

EDEL QUINN



H. E. MGR.

LEON-JOSEPH SUENENS

AUXILARY BISHOP OF MALINES, BELGIUM

This Life of a wonderful apostle of our own day will etch itself deep on your mind. You will rise up from it with supercharged feelings and with a new slant on holiness. It is the story of a girl of supreme faith, who combined harmoniously gentleness and superhuman courage. Her beauty, her smile, her manner were captivating, but anyone who followed her was led and urged towards arduous tasks. She adapted herself to all by her thoughtful charity, but took iron grip on souls and wrested them from mediocrity and sterility. She was attractive and lovable ; everyone who met her speaks of her charm. But that fascinating exterior hid an incredible strength. No one ever discovered a shadow of fear in her, nor a hesitation at the call of duty. Already she has become a legendary figure in Africa.

It is necessary for you to make this close contact with Edel Quinn, because, unquestionably, she will strengthen your spirit ; and what do you need more than that ? What could be more precious ?

EDEL QUINN

By the same Author

Theology of the Apostolate of the Legion of Mary.

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A Heroine of the Apostolate (1907-1944)



EDEL QUINN

*Envoy of the Legion of Mary
to Africa*

H.E. MGR.

LEON-JOSEPH SUENENS

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF MALINES, BELGIUM

Preface by H.E. Archbishop Riberi, Internuncio to China

EDEL QUINN AT THE AGE OF 28, THAT IS ON THE EVE
OF HER ENVOYSHIP.

"Destined by sheer force of example to influence the course of history."
—(Archbishop Riberi.)

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Dal Vaticano.

9th October, 1952.

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Monseigneur,

On receipt of your letter of the 16th July, I at once offered to the Holy Father in your name the beautiful volume in which you have enshrined the memory of Edel Mary Quinn, the Envoy of the Legion of Mary in Africa. His Holiness showed marked appreciation of your courteous presentation to him of this interesting biography, and instructed me to transmit to Your Excellency the assurance of his deep gratitude.

This "heroine of the apostolate", as you style her in the sub-title of your book, has in very truth spent herself in the planting of the Legion of Mary in the soil of Africa. Her devotedness and supernatural spirit have been such as should be brought to the knowledge not only of the members of the Legion itself, but also of all those who have at heart the advancement of devotion to Our Lady, and in general of all those apostolic workers who, in their various ways, are working in the Father's harvest-fields. It is unquestionable that this most attractive example will operate to draw numerous souls along the path of more complete service of the Church.

Accordingly, the Holy Father expresses the earnest desire that this book will meet with the most favourable reception, and as a pledge of the graces that he calls down on your works, he imparts to you with all his heart the Apostolic Benediction.

I thank you also for the copy of the Life which you so kindly forwarded to myself, and I beg of you, Monseigneur, to accept this assurance of my devoted regard in Our Lord.

Pro-Secretary.

His Excellency,
THE MOST REV. MGR. LEON-JOSEPH SUENENS,
Auxiliary Bishop to His Eminence, the
Cardinal Archbishop of Malines.

*In accordance with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII,
it is declared that there is no intention in this book
of anticipating the judgments of the Church.*

PREFACE

by

HIS EXCELLENCY THE INTERNUNCIO TO CHINA

Cum licentia Ordinarii Mechliniae
21 Novembris 1953

THE reawakening in this 20th century of the layman's realisation of his duty to co-operate in the apostolate forms a characteristic expression of the perennial vitality of the true Church of Christ. During the preceding centuries, as a result of the Protestant revolt, the Church was obliged to put special stress on the hierarchical constitution with which her Divine Founder had endowed her, and to safeguard it as the vital centre of her system. Meanwhile, the Protestant defection from the Faith over so considerable and so important a portion of Europe could not fail to induce, more than any other cause, the dechristianisation of the masses.

This is not to say, however, that other causes may not have contributed to that lamentable process, such for example, as the frailties inherent in all human institutions. Even in the Church, spiritual and material elements confront each other in constant opposition. So, while making full allowance for the innumerable elements in that terrible struggle of ideas, of political interests, of economic necessities, still one has to face up to the fact (paradoxical though it may seem) that the "ages of faith" contained in themselves a germ of weakness. It was that they permitted the duty of the apostolate, which is one of the fundamental requirements of the Christian faith, to drift into oblivion in the minds of the faithful.

In those ages the whole of society was profoundly rooted in faith. Civil institutions in their most intimate expression were saturated with the sense of Christ. Christian values were not called in question and, even when veiled or at times violated under the stress of individual passions, they were openly professed, often even with ostentation. One deep and lively faith was the heritage of all men.

As a result of this, slight need was felt to communicate the faith to others. Through a gradual, imperceptible process, the idea of the lay apostolate became obscured almost to the point of total eclipse. This was indeed a radical departure from the early Christian tradition, in which that duty of universal apostleship was so vividly appreciated and so thoroughly fulfilled that it constituted one of the prime reasons for the incredibly rapid diffusion of the new religion.

As a sequel to that weakening of the apostolic spirit, the great

spiritual catastrophes of the modern epoch took place. First, the paganising reaction of the various national renaissances; secondly, the breaking off of entire nations from the centre of the faith; thirdly, spiritual disturbances in the ideas and customs of the nations still calling themselves Catholic; finally, the inevitable abandonment of religious practice, at the outset by the ruling classes and then by the masses.

It is significant to note that, following the great work of re-establishing and consolidating the hierarchical principle in the Church—a work which culminated in the definition of papal infallibility, the Popes have never ceased to insist on the necessity for the lay apostolate. The passing years have seen the crescendo of this insistence reach an ever more commanding tone. Then, at the very moment when many began to speak of the necessity for a theology of the lay apostolate, there appeared in the midst of the strife of World War II the memorable Encyclical on the Mystical Body, which gave solid theological basis to this apostolate.

Such is the historical setting in which Miss Edel Quinn appears as a shining example of the lay apostolate. The child of a comfortable middle-class family, but early taking her place among the young business-assistant class, she is a typical expression of the modern masses. Of a delicate constitution and wasted by an incurable disease, she represents a sublime challenge of the spirit to the materialism which seeks to gain possession of the masses. Above all, through her humble and unpretentious life, through her intimate contacts with even the most abandoned souls, by force of virtues which were simple and yet heroic, she offers to this present generation a perfect example of the overwhelming power of the lay apostolate and of the possibilities it holds for the winning back of souls to Christ.

Intentionally we have spoken of the "masses". For although the apostolate of Edel Quinn was essentially the inconspicuous one of individual contact, who can fail to see the force of spiritual fermentation that will be brought to bear upon the masses, if all those who have been won to or brought back to Christ by an apostle share his invincible zeal? Therein we would see the case of the mustard seed.

Any apostolate is doomed to sterility, however, unless it be the radiation of a true interior life. This is an unquestionable axiom. It is not surprising, then, to see Edel Quinn adopt as her favourite reading and her constant meditation, the celebrated spiritual writers of our day. Such reading and reflection led her to make of the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the sacred Eucharist which she received every day, often at great sacrifice, the centre of her life. In Catholic Ireland, where the teachings and directives of the Roman Pontiff are followed and practised with sincere love and filial devotion, Edel Quinn stands out as a striking demonstration of the religious transformation effected in the world by the Pope of the Eucharist. No wonder, then, that her intense spirituality impelled her decisively to-

wards the contemplative life, and made her unshakable in that resolve, even when an attractive married life was offered to her by one who had learnt to value her at her true worth. God alone could turn her from that high attraction. He did this by a direct and providential intervention, as if His purpose was to remind us that a fruitful apostolate can only be the radiation of the inner life of grace.

In the modern world, Christian spirituality and fruitful apostleship appear inconceivable without being fused in Mary. The instinct of the Catholic Church has always discovered Mary in every Christian manifestation. It is particularly significant that the rebirth and increase of Catholic influence in the modern world has appeared simultaneously with the oncoming of what we call "the era of Mary". That epoch has been marked by the definition of the two dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and of her corporal Assumption into heaven. No less significant has been the canonisation of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, the most outspoken champion of the doctrine of Mary, the Co-Redemptrix of the human race and the Mediatrix of all Graces.

Might we not, then, regard it as inevitable that among the most modern and efficacious forms of the lay apostolate, one would rise up which would contain and express that intense devotion to the Mother of God in its deepest, richest, most advanced aspects? And, indeed, that birth took place; and Divine Providence arranged that it should coincide with the anniversary of the birth of the Virgin Mary; which is appropriate. For the Legion of Mary is in very deed a school of Marian spirituality dedicated to the service of the apostolate. Notwithstanding the military terms chosen to describe the Legion organisation, its pre-eminent characteristic (alike to the mind which analyses and to the heart which feels) is the relationship of mother and child which exists between Mary and the Legionaries, and which establishes among themselves and with Christ, "the first-born of many brethren", that fraternal union which the Apostle of the Gentiles loved to dwell on.

From this union, too, there arises among Legionaries that sense of family unity which made of the first Christians "one heart and one soul", and inspired them to deeds of courage. This explains the surprising diffusion of the Legion throughout the five continents, and its prodigious development in mission lands. It is no exaggeration to affirm that in the Legion of Mary is renewed the fervour of the first centuries of the Church. We believe that this outpouring of spirit will become the greater in the measure that the Legionaries absorb the rich heritage of defined and developed doctrine which the centuries have provided, and in so far as they bring their organisation to a more solidly based, more consciously planned, more experienced efficiency.

Out of the Legion of Mary spring the Marian spirituality and the conquering dynamism of Edel Quinn. Her life and work provide such

an inspiring example of these two most salient aspects of the Church to-day as to become a factor destined to influence by sheer force of example the course of history.

As a witness in four continents, through my official duties, of the great tasks confronting the Church, I have always hoped that her wonderful life would find a pen capable of presenting it fittingly to the attentive examination of the Catholic world. It was with great satisfaction, then, that I heard the announcement that His Excellency, Monseigneur Suenens, Auxiliary Bishop of Malines, had undertaken that work. It would be difficult to confide it to a person of greater authority, to a more brilliant writer, to a deeper thinker, to one with more expert knowledge of modern conditions.

Mgr. Suenens is the eminent author of the *Theology of the Apostolate of the Legion of Mary*, which is a beautiful and brilliant presentation of the axiom, "To Jesus through Mary", and which gives a clear and authoritative exposition of the principles which have been the life of Edel Quinn's apostolate. In his *Theology of the Apostolate*, Mgr. Suenens has supplied a natural introduction to this present volume, *A Heroine of the Apostolate*. These books are complementary; the first finds confirmation in the fruitful apostolate described by the second; and the second can only be explained by the principles illustrated in the first. These two books should be read by everybody.

It has not been easy for the author to penetrate the veil of humility which covered the profound spirituality of Edel Quinn. For this additional reason the *Theology of the Apostolate* should be studied. It will aid notably towards the understanding of that fulness of Mary, and through her of Christ, of which the apostolate of the heroine of these pages is but a manifestation.

These pages are written at the very moment when the Legion of Mary, the Marian school of Edel Quinn, is the victim of a cruel persecution, the first that it has had to undergo in the thirty years of its existence. Conscious of the meaning of the Communion of Saints, the author very justly concludes Chapter XIV with the words: "Hidden in the depths of the African bush, Edel Quinn was helping, without knowing it, to save China." From the vantage point whence I write, on the margin of the most subtle and most total persecution in history, I can say—and I am happy to say—that I endorse this statement. Without the astonishing success of Edel Quinn's apostolate, it would have been difficult to find the courage to launch the Legion of Mary amidst the adverse and hazardous conditions which afflicted China in the post-war period.

The introduction of the Legion of Mary into China has been followed by a growth far surpassing our most optimistic hopes. That growth has been both wide and solid. Above all, the Legion has been in the advance guard in its defence of Catholic orthodoxy. In that noble cause many of its members have been brutally butchered and

imprisoned. At a time when those Legionaries are being made the target of the most unreasonable and fantastic accusations, this account of the innocent life of Edel Quinn will serve to shed a vivid light on the noble activities, the sublime idealism and the irresistible force of the Legion of Mary.

Ethereal as a breeze, frail as a flower, but at the same time strong as the army which her invincible energy has drawn after her and will continue to draw after her—that Heroine of the Apostolate will confound before the world the mad folly of the new persecutors.

And in the glowing path trodden by Edel Quinn, the world will discern a new reflection of the eternal youth of the Church, ever on the march for the conquest of souls for Christ through Mary.

Hong Kong, February, 1952.

* ANI' RIBERI,
Titular Archbishop of Dara,
Internuncio Apostolic to China.

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INTRODUCTION

EDEL MARY QUINN was a young Irish girl who is in a fair way to become a national glory for her country and a legendary figure in African lands. The story of her life has not previously been written. The present biography aims at spreading afar the radiance of that heroic life which does honour to the Church and to the Legion of Mary.

When the authorities of the Legion asked me to write it, I hesitated; should not such a task be reserved to a writer belonging to her native land? I was told that my undertaking the work would be in incisive affirmation of the Catholicity of that missionary life, and would constitute yet another unexpected factor in that altogether astonishing story. I agreed, at first in the spirit of faith, to examine the "records", that is, the vast correspondence covering especially the years 1936-1944; and to collect the evidence. In the course of several visits to Dublin, I met those whom Edel called "Head-quarters", the heads of the Legion, who became my friends. I met, too, some of the principal witnesses of her life in Africa and in Mauritius. Bishop Heffernan, Vicar Apostolic in Zanzibar in Edel's time, was good enough in the intimacy of Kimmage Manor to share with me his memories, and to let me understand the problems that Edel had actually to deal with. The friends who had maintained a correspondence with Edel put into my hands the letters they had got from her. Her family received me in their home and allowed me to question them most searchingly. A French correspondent of Edel's, whom we shall designate simply by the initials P.L., put completely at my disposal about fifty precious letters. I was able, besides, to question at leisure people of all grades of society who had watched her life as she fulfilled its details. The sum of all those impressions has enabled me to trace a picture of her. I thank all of them for their candour, for the confidences they imparted to me, for their trust in me, too. This book merely gives them back what I received from them. I keep for my share only the joy of a prolonged contact with a chosen soul and the grace of discovery.

*
* * *

Edel Quinn was a frail young girl, given up by the doctors, who

went off as a lay missionary to bring the Legion of Mary to British Central and East Africa.

The reading of her life will comfort first of all, we hope, invalids and the sick. It will show them the strength of a soul that mastered its body. It will show them, too, what courage can do when it submits to grace and to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

We think as well that no missionary can read this life without being spurred on by this invalid whom the love of Our Lady sent out alone upon the paths of Africa. She will aid them to suffer crosses and toils for the Lord. The realisation of what this young girl was able to do with her shattered health invites us to revise our standards of generosity. Her life is a challenge to the prudence of the over-cautious. It proves once more that the folly of the Cross is a living force; and this is a fact which needs to be driven home all the time.

Likewise, Edel Quinn is a model presented to all the members of the great army of Mary, the Legion. Her story proclaims that we must take the Gospel literally and that we must not hesitate to risk life itself in the service of God. She is the incarnation of courage and heroism. She is the type of the legionary who pledges himself without possibility of looking back, and whose faith bridges chasms and moves mountains.

When Legionaries come home after unsuccessful visitation, tired out, discouraged by indifference or hostility, let them turn to these pages, written for them and especially for those moments when the devil prowls round us and whispers to us that we are not our brother's keeper. One glance at this sick girl, who was never known to show depression, or fear, or hesitation before the Cross, will bring the grace of support and perseverance.

In writing this book, naturally I also thought of that galaxy of Envoys, or delegates of the Legion, who are continuing the same work of expansion in the five continents. When they, too, feel the heat and burden of the day, the image of Edel Quinn will be for them an abiding "Sursum corda". She must understand them better than anyone else, from within. She must feel herself very near those pioneers, her brothers, who are still at work. She shared the same difficulties, the same endurance, the same hopes. She is "in the same line of business". These "Evangelists" have left their mark on the history of the missionary Church. The Holy See itself announced Edel Quinn's death to Dublin and paid her a moving tribute. Edel has left an enduring trace of her passage here below; wherever she ploughed, the Church is now more deeply rooted. She raised up apostles who understand that a Christianity which is not

apostolic contradicts its own origin. She kindled, too, an ardent appreciation of Our Lady which far outlived her own earthly span and continued among men the blessing of her short life.

This book tells of a life that all could see and admire. But it seeks as well to penetrate the sanctuary of her soul, as far as the sources of information permit. All witnesses agree in saying that she revealed to no one the ultimate inspiration which ruled her life. We shall describe what we were able to glimpse, without adding anything; the rest belongs to God.

When, after the war, the trunk containing her property arrived in Dublin, there was little found in it: her New Testament, some albums and diaries, a few books. That was about all. But among the books were two which reveal at once what filled her heart: *The Secret of Mary*, by St. Louis Marie de Montfort, and the *Handbook of the Legion*. The deep soul of Edel Quinn stands at the junction of these two streams; we shall make this plain as we proceed. And that, perhaps, will be her own special message: prayer and action must be united. She repeats to the world in her own way that the apostolate springs from the depths of contemplation, and that a consuming love of God is incarnated in a superhuman love of one's brethren. A Martha in the eyes of the world, a Mary in the eyes of the Master, Edel Quinn unites in herself to an exceptional degree this double and yet single vocation. But let us not anticipate. We shall follow her step by step. Her early years are marked by no outstanding feature. Nevertheless, we shall recount all the simple details, because, by seeing her very near us, we shall better understand that she is one of ourselves. The greatest disservice one can do to the saints, it has been said, is to put them on a pedestal. Edel needs no pedestal to make her great. Besides, those early years have a special value: they contain within themselves the future and they prefigure what lies ahead.

Before seeking the heights, a plane rolls for a little while along the ground. When it has taken off, we understand that the runway was but a springboard; the flight was really hidden in that apparently unromantic start. Edel Quinn's life, before her African adventure, was like that preliminary run; it was already rich with the generousities to come, and unconsciously it took into its scope the ends of the earth. We are able to perceive all this when we go back to Edel's beginnings.

We shall also give the details of her apostolic work, for the great Legion family wishes to know all, the better to be inspired by her life. Men have need of visions to fit them to live. It is good for them

to look closely at such a life's concrete detail, so that they may the better understand how completely a soul can submit itself to God. Edel Quinn offers them a vision of supernatural beauty which is an inspiration and a stimulus. She belongs to that class of heroes of whom Bergson has said that their very existence is a call to action.

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

"I have redeemed thee and called thee by thy name: thou art Mine."

ISAIAH.

HARDLY had St. Patrick brought the Faith to Ireland when this people grasped its missionary vocation. From the seventh to the twelfth century, religious and monastic Ireland sent to the Continent of Europe its ceaseless swarms of travelling laymen and clerics, monks and bishops.

It is an amazing and a picturesque story, that of these heralds of the Faith, going out from this island of legend lashed by great winds and ocean spray. They crossed the "wild-headed sea", as one of their old chroniclers calls it, to speed on missionary adventure. They hastened to announce to others the good news they had just learned. Their example was contagious. From those young churches that sprang up at the heels of St. Patrick, the Celtic monks set out in incredible numbers. The chronicles tell the exploits of crews putting out to sea without oars, the better to go where the Will of God ordained. Coming from all parts, working in scattered groups, without concerted plan, these "peregrini" as they were called, criss-crossed Gaul, Germany, Italy, in all directions.

Columban incarnates them all.

Possessed by the mystical longing for self-sacrifice and adventure which harassed the men of his race, he set sail with twelve companions and landed on the coast of Gaul. A kind of prophet of Israel came to life in the sixth century, as peremptory in his speech as an Isaiah or a Jeremias, one on whose face (his biographer declares): "the force of God shone visibly". Such is the picture that a historian draws of him. At his call monasteries spring from the earth: Annegray, Luxeuil, Bobbio. . . The abbey born under his influence are estimated at two hundred.

Other Irish missionaries pursued a long and hard pilgrimage, alone or in small groups, carrying from shrine to shrine their sufferings and their prayers.

When leaving their native land to go and evangelise other countries, they vowed to God a "peregrinatio". They bound themselves

to leave their land without hope of return; they went at random, led by God, urged by the desire of "peregrinatio propter nomen Domini"—a voluntary exile "for the name of the Lord". One ideal inflamed them: to spread the Faith received from St. Patrick.

Some among them would be consecrated bishops but would never have a See, so as to be bound entirely to their mission of conquest. *Episcopi ad prædicandum*—such was their title; even in territory already Christianised they remained missionary bishops.

This spiritual invasion left a deep mark on our continental Christianity. Daniel-Rops writes: "In the dark ages of the West, Ireland became, as it were, a new Palestine, a new cradle of the Faith." And this epic he terms "the Irish miracle".

The Ireland of to-day, with her three millions of Catholics, supplies by herself the twelfth part of the Church's missionary army. This amounts to saying that she has Catholicism in her blood and that her faith has lost neither its freshness nor its power of expansion. That heritage is sacred to her. Has she not paid for it, through the ages, with her blood? *Sanguis martyrum*. . . .

It is in no way astonishing, therefore, that, in the twentieth century again, a new Pentecostal wind should have stirred over the island of Patrick. In a form modern, unostentatious, unexpected, Ireland maintains and renews her ancient apostolic tradition. Columban's monks are succeeded to-day by the Legionaries, who for the same cause take up again the "peregrinatio propter nomen Domini". These envoys of the Legion of Mary continue the work of the path-finders and pioneers of old. Though circumstances and methods differ, the same spirit animates them. The same faith of Patrick inspires the same glorious adventure. Their courage touches heights as great; their spirit of sacrifice is no less intense.

In recalling, as our biography opens, those giants of the apostolate who sprang from her race, we believe that we are tracing the true spiritual genealogy of Edel Quinn. Her roots go back through the centuries and lie deep in Columban and the builders of Christendom.

*
* * *

Edel Mary Quinn was born in Ireland, at Greenane, near Kanturk, a remote small town in Co. Cork, on September 14th, 1907.

On that day the Church celebrates the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Was that fact a mere coincidence or was it an omen? It is very certain that the life beginning under that austere sign was to be

profoundly marked by the redeeming cross. Its image may be traced, as it were, in shadow, on every page of this biography. It is a harsh, sturdy cross, like those old Celtic crosses carved from the granite of the country, a bare cross cut in one piece, almost part of the landscape, so well does it harmonise with it. But Edel will take such pains to hide it; she will accept it with such apparent joy as to succeed in hiding it from all. More than once she will declare the Exaltation of the Cross to be her special feast; it touched deep chords in her.

Her coming into the world was greeted with joy and gratitude as God's first blessing on a new family. Her father, Charles Quinn, hailed from County Galway; her mother, whose maiden name was Louise Burke Browne, was a Clarewoman. They had met and been married when Charles Quinn was in the National Bank at Roscommon. By all her roots Edel belonged to the pure Celtic race which forms the glory and the charm of Ireland.

Four days later the little girl was baptised by Father Green in the Church of St. Mary at Castlemagner. The name of Edel which she received in baptism together with that of Mary, was given to her by accident. It happened that the parish priest misunderstood the name that was told to him. Mrs. Quinn, out of affection for one of her sisters, had chosen the name of Adèle. On arrival at the church, Mr. Quinn faithfully interpreted the young mother's wish and asked the priest to christen the baby Adèle. The priest understood "Edel", and thought they had chosen the name of the flower, and that Edel was the diminutive of Edelweiss. A mistake had been made, but the name remained. This is the explanation that Edel herself gave in a letter, and half in joke she confessed that the rather affected name did not please her much. Others may see in it a prophetic symbol. The edelweiss, the immortelle of the snows, is a flower of the heights, which seeks solitude and mountain-peaks, which braves the snow and the gale, and tries to hide from those who would pluck it. Similarly, that little girl who has just come into the world will be found living on the spiritual heights, bearing bravely the assaults of suffering, seeking to evade the gaze of people. Her love of solitude was to equal her disregard of fear. God alone was to pluck that flower, and it was to bloom for Him only. The name contains many similitudes, each one the shadow of something to come. Did her mother guess at this when she offered the child a crown of edelweiss on the day of her First Communion?

The father's work entailed frequent changes of station. This prevented the Quinns from taking deep root anywhere and obliged them to move frequently from one home to another.

A few months after Edel's birth, they had to leave Kanturk and go and live in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. There the child attended her first school, run by the Loreto nuns. This stay lasted six and a half years, that is, until 1913.

Mr. Quinn then became manager of a branch of the National Bank in Cahir, a small town ten miles from Clonmel, the centre of an important regional fair. They remained there three years, and then moved according as each new promotion came, first to Enniscorthy, where they stayed until 1917, then to Tralee, where they were until Christmas, 1924.

At that date the family came to Dublin and settled there definitely.

In the course of these peregrinations, the family had grown. In addition to Edel, there were three girls: Leslie,¹ Mona, and Dorothea;² and one boy, Raphael. All these young people grew up in an atmosphere of joy, of liberty, of mutual understanding. Edel, the eldest, was naturally the leader, the one whose example was instinctively followed. She fully deserved this kind of uncontested sovereignty.

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The big day of her peaceful and happy childhood was that of her First Communion. She made it in Cahir on June 1st, 1916, the feast of the Ascension. We know nothing about that first meeting between Edel and the God of the Eucharist; we know only that it left an indelible mark. At every stage of her life, witnesses remark on her craving for Communion. Devotion to Mass and Holy Communion was her special mark. From the first contact, her faith went to the heart of the Sacrament. Later she would perform feats of mortification and effort in order not to miss Mass.

After her First Communion came Confirmation. In Ireland traditionally, the child receives new heavenly patrons on this occasion. Edel Mary was supplemented by Eucharistia Joseph. It would appear that the child herself chose the names.

We have nothing but a photograph to help us in reading this soul just awakening to life. But that photograph is worth its weight in gold, for it opens up to us a whole world. An extraordinary goodness shines out from the child's face, framed in its abundant tresses. How unforgettable are the large blue eyes, lit up by the smile which was to become legendary. One can guess, as one sees it, that it came

¹ Now Mrs. McCormick.

² Now Mrs. Bannon.

from the depths of her being and that it was her gift to all who would come near her.

That smile tells already of God's special love for her. There are some souls, tortured and chaotic like Mary Magdalen and Augustine, who remind men of the patience and the mercy of God; they form encouragement for us sinners. Then there are others whom God seizes on the very threshold of their life and of whom He takes exclusive possession. "I have redeemed thee and called thee by thy name: thou art Mine." This is God's speech when His love possesses a creature. Those souls have but to take the trouble to be born, as Péguy sang in "Le Mystère des Saints Innocents"; they have not to struggle after union with God painfully, by toilsome effort. God takes hold of them at their first moment; they proclaim His freely-given love, His magnificent generosity; they have nothing to do but to be faithful to that Love which will not withdraw itself from them.

Edel was of that lineage. In her we witness no growing pains, no phase of renewal or conversion. She followed a straight road.

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A few memories of her brief time in Enniscorthy show us that the salient features of her character were already in evidence. That record comes to us from the Loreto Convent where she was at school. At that time a close and lasting friendship had been knit between the Quinn family and one of the nuns in charge of the school, Mother Thomas Aquinas. Edel continued to write to her even from Africa, a fact which proves the depth of her attachment.

Mother Thomas has in her mind a very clear picture of the ten-year-old child, with her long golden hair. "She was a real imp at school, not indeed bold, but always bubbling over with good spirits, full of life and gaiety and up to every kind of prank.

"She was the centre of every group bent on fun or mischief. A daring cyclist, often when dashing at full speed down the hill which leads from the convent to the town, she used to turn round and wave, in order to show that she was fully in control.

"To the simplicity of a child she united great poise and attractiveness. Completely at ease in any situation and in every company, she always rose to the occasion, instinctively saying and doing the right thing. Selected to read the address of welcome to a newly-consecrated bishop who visited the school, she performed her task with a grace and charm that struck everyone. Then, when His Lordship spoke to her, she replied with the perfect degree of freedom and deference.

"Though carefree and lively, she was never slipshod in her work or her appearance. With astonishing accuracy, she described to an examiner the catechism she had studied before coming to Enniscorthy.

"Her unselfishness and her readiness to do a service were notable. She was a born organiser, and everything she undertook she did well."

This is the earliest sketch we have of the child.

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The stay in Enniscorthy was short. Another promotion for Mr. Quinn placed the family in Tralee for several years. This was an important stage in Edel's life, for it was during it that she first left home and went to boarding school. She was sent to England, to the Faithful Companions of Jesus, at Upton in Cheshire. That school was selected because of its proximity to Liverpool, an easily accessible port. Edel was to stay there two years.

They still remember at Upton that highly-principled pupil, absolutely reliable, attentive to every duty, kind almost to a fault. "Her influence in class and at recreation," writes one of her mistresses, "was not only healthy but uplifting." Without obtruding herself, she was dexterous in stimulating others to generous acts and in moderating those whose characters were naturally rough and rebellious.

Her spirit and enthusiasm increased the fervour of Our Lady's Sodality; this first sign of active devotion to Mary deserves to be noted in passing.

Edel put her heart both into her studies and into the games.

Because of her skill and quickness she was chosen as captain of the cricket team.

She liked tennis and was fond of the piano. She was excellent at dancing.

Though bubbling over with life in this way, she was very much mistress of herself, and she set a value on the making of little acts of mortification. "I always tried to stop talking when the rules called for silence," she confessed later. That seems a small thing; yet her intense interior life was showing itself in germ in those daily victories.

Her mistress notes another characteristic which was to be observed very often later on: "Her personal worries were borne silently and with a sweetness that caused many to think that Edel had not a care in the world." This careless and gay exterior hid a wealth of self-denial and a great depth of feeling. It is not astonishing to learn that

even before leaving Upton she had in her heart definitely renounced the world.

The cycle of her studies was not completed when, owing to reverses of fortune, her parents were obliged to bring her home. Her return coincided with the settling of the family in Dublin. Edel was the first in age, and, therefore, must be the first to face the world and secure a position which would enable her to help her family. Without flinching for a second, the Upton schoolgirl set about this new task. She began by attending commercial classes at Potter's College, in Dun Laoghaire, and then at Rosse College, St. Stephen's Green. She was all anxiety to assume her share of the family burden.

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The Quinns lived at this time in Trafalgar Terrace, Monkstown. They were a very united family, living in an atmosphere of warmth and freedom. They followed their own individual aims and tastes; while family affection harmonised the different characters and gave charm to their diversity. Mrs. Quinn set an example of profound piety, of a delicate and refined kindness, joined to an uncommon energy. Do they not tell that she was in the habit of bathing in the sea all the year round before going to the earliest Mass in the morning?

One does not learn to be soft in such a school.

One of Edel's sisters, Leslie, was third in the swimming championship of Ireland, and represented her country against England. Another sister, Dorothea, was on the Leinster team in interprovincial hockey.

Edel, as we have said, held a unique place in the hearts of all her family, not only as the eldest, but also because she had acquired an unquestioned personal prestige. Her father's familiar term for her was "Granny", so wise and mature (he said) was her advice.

The family turned instinctively to her; her opinions had decisive weight with them. Whether the question was one of choosing a school for the younger ones, or of their studies, or whatever else might be the problem—Edel's influence made itself felt. Not that there was in her any vestige of masterfulness, or of tyranny. What was at work in her was the purest charity, which sought to determine what should be done and the straightest way to it.

She astonished strangers by the maturity of her remarks, by her clear, rapid, sure judgment. Here is a revealing thought that we get from her pen at that time: "It is not always easy to get through the

outer layer, but until we have penetrated it we must not judge. Taking things at their face value leads to false conclusions."

She sums up men and things with accuracy, kindness and supreme good sense—valuable equipment for life, the more so as the cultivation of her mind was not pursued beyond those two years of study at Upton. She was thrown back on her innate gifts, on her great natural ability, on her sure intuitions, and not always was she able to open up to their full extent the rich treasures of her mind and heart. She felt and appreciated more than she expressed, and she did not easily give outward form to her conceptions. She read many books, especially spiritual ones. She hungered for intellectual fare, but she could not be called bookish. She was gifted, even it would seem, singularly gifted, for higher studies. Circumstances brought to a standstill her educational development when it was but half completed; but they gave her rare compensations, experience and natural powers, of which she made full use.

The secret of her influence in the home lay in her entire selflessness. It was natural to her to forget herself: "Never did we see a trace of selfishness in Edel," say her family with complete accord. "She forgot herself entirely for the sake of others, and did it as an absolute matter of course. There was never a resting on herself, never an egotistical movement."

She gave to others all that she had, and she gave herself into the bargain, just as the flower gives its perfume, the fire its flame, the sun its light. And from that fact proceeded the universal affection that surrounded her at every moment of her life.

Her generosity was so ruthless that it was impossible for anyone to guess her likes or dislikes. She gave herself to all that was asked of her with the same interior detachment and the same whole-hearted enthusiasm. No one ever saw her depressed or disturbed, or disconcerted by a difficulty. She did not show her intimate feelings, still less her inner life, even in the family circle. She solved all difficulties with an easy, overflowing humour which never forsook her. It was impossible to resist such contagious gaiety. Her spirits were unquenchable and, in awkward situations, she brought good humour into play with all the skill of an artist.

Another trait of her character impressed itself on all who knew her: it was her fearlessness. "Edel," insists Mrs. Quinn, "never knew what fear was." This detail should be noted, for it later explained her deeds of apostolic daring.

One night the whole family was excited by an unusual and suspicious sound in the basement. Could it be a burglar? Edel jumped out of bed with the rest. Without a moment's hesitation she left her

room, armed herself with a poker, and ran down into the cellar. The adventure ended happily in a burst of laughter when she confronted . . . a cat!

This freedom from fear was allied to a strong, sometimes obstinate, will. Her mother on occasions had to subdue the child's already determined nature, but obedience always won the day.

Edel had an intense love for her mother, and it remained all her life written deep in her heart. When later she will decide to leave home, without intention to return, she surely will have made the greatest sacrifice in all her life.

At this time of her life—she was nearly nineteen—her love for her family took the form of a virile decision: she seeks a position that will enable her to help them.

CHAPTER II

LIFE BEGINS

"The present moment is always like an ambassador declaring God's orders. The heart always speaks its fiat. The soul flows out thus by means of all things into its centre and end. . . . Everything without exception is a means, an instrument of holiness for it."

DE CAUSSADE.

DUBLIN is a capital city of the right measure for a man. In it one feels neither crushed nor lost. If the centre of the city, around Nelson's Pillar, is a busy hive whose cells are its banks, its shops, its public-houses and restaurants, one can wander in peace along the quays of the Liffey, in which flotillas of swans disport themselves. One can seek refuge, too, in the immense Park where riders disturb herds of deer among the thickets, while gulls and rooks manoeuvre as they fly over the grassy expanse.

As soon as one leaves the centre of the city, long monotonous streets of low houses create an impression of melancholy and of greyness. One realises that Ireland was oppressed for many centuries, and that her independent life is only beginning. War has been declared on the slums, on pauperism, a relic of the bad times. The day has not yet been won, but the people who fill the streets are lively and alert. The race is young, vigorous, simple in its ways, combining to a remarkable degree religion and poetry, fancy and humour, kindness and combativeness. A city in the state of grace, Dublin has been called. At any rate, one notices a commendable restraint about its manners and customs, its theatres, its advertisements, its newspapers. One breathes the Faith there, as likewise one inhales the sea air. The people pray without human respect: they do it as a matter of course. One lives there at a normal rhythm, in an atmosphere naturally Christian.

Dublin was to be henceforth the scene of the activities of Edel and of her family.

The search for a position was easy. The Quinns were friendly with a young couple living at Seapoint, near Blackrock, the Taylors. They had a lodger, a young French businessman, who told them one day

that he was looking for a typist. They suggested Edel Quinn, who at once found herself engaged as secretary of the "Chagny Tile Works", a firm for the importation of building materials, having its office in Tara Street.

The managing director of this company never forgot their first meeting.

"She was nineteen," he writes. "Our first meeting has left me the impression of a rather delicate girl, probably somewhat intimidated by the young French employer, but smiling bravely all the same."

Timidity and courage: her two characteristics have been rightly noted. Other witnesses, too, took note of that timidity, of which she was conscious herself.

"I am glad you understand about the shyness," she wrote one day. "I note you had a touch of it yourself when you first went to see the Taylors. Isn't it a horrid sensation? And yet there is no getting away from it. With or without one's leave it comes."

But that never held her back. It will be, so to speak, her trade to endure the buffetings of fortune, but ever "smiling bravely all the same". Just now she is only beginning her apprenticeship.

Her employer did not have to repent of having engaged her. She very quickly showed herself a model worker and perfect secretary; whatever she was asked to do was quickly mastered and faultlessly carried out. Confidential work was soon entrusted to her, and later, some duties of management, for her skill in dealing with people and her competence were notable. Her letters to her friends at this time were full of references to cement and tiles and slates, with that liking for finish and precision which was always to characterise her. She discussed tariffs and prospectuses with genuine interest; obviously she had at heart the success of the firm. It was the period when Ireland was just beginning her career of national independence, staunching the wounds of her civil war, organising her material existence. The times were favourable for a firm which imported building materials, and Edel's work became more and more exacting. Her employer became worried about her health, feared that she was overworked, and proposed her getting an assistant. Edel replied cheerfully that, except for the first days of each month, she could manage very well and get home at a normal hour. She wrote to him: "You need not think I am doing anything specially hard, and really there is *never too much* work to do. Do not worry about me; I don't believe I will ever die of overwork." Therein she was mistaken. The reader should note her "*never too much*" which she had underlined. Nothing was too much for her generosity. In the matter of giving

herself she had her own arithmetic, and she went beyond limits so gaily and gracefully that she deceived the most watchful anxiety.

Working in a French firm, Edel at once realised what an asset to her would be a knowledge of French. At once she began to work at it in her rare moments of leisure, and even attended night classes. Her young employer offered to help. He guided her through an original "method", which had its measure of success. "French through joy"—the method did not justify its title, but Edel came to the stage of reading French easily and understanding it. Her spiritual life was to be substantially nourished by French writers. Moreover, the rudiments that she acquired would be a help to her later on in her visit to Mauritius. Providence was making her ready for the tasks of the future.

Meanwhile she was very much in the present, and the interests of the firm she made her own. She did not spare herself. One day she had to undergo an operation for appendicitis at St. Vincent's Hospital. She went through it, but too quickly she was back again in the office. To those who expressed surprise at her imprudence she replied briefly that her employers were very considerate and that she could not inconvenience them too long by her absence.

Edel was conscientious about her office work and she carried her scrupulousness in that regard into fine shadings. She would not take a moment from her hours of work, even to satisfy a little curiosity. For instance, this is what she writes to a friend: "I got your letter all right, but at the station met a friend who travelled in the same carriage, and I had to talk all the way in. At lunch time I had to go to the Bank, and so it was only in the 7.30 train home at night that I read your letter. It is terribly tantalising to have a letter and not be able to read it."

When she received her first rise in salary she expressed her joy with a perfect simplicity, which showed her devotion to her family: "Personally I would find no pleasure in an increase, if it just meant extra pocket money, but in my case it makes a difference to the family, and you cannot realise what a pleasure the increase was on that account."

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The life of work, very absorbing in itself, and made longer by the daily journey to and from home by train, did not leave her much time for social life. She regretted this, for she loved animation.

Dancing was popular in Ireland, and for young people it was the supreme business. Edel did not go to public dances. But now and

again her friends induced her to accept an invitation. "Besides," writes her employer, "when we played tennis at the Taylors and it got too dark to see, we would sometimes go into the drawingroom, put a dance record on the gramophone, and then with Edel and Ethel Foley, Dr. Taylor's sister, as partners, one or two young men and myself, we used to dance. Vividly, I remember her as an incredibly lissom partner. To dance as she did—she was as light and as fleet as a sylph—she must have loved dancing. Like all perfectly pure beings, Edel spread that purity about her." He adds: "As lively and gay as anyone could be at that age, how could one suspect that this young girl, apparently so normal, was possessed of spiritual resources so great that from them was about to issue a life of heroism and holiness?"

Edel was fond of golf, too, and thoroughly at home on the links. But her personal tastes were always sacrificed when thrown into contest with her generosity. Golf became a victim of her passion for sacrifice. And so did music, for which she had a special love. She had a deep musical sense and gave great joy by her playing, but here, too, she immolated a very real talent on the altar of stern duty. The amusement that survived the longest was tennis; it was her favourite game. She belonged to a Club at Clarinda Park, Dun Laoghaire, and was a popular figure there and much sought after as a partner.

But alas, the hours of recreation were parsimoniously measured. She was too anxious to be helpful at home, and especially to her mother, for her to let slip any opportunity of giving a hand and lightening the household labours. The fact that she was the eldest seemed to have implanted in her a semi-maternal responsibility for the younger ones.

Her untiring devotion was not confined to the family circle. She had the gift of getting around and of making herself useful everywhere. She belonged to the Loreto Social Club, the meetings of which took place in North Great George's Street, and she took a leading part in its activities. From its foundation she was a member of the committee and she devoted herself wholeheartedly to the training and recreation of the club girls. While one of her friends took charge of a drill class, she was happy to play the piano for it. She helped in the composing of little plays and operettas, incidentally exercising her keen sense of humour. Some of these were performed in the A.O.H. Hall in Parnell Square. Though she occasionally consented to go in for private theatricals, they did not attract her. That type of recreation, nearly always superficial and sketchy, appeared to her to be senseless. She seemed instinctively to shrink from it.

"Like you," she writes to P.L., "I do not care for theatres and

revues; they always seem so hopelessly empty and vague. When sometimes I have to go, I am restless all the time. I cannot see what people can find enjoyable and fascinating there."

These words, written at the age of twenty, are not misanthropic. On the contrary, Edel was full of life and youth and joy. But her generous soul was already open to the love of God and in tune with another world.

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The framework of her life did not lend itself much to change of scene or to travel; holidays were too few to enable her to go far afield. Once, however, she made an exception in favour of her old Convent at Upton. Three years had elapsed since she had left there. She was invited to spend the week-end with her former companions. She accepted joyfully and started off. Here is her amusing account of the journey:—

"To begin at the beginning, I left Dublin on Friday night. The boat was packed and I had to share a cabin with a terribly loquacious woman. She talked and talked and talked, and when I did get to sleep, she woke me up again at about 5 a.m. to tell me she was thinking how lonely her little white cat must be without her! This beautiful creature she feeds on fish always and, as a result, it has a beautiful silken coat! You can imagine how nice it was to hear these interesting details at such an hour! The funny part was that she mentioned only casually that she had left her little boy at school while she was on this fourteen-day holiday. All the time it was the cat she was fretting about for fear it would be lonely. She ended up by asking me to come and see her and the cat, when she went home."

The torment came to an end: the ship entered the port. Edel made her way to Upton. The letter continues, giving the impressions made on her by this return to the past:—

"I cannot tell you properly how pleased I was. I felt a bit shy at first, but after meeting Rev. Mother, who gave me a most cordial welcome, I recovered. All the nuns welcomed me with open arms and could not do enough for me. Fancy, after three years they were as pleased to see me as if I had only just left. Many of the girls I had known were there. Some even of my class mates were still at school studying for their degrees, while those who were juniors in my time are now in top forms. They were so friendly and pleasant, I began to feel I was back as a pupil once again. . . . It is funny what a change these years make. Some of the girls had altered a great deal; one or

two had acquired a rather bored expression, and talked and looked at everything as if it wearied them and they wanted to get away. They seemed only half alive. I noticed that these were mostly the ones that had nothing much to do with their time at home. Some of the old girls were very interesting, when they told of their various occupations; they were all far brighter and seemed happier and more contented than the 'ladies of leisure'."

She invites her correspondent to go and visit Upton some day as a tourist—but she has no illusions about his probable reactions. "I know," she writes, "that most men fight shy of convents. My father could never be induced to go near one of them on any pretext whatsoever! Mother is almost as bad. When she enters one she gets tongue-tied and it is impossible to extract a word." She refers then to a much-loved mistress. "She is a fine character and her personality is very attractive. The girls are very fond of her and respect her, and will do anything for her. Since she came, they have become more united and loyal. For everything they are left absolutely on their honour, and for any breach of rule they commit, they themselves are in honour bound to report on themselves. Before that, a nun was in charge to see that silence was kept, but now one of the head girls is just told publicly to see that everything is in order, and perfect quiet is maintained. It is surprising how effective this is, and what a good training it is for the girls. They have all a high sense of honour, and are far better and stronger in character than when always watched and left without responsibility."

Edel then confronts the past and the present: "Coming back to the comparative quiet and rest of school was like finding an oasis in the desert. It made me forget all the turmoil of everyday life. Everything outside, the cares and petty worries, all faded away before the placid, well-ordered hours. It was like getting an anæsthetic; it was pleasant to forget the present and to imagine oneself as living once again in the past."

This last sentence, which might suggest that she longed for Upton, must not lead us into error. Edel was too much of a realist, too mature already, to make a pilgrimage back to her school days in that spirit. Her heart was not in Upton; it was among her own people who needed her, and her letter avows that in a final statement which reveals the warmth of her affection for her family: "It will be good to get back to the people whom I love." In that phrase we truly see the girl who confessed one day to a friend that she used to weep bitter tears each time she went back to school after the holidays. But never while the family was looking on. Not for worlds would she have let them suspect her weakness. We shall have occasion again to

notice this distinctive courage, which in her went hand in hand with a deep tenderness. To understand her, we must always remember her exquisite sensitiveness which, though hidden, was ever awake. By dint of self control and gaiety she sometimes misled the casual observer.

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Her delicacy of soul showed itself by another characteristic, well known in her own family as well as among her friends: her love of animals. The story of the lady with the satin-coated cat must not mislead us. Edel was of the family of St. Francis, who preached to the birds and the fishes and treated the wolf of Gubbio with respect. A story shows her compassionate and practical love, as well as her courage. One day a very miserable-looking little cat wandered into the office where Edel worked. Plainly it was a stray, and Edel decided to take it home to Monkstown. It was a Thursday and she was going to a meeting. She stayed in town after office hours; went to her meeting, which ended late, and set off alone through the empty and unsavoury streets near the quays to her office in Tara Street. She groped her way in in the dark, found the cat, and carried it off. Her friends have never forgotten this act of kindness, and her mother bestowed on the little cat from Tara Street a special affection, of which they still speak in the family.

Edel was very much one with her family and loved each member of it devotedly. The Quinn household was a very united one, but all were left much at liberty. They teased her freely about her constant errands and the many embarrassing situations she got into, but they did not interfere with her, and privately they admired her. Her influence went on increasing, and her advice, as we have said, was decisive at the important junctures of their lives. She went on her own way, but at the least sign her personal likings were subordinated, and she was at the service of others.

One day she went home on the eve of a national holiday, full of joy at the prospect of a few moments of relaxation after a particularly wearing day. A hitch occurred; we see her immediate reaction in a letter to P.L.

"When I got home, Mum mentioned that the kiddies were dying to see the illuminations in town. I knew that if I did not take them to-night, they would not see them at all. So I said I would bring them. We departed on the 7.15 train for a promenade of Dublin. By the time we had examined the Grafton Street side of the town and then proceeded with the throngs to O'Connell Street, it was pretty

late. But there was a boat made up to look like a dragon sailing up and down the Liffey, so, of course, it was necessary to queue up for that. With no little trouble I got my young charges home on the 10 o'clock train. After chatting for a while, the family have all gone to bed, and here am I, at 11.30 p.m., seated in an armchair before the 'relics' of the fire, an attaché case on my knee, writing to you in peace and ease."

Such continual and ready self-forgetfulness can only spring from true love. To be empty of self one must be full of something else. We have suggested before that the soul of Edel was filled from a fountain head that never runs dry: the Eucharist. "There is always a terrible void in a day when Mass and Communion are missed," she wrote at this time. Which—from her—was not an empty phrase.

On week days she generally heard 7 o'clock Mass at St. Michael's, Dun Laoghaire, or at Blackrock, and she did not go home to breakfast. Sometimes she put an apple in her pocket, but her family never were quite clear as to when and where Edel had her meals. It seemed to be the least of her concerns. All the tests that enable one to check her comings and goings indicate that she gladly sacrificed her lunch hour to visits of charity, to bringing some sinner to Confession, to instructing a convert. Very late at night she would arrive home, often when everyone was in bed, so that she could mortify herself in this way unchecked and to her heart's content.

During the week she was completely absorbed by her many activities and was never to be found.

Sundays, on the other hand, were given to God by way of prayer and devotion. Her Sunday table of engagements needs no commentary. Usually she heard the 7 and 8 o'clock Masses, then returning home. It was the only day when the family saw her for breakfast. After this meal, she went back to the Church for the 10, 11, 11.30 and 12 o'clock Masses. She admits this in a letter: "On Sundays we go to Monkstown. Then after breakfast I generally go into town to Clarendon Street Carmelite Church; it is very peaceful, and at the late Masses there is a good choir."

It is not hard to establish the fact that her whole Sunday morning was spent in the Church. "I know," says Mona McCarthy, "that she was always there before me and after me. Speaking one day of the sermon, Edel said: 'After you have heard it three or four times, showing that she had assisted at several Masses.'"

That was not all. In the afternoon she went to 4 o'clock Benediction and, if nothing prevented her, she used to manage a trip into town for a 7 o'clock Benediction.

Such was her way of "keeping holy the Lord's Day". For her it

was not a meaningless expression. On that day she lived on Him and for Him in a total surrender. Sunday was one long uninterrupted Eucharistic communion. Each Mass was such a living reality to her that she could hardly tear herself away from it. Under the Sacramental veils her faith revealed to her the mystery of Calvary, and taught her to remain like Mary and St. John at the foot of the Cross. Her understanding of the Mass went beyond the average, and many of the books that she read and meditated upon at this time of her life were devoted to that subject. She read and reread *The Meaning of the Mass* by Father John Kearney, C.S.Sp. She loved to make presents of the books which she particularly liked. One of her friends received Father Kearney's book from her with the significant inscription "A book to follow the Hound of Heaven". This linking in her mind of a book of spiritual teaching with the famous poem of Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven*, shows how deeply she loved them both and based her own spiritual life on them. It is not astonishing that Edel should have loved that poet of God's tremendous Love. She felt herself captured, possessed, by that Love which was her whole life. She knew herself for a creature deeply loved; never did she forget that she owed all to the Blood shed for her in sacrifice.

She gave or lent other books too, such as the works of Mother Loyola, which echo the same Eucharistic note. Edel was a simple soul, and like all simple souls she went straight to the heart of things. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God! Edel saw God under the appearances of bread and wine. That sufficed for her. She had found "the better part", a foretaste of Heaven. What a contrast with her life in Tara Street! Her contemplative soul breathed freely. She felt so keenly the need for recollection and prayer! "More than anything," she wrote once, "I believe in the power of prayer"—a phrase which should never be lost sight of, for it supplies the key to her life. It points to the animating principle of a life which was to be full of activity. To see in Edel apostolate, and not at the same time contemplation, would be to misunderstand her whole nature.

Once, when visiting a school, she remarked on the over-laden programme of the nuns and commented with surprise and in detail on the small part there allotted to actual prayer. It seemed to her paradoxical. "Of course," she writes, "their work is prayer, but would you not think it very unsatisfactory for a nun to have so little time to devote really and uninterruptedly to God?"

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This hunger for prayer, for recollection, for the Eucharist, Edel did not show outwardly. She had, like most of her countrymen, a marked reserve about her intimate religious feelings. She belonged to a race which believes more in deeds than in words, and which is prone to make fun of exaggeratedly pious talk. The Irishman stops in the street to make the sign of the cross and say the Angelus; but he does not speak easily of his interior life, and, above all, he will not do it for the purpose of being edifying. We find very few "edifying" phrases in the voluminous correspondence of Edel. She preaches to her friends in her own lively and direct manner, rather by example than by precept. But she does not hesitate to speak of God to any soul in trouble. She was more at home in talk about rescue work than in pious conversations. She lifted the curtain on her deep interior life only in the very strictest intimacy, and then only up to a certain point. Therefore, every word she lets drop about herself is most precious as affording a fleeting glimpse of a vast and hardly known world. We must seize on those words as we would catch a bird in full flight. One day a friend was speaking to her of the generosity required in God's service.

"I do not see how we can put limits to self-sacrifice," said the friend." "No," replied Edel, "there can be no limit."

That answer issued spontaneously, as a self-evident truth. Her whole soul is expressed in that brief rejoinder. She could not conceive of half-measures; of that her life is a dazzling demonstration. She did not venture to give spiritual advice; in her own eyes she was weakness itself: "I assure you honestly," she confessed to P.L., "that I am less than a beginner in the spiritual life. It seems to me to be an unending struggle to rise; one gets no rest."

Yet she desired intensely to lead others on to apostolic work. To convince them, she would put forward concise and logical arguments. Even if she met with a refusal, she would not desist until she had secured at least the promise to pray to Our Lady of Good Counsel for help to understand the value of a soul to be saved.

Reserved about her spiritual life, Edel was equally so about everything that concerned her personally. All her friends noticed this: one had to be very insistent to get her to speak of her own affairs. Instinctively she gave herself wholly to others and espoused their interests. She was so naturally "all things to all men" that they let her do as she liked, not trying to row against the stream by asking for her confidence. Of her very nature, she shared the cares and troubles of others and made them hers. Her sympathy was never merely conventional. She had the most rare gift of listening to

another's confidences, and those were given the more freely because one sensed her overflowing sympathy. She practised wonderfully "that pure attention to another's existence" which, according to Lavelle, is the definition of charity. She treated each soul as if it were the only one, and as if her own time was due to it by right.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT CHOICE

"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come, follow me."

MATT. XIX, 21.

*"I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and s'ed hail
And a few lilies blow.*

*"And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea."*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J.

EDEL was twenty. Life lay before her. She was compelled by home conditions to take a position that satisfied neither her aspirations nor her tastes. She accepted it as a duty, "smiling bravely all the same". She had been for some months a typist in the "Chagny Tile Works", and seemed destined to continue there until her brother and sisters should have grown up.

Suddenly she found herself at a cross-roads. Her young French employer, who had learnt to think more and more highly of his casually-engaged but valuable secretary, felt himself much attracted by her. In recalling for us the memory of his first contact with her, he added: "She was always smiling, and Edel Quinn's smile was something to remember; it was something bright and frank, wholly attentive and understanding; it shed light around her. Unconsciously, I must have grown used to that smile."

At every stage of her life, that smile is recalled; it opened all hearts and won the most hopeless battles. In it Edel gave her soul as a pure gift. "Silver and gold I have none," said St. Peter to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, "but what I have I give thee." Edel might have echoed these words; her smile was a reflection of the love of God for men, a ray of light from the other world. She gave it un-sparingly to all, because it belonged to God alone. But the hour had come when a choice must be made and she must reveal her secret.

We shall let the young Frenchman tell his story: "So the summer of 1927 came around, without my having thought seriously of this young girl who attracted me but no more. Business was growing rather slack and I had been six years in Dublin. London tempted me, and I decided to leave Ireland. Before my departure, I wanted to tramp across Kerry, from Killarney to the coast. So one night I reached the hotel at Parknasilla. Having walked a good twenty miles, and being too late to get a meal, I went straight to bed. The first thought that occurred to me on awakening was that I was in love with Edel Quinn, and that I would marry her. I had to ask myself at first if this new feeling was the result of a dream. But in the course of the days and weeks that followed, I became convinced that it was a deep-seated irresistible sentiment."

The young man returned to France, after having transferred his business to a French firm, which appointed Edel Quinn as manager. The concluding of this matter obliged him to return for a short stay to Dublin. It would be a perfect opportunity, he thought, not only to complete his business arrangements, but also to open his heart to Edel.

It did not take him long to settle his affairs. The second part of the programme remained to be carried out. It seemed quite simple. He invited Edel to lunch in a restaurant and resolutely, manfully, told her of his love. Let us hear his account of the scene: "To my amazement," he writes, "for I had thought of everything but that, her face grew rigid while I was speaking, as if she was in pain. Then she told me she could not return my feeling, that she was no longer free, having promised herself to God."

The shock was a grievous one. Edel, very much moved, explained that she had decided to become a Poor Clare in Belfast, and to live a life of prayer and penance. She was only waiting for the moment when her family could spare her, and that moment was at hand. All this had been determined in her heart irrevocably for a long time. She begged him to understand and to forgive her refusal. The young man concludes his story in these words: "And on the night boat that brought me back to Liverpool a few days later, the few passengers sitting late in the saloon saw a young man, his head bowed between his hands, giving tearful rein to his sorrow."

Edel realised that she had inflicted a cruel blow where least she wanted to do it. Her refusal might imperil the religious development of the young man who, under her influence, had returned to the Sacraments. Since he was leaving Ireland without hope of return, she regarded it as a duty not to break off corresponding with him.

He did not misunderstand her. "Edel," he writes, "had pity on

me, and it was on her pity that I lived for the weeks, months and years that followed, during all of which she replied punctually, letter for letter, page for page, to all that I wrote her from the different countries in which I lived successively for the earning of my livelihood."

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That correspondence—some fifty letters—opens many vistas for us, not on her intimate thoughts which she did not betray, but on her disposition, her outlook, her tastes, her reading. It shows us her unobtrusively apostolic spirit and her prudence. At first sight, a correspondence starting immediately after an irrevocable refusal may seem somewhat risky. In actual fact it was a perfectly natural, spontaneous, open-hearted effusion. There was not a word that did not strike the right note, not a sentence that might revive shattered hopes. It was not possible to misunderstand her; she spoke with unmistakable precision when once her correspondent let her see that still he hoped against hope.

"You see, Pierre," she writes, "I have not changed my views, and if it is God's will, I do not believe I ever shall. I feel absolutely certain that I am doing what God wants of me. This sounds presumptuous, I know, when one considers the calling. But the call to the Religious Life is a grace from God, and when one receives it, there is no mistaking it. One may be for years without the slightest inclination for such a life, and even feel dislike for it. And yet, when one gets the call, even though one fights against it and tries to put away the thought, still it persists and one sees quite clearly what is God's Will. To act otherwise would be to do what one did not believe to be right, and to reject God's grace. I know this is difficult to understand, but perhaps one day God may be pleased to enlighten you. It is very, very difficult to explain my reason, and I would not attempt the task but that I would like you to see my point of view. So please forgive all the failings of this letter; it is even harder to write an explanation than to try to give it verbally."

Then ceasing to speak of herself, she says: "I feel that you could do great things for God and that He has work for you to do. It is not always easy to see clearly what God's Will is, but in His good time you will know what He wants of you, and I have no doubt that you will say 'Fiat voluntas tua', no matter what it costs you. I believe that when we unite our sufferings with His and offer them up for His Glory, those sufferings become sweet and bring us very close to

Him, and will be a source of real happiness. Do you not feel, Pierre, that we are in His hands, and that whatever comes to us is for the best? So let us unite our wills with His Divine Will, and entrust the future to Him."

Such a letter allows of no misconstruction. Edel did not return to the subject. She was able to unite the firmness of her refusal to an ease and a freedom that belong to the gift of wisdom. From first to last, all is crystal clear. Most of the letters are very matter of fact, and refer only to business matters. Some appear like letters of a disciple to a master. Now and again the positions are reversed, when Edel speaks of the spiritual life and invites her correspondent to rise to higher things. There is nothing stilted, no preaching, but a freshness due to the natural tone of the writer, to her liveliness, to her youth also. For Edel was not twenty when this correspondence began. She was a child, amazingly mature for her age, but feeling herself in the presence of a man much more cultured than herself. One divines in her a wish to learn, an attitude of respect, of admiration. She is aware that her correspondent is in love with her and she wishes to make use of the fact as an instrument of conquest, an invitation to a holier life. She has no thought of herself. In spite of her obvious religious superiority, she feels herself to be his inferior.

"I have asked Our Lady to look after you and to do what is best for you," she writes, "so you are in good hands. I know She will obtain something good for you, and far better than what you now want. Please do not say you are not worthy, Pierre; it is not true; you are far above me in every way. God knows that, and it is only His merciful love that could call me to serve Him in religion, seeing what I am. Please pray for me that I may become a little less unworthy of Him."

In writing these words, Edel is not straining after humility. Never does one surprise in her a secret self-esteem. She truly sees herself to be nothingness, sin, wretchedness. But she believes that God fills a soul which is empty of itself and she expects all from Him. Since love is blind and God is love, must He not be blind to our sinfulness and fill us with merit out of pure goodness?

Edel never felt that she had done enough for God or deserved anything but His Divine pity. But she was joyfully willing that God should do all for her and supply for all her weaknesses.

This kind of language seems to us exaggerated; we find it hard to understand such "excesses". For we have not vision penetrating enough to see ourselves as we are. Edel felt deeply the duty of being entirely logical with her faith and her ideals.

"An idealist who does not try to put his ideals into practice,"

she writes, "is not worth much. I agree with you that the difference between our acts and our ideals is the most distressing thing imaginable."

She had a horror of fluttering around from one thing to another, taking little sips at each. As she said: "It was not for fun that God loved us." Determined, resolute, deeply serious herself, she wished that her correspondent also should give to God a wholehearted service.

"I must relieve the fear that you express about your inability to attain true holiness," she replied to him one day, "and I speak in all sincerity and humility. Whatever you have undertaken either by way of work or recreation, you have put your heart into it and you have done your utmost to get the maximum result."

Edel had no use for bargaining or half-measures. She made her life a triumph of generosity. There was no hiatus between her faith and her life. Everything was quickened from within; the harmony between grace and nature was so perfect that one perceives no joining.

She calls her correspondent's attention to this integral Christian spirit that she has observed in a poor woman: "What you say about learning from the poor reminds me to ask if you ever spoke to the woman who used to do the office at Eden Quay. She had what one would call a really hard life, but by listening to her views on things one learned a great deal about the putting of one's faith into practice."

Under her influence, as we have said, her correspondent had returned to the practice of the Faith. Edel felt the need of encouraging him and pressed him to impart to her his impressions of religion.

"I like hearing your opinion on the different practices of the Church and on the Mass, etc., as you, to whom these things are more or less new, see a beauty and a wonder and a fresh aspect, which we, who are apt to take too much for granted, miss. So please let me know what particularly appeals to you and what strikes you most. I should like to share your discoveries."

She realised very vividly the freshness and novelty of the Faith in this convert who came to it with an open soul:

"It is easy enough to be a Catholic, if one has been in contact with the Catholic Faith, and has been brought up in Catholic surroundings. One would be very unresponsive if some little bit of religion did not penetrate; in fact it would be almost an impossibility to escape, no matter how destitute of goodwill. It is another story altogether, when one who has not known the Faith suddenly receives that surpassing grace. It is like an awakening; everything is new. The harder the fight, the more one appreciates and values the victory, is it not so?"

These extracts from her correspondence with P.L. are the most characteristic that we have. Generally, the subject matter is less personal and does not produce those reflections, which are like deep breakers coming from her innermost soul. Their tone is lively, easy, casual. Besides business items, there are rapid sketches of men and things, impressions, psychological remarks, or simply the film of every-day life. These letters are precious, nevertheless, because they show us an unsuspected Edel. They give us a glimpse of a certain gift of quick and delicate perception in human affairs that she had little opportunity of exercising in later times, and which lay at rest, as if buried.

One day she sent him a birthday present of a necktie. It was a difficult thing to choose, and she was in torment over it.

"I am glad you like the tie," she writes. "I was on pins and needles trying to choose it, because nobody can choose a tie for a man except that man himself! It was the red stripes that gave me spasms. I was afraid they would displease your majesty's taste. In fact, if I had not immediately posted it, you would never have got it, as I know my courage would have failed in the end. She who hesitates is lost. I spent from one until two choosing it, and the girl was nearly frantic at the end."

Edel had excellent powers of observation and, when needs be, could express very personal reactions. Here are her remarks on the reproduction of a painting: "The old lady with the blue eyes."

"I was glad to see that the picture of the old lady was the one you had for a day or so at Eden Quay. I remember well the piercing blue of the eyes and their expressiveness. Yes, I think an old person with a pleasant, youthful face is very fine to see. Don't you love studying people's eyes? Some people look almost insignificant if you glance at them casually; yet when you see their eyes, you cannot forget them. It is not that their eyes are beautiful in size or colour, it is just the expression.

"There is a girl I often see on the train; she in appearance is very ordinary and she dresses very ordinarily, too. Yet you could not forget her, because of the distinction of her eyes; they are not wonderfully beautiful, it is just the lovely expression they have."

We find her another time discussing art. Her correspondent had sent her a postcard representing a work of art in the Tate Gallery in London.

"Thanks for the card showing a statue by Epstein," she writes. "It is a wonderful gift to be able to get such expression into metal. One can almost feel the mental agony expressed. One would say the person had reached a stage of stoical endurance, and yet one feels

that, even if the anguish were greater, some interior strength would bring her through. If the postcard copy shows that much, the original must be fascinating. Is it not extraordinary that a statue should enthral you so! One is drawn back and back again, to try and read and pierce to the depths the expressions which the artist has portrayed. It is like the search for some clue that will put you on the right track."

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When Edel received the proposal of marriage, her answer came instantaneously: she belonged to God alone. She had made her choice long before; never had she had the least hesitation over the divine call. The selection of the religious order was her only problem. Here again, her passion for the absolute was her guide; she wanted the hardest life, the most entire sacrifice, the most complete union with God. Therefore, her choice had fallen on a contemplative order supremely austere, that of the Poor Clares.

Such vocations cause astonishment. In our day more than ever, people are tempted to say: why this waste? Ad quid perditio haec? They have forgotten that the question was first asked by Judas. They do not know that man was created first of all for God and His glory. They see no relation between the glory of God and the business of this world. How could they understand the folly of choosing unreservedly the one thing necessary?

How could they understand a St. Francis of Assisi, flinging a purse of money on the dung heap, or dismounting from his horse to embrace the leper whom he met on the road?

Yet, in each generation, there are souls that hear a like call and obey it.

When Francis of Assisi came to preach in St. George's Church in the Lent of 1212, there was among his audience a young girl of fifteen, of noble birth, named Clare. Hearing the "Poverello" speak so wonderfully of contempt for the world and of penance, of voluntary poverty, of the longing for heaven, of the nakedness and the shame and the sacred sufferings of our Crucified Lord"—so tell the Fioretti—she was dazzled, as if by the discovery of a new world. She came to Francis; they were made to understand one another. "Providence," says Father Perreyve, "has created certain souls with certain resemblances, so that when they meet they are obliged to look at one another, to recognise one another, to love one another." So it was with St. Francis and St. Clare. In the night of Palm Sunday,

she secretly left her father's house and went to the chapel of the Portiuncula. Francis, who awaited her surrounded by his first companions, cut off her hair. She changed her dress of brocatelle for one of coarse serge: the Franciscan Second Order was born. Clare lived this challenge to nature without weakening. Prayer, penance, poverty—this was her life. God repaid her with magnificent generosity by giving her in this life a foretaste of the bliss of heaven, that perfect joy promised by St. Francis to Fra Leone, if he would pay the price.

And Clare died, murmuring the glorious thanksgiving: "Oh, my God, blessed be Thou for having caused me to be born."

For seven centuries the example of St. Clare has raised up imitators. Thirsting for poverty as others thirst for gold, the Poor Clares seek to show the world that one can live happily by putting one's whole trust in God and taking the beatitudes literally.

Shut up in their white-washed convents, bound to perpetual fasting and abstinence, sleeping fully dressed on bare boards, spending part of the night singing the Divine Office, they enjoy even here below the Glory of God. Citadels of poverty and prayer, these convents are "the high places" of the Church which attract grace and make fruitful the visible apostolate.

Won by that life of total self-oblation, Edel had chosen to continue for her part the great Franciscan adventure, the glorious heavenly wager. In order to give up still more, she had selected the Poor Clare convent in Belfast.¹

In the heart of that city, hostile to the Faith of her fathers, she would be the grain of wheat which dies in the earth in order to bring the hour of the harvest. She had now but to await the moment.

Already she was preparing for it by the long hours of recollection on Sunday. She blessed Heaven for her too rare moments of solitude and silence.

"Do you not get tired," she wrote one day, "when you hear a lot of people talking like that, each one trying to impose his own point of view? It often makes me wonder how they are satisfied to go on like that day in, day out. The hermit life has decided attractions! Is it not strange how difficult it is to get absolute peace and quiet?"

Edel prepared herself also for her approaching entrance into the convent by beginning to learn Latin. She explains this to P.L.:

"You see, the Order which I hope to enter is a contemplative one, and the Divine Office, which is in Latin, is recited during different hours of the day and night. The Mother Abbess asked me if I had

¹ Belfast is, as everyone knows, the capital of Ulster and the centre of Northern Ireland. The Protestants are in the great majority in that city.

ever learnt Latin. I said I had done some at school, but that my knowledge was not good." Her correspondent offered to help her in this study; she replied: "I am afraid you will have to give up the idea of doing Latin with me because, as I mentioned, I am beginning practically at the beginning, and that would be boring in the extreme for you, who probably have a decent knowledge of it."

At a time when the liturgical movement had not fully developed, Edel felt instinctively the need to keep very close to our liturgical sources for the sustenance of her spiritual life. She wrote of books and of liturgy to P.L.

"I should think that if you start strolling round Burns & Oates's you will become a good customer. It is difficult to resist buying books, I find. St. John of the Cross has written some very fine ones. I believe *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night of the Soul* are his best. You were wise to invest in a missal. Yours must be a good one, if it gives all the explanations of the liturgy of each Mass. As a rule, a missal does not contain this addendum, which makes all the difference. The study of the liturgy has become very widespread in the last couple of years. Formerly it was much neglected. That opens up a wide field of study."

It is a curious thing that many of Edel's letters to P.L. conclude with her signature, followed by the initials H.B.S., which stand for "Handmaid of the Blessed Sacrament". This is the name of a Eucharistic League. Later these initials disappear. Why did she write these under her name? She has not given us any explanation. Perhaps they were intended as a quiet reminder to him of her religious vocation? In any case, the tone of her letters, as we have said, left no room for doubt or for the smallest hope that she might reconsider her decision. Her correspondent realised this. He continued, nevertheless, for some years to write to her, without ever referring to his vanished dream. At long intervals, a postcard from some foreign country continued the conversation. Then silence descended.

But for these letters which escaped destruction, we could not have caught glimpses of those recesses of her nature, those human vibrations that make us know her better. They show how human Edel was, while at the same time they picture her as "a stranger on the earth and a sojourner".

At the moment when she was turning away from the world, one perceives how close she is to mankind. Though she was giving up the joys of earth, she knew their value. Her higher vocation came not from contempt but from preference. Diligis me plus his? "Lovest thou me more than these?" was the Master's question.

CHAPTER IV

EDEL MEETS THE LEGION OF MARY

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?"

CANTICLE OF CANTICLES.

EDEL QUINN'S life was made up of unobserved labour and hidden prayer. Like so many others, she went to her work every morning, sat down before her typewriter, typed letters and estimates, called to the bank on matters of importance, kept record of the comings-in and goings-out of consignments of building materials. There was nothing in all that to call attention to her; in any case her wish was to pass unnoticed. The secret of her interior life was confided to no one and, except for the brightness of a luminous smile, a beauty uncommon but elusive, and an untiringly helpful spirit, she just seemed one business girl among a thousand others. She lived the same monotonous and hurried existence as her companions, caught up in the machinery of modern life, imprisoned between the morning and evening train or bus journeys, her unvarying day's work ruled by the clock. Though her responsibility had increased since the firm had changed hands and the young Frenchman had left Dublin, the evident confidence did not modify in any way her ordinary daily scheme. Something, however, was about to revolutionise that existence, to shake it to its foundations, and to become the dominant factor in her life.

Something was about to make of this almost unknown business girl a heroine of the missionary apostolate.

That something was the Legion of Mary.

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The apostolic movement, of which Edel was to become one of the finest glories, had recently come into being in Dublin, actually only a few years before the Quinn family settled in the capital. Its beginnings had been simple and unobtrusive. On the 7th September, 1921, the eve of Our Lady's Nativity, a small group of people had met

together in a St. Vincent de Paul work centre at Myra House, Francis Street. They were clustered round a table, on which was set a statue of Our Lady, the hands of which were held out to them in a gesture of welcome. They had met to consider together how best they could work for God's Kingdom. Mary seemed to be awaiting their service. She was enthroned among them, encircled with flowers and candles. They went on their knees and, after an invocation to the Holy Ghost, the Rosary was recited. The group included a priest, Father Toher, a civil servant from the Ministry of Finance, and fifteen women, almost all of them working in offices or shops, people of small means, having little leisure, and coming to this meeting after a hard day's work. They wished to devote themselves to a directly spiritual apostolate, one that would be complementary to the work of the Vincent de Paul Conferences. Most of them were poor and had nothing to give save the best that was in them, their faith and their love for souls. They saw that something should be done, but brought to the task only an indefinite goodwill. Our Lady breathed into them a common spirit. She did it through a concourse of circumstances and coincidences.

Some time before the evening of that meeting, the civil servant (who was the only layman in this feminine group) had mentioned in a talk the discovery which he had made of St. Louis Marie de Montfort's *Treatise of the True Devotion*. He confessed that he had found it somewhat hard to read; had laid it aside half a dozen times, so much did the style and the "Marian excess" of the book jar. But finally he had come to the end of his study of it, and a world had opened before his eyes. Frank Duff—for it was he—had discovered for himself the doctrine of Mary's Universal Mediation. It was at the time when His Holiness Benedict XV had just granted to Cardinal Mercier the Mass in honour of Mary Mediatrix of all Graces. Frank Duff believed that that doctrine was a source of life and, being a man of action, resolved to draw it out to its logical apostolic conclusions. They had met again to hear him once more and to follow him. "A real devotion to the Blessed Virgin," he said, "cannot be a self-centred devotion, passive, inert, without effect on the life of our neighbour. To love is to act. If devotion to Mary does not oblige us to work for her, to devote ourselves without stint, to be heroic, I cannot think it to be sincere. If we love Mary, we must share her anxiety for souls and we must go to them."

So spoke Frank Duff on that evening of September 7th. The priest who was present at the meeting spoke in his turn. His contribution was a moving address on the doctrine of the Mystical Body, which must not only be accepted as a doctrine but be practised also.

The little group listened eagerly and then offered themselves to Our Lady so that through them she might exercise her mediation, and that thereby they would live the doctrine of the Mystical Body down to its ultimate consequences.

At that initial meeting it was agreed that they would go in pairs to visit the Union Hospital of Dublin and give spiritual help to the patients. The following week they would meet again at Myra House to report on the work done and to have other tasks appointed. Those things arranged, the wards to be visited were divided among them. All went well till they had to allocate the cancer ward. Everyone claimed the privilege of visiting that ward; it was the only matter in dispute and it was settled by authority.

The Legion of Mary had come into existence. No one suspected that this organisation was going to spread over the whole world. The initiator himself denies that the first inspiration was his: he did but "back the play" of Divine Providence.

Frank Duff is a man of doctrine and of action. He never dissociates these two forces. His motto might be the prayer of St. Thomas More: "The things I pray for, dear Lord, give me the grace to labour for."

He believes that the world can be converted. For that, he says, every Catholic must become a normal Catholic, that is, an apostle. He relies on the little ones and the humble to accomplish that super-human task; they are resourceful and faithful; they know how to work hard and to persevere; they do not talk at random and they act efficaciously. But they must be organised. One man doing apostolic work by himself is, he says, an oddity or a saint; he discourages the rest and no one follows him. A whole group doing apostolic work offers to all, even to those most devoid of gifts, an accessible ideal, one open to all.

Frank Duff affirms all this quietly, but one feels that all the same he would pursue the task alone, in the face of the whole world—alone, but with Mary. For the key to all success, he reiterates, is union with Mary. It was by her that Christ was born, and it is by her He will continue to be born. All that is needed it to have faith and the courage to walk upon the waters.

The story of the Legion of Mary is no more than the application of these principles, simple and revolutionary like the Gospel itself.

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The first branch, called "Our Lady of Mercy", was soon fol-

lowed by a second, "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart". That group was to take in hand a hostel which would play an important part in the life of Edel Quinn: Sancta Maria.

To tell the origin of that special work is to place us at once at the heart of the Legion of Mary.

It was July, 1922, a few months after the foundation of the Legion.

In the parish of Francis Street a mission was being preached.

There was in the neighbourhood a lodging-house for street girls, No. 25 Blank Street. One of the priests of the parish, Father Creedon, went to the house with one of the missionaries. The thirty-one lodgers, taken aback at first, then jeering, gathered in the kitchen to listen to the two priests. Soon the jeering stopped, while some were found in tears. When they came away, the priests, astounded at the sincerity of their welcome and of the contrition aroused, discussed the best way of lifting these girls out of the slime. Someone suggested: invite them to make an enclosed retreat. It seemed a mad idea. They held a council. It is quite impossible, said those consulted, and they gave many reasons. One was that the Legion could not expose itself to failure and ridicule. But the Legionary spirit prevailed. A soul to be saved was worth any risk. So the views of the "wise" and the "prudent" were disregarded. There remained to find a convent which would take in the hypothetical retreatants. This meant new mountains to be moved; for such a retreat was unheard of. In the end, Mother Angela, Superior of the Sisters of Charity at Baldoyle, agreed to give them the use of several classrooms for the purpose. But even she feared the worst. In the meantime the Legionaries were too busy buying furniture to provide for their guests to be able to think of the eventual result. Five Legionaries were commissioned to go to No. 25 Blank Street, and issue the incredible invitation. They went and managed to get in, though not without some trouble. Amazement, suspicion, reserve—such was their reception. By dint of friendly obstinacy, the group succeeded in going the round of all the rooms. In each one they besought their listeners, allayed their suspicions, calmed their troubled spirits.

This Way of the Cross, of many stations, lasted for five hours. Sometimes all seemed lost; then again the discussions were resumed. Finally, promises were given. But what would be their value on the morrow? That remained to be seen. In any case, a meeting place had been arranged: a bus would await the retreatants at Myra House the next day at 11.30. The Legionaries felt that they must strike while the iron was hot so that the devil would have no leisure to come back and prow around.

The next day at 11.30, they went to Myra House with anxious hearts.

There were 23 retreatants waiting—23 out of 31—faithful to their promise. A friendly crowd gathered round them and wished them a safe journey. When they were sure that no more latecomers would arrive, Frank Duff got in beside the driver; Miss Plunkett, Miss Scratton and Mrs. Davis mingled with the "guests". The bus set off in the direction of the Quays. A stop is made at the Franciscan Church to make inquiries. For they did not yet know if Father Philip, to whom they had appealed at the last minute, had received the permission of his superiors to give the retreat. The halt was nearly fatal. Across the Liffey, a grim sequel of the recent civil war was being enacted. The shaky walls of the Four Courts, Ireland's Central Courts of Justice, were being pulled down. Armed soldiers were keeping the inquisitive at a distance. This was enough to rouse the suspicions of our travellers; was not this a police trap, and were they going to be arrested? A minute more and panic would have reigned. Happily, the friary door opened. Frank Duff reappeared with Father Philip, who signalled that all was well and that he would follow shortly. They breathed again. The bus crossed O'Connell Bridge and skirted the Bay in the direction of Baldoyle. The girls were singing like schoolgirls on a holiday.

The retreat began. No one ran away, in spite of a few alarms and various heart-shaking scenes. Mother Angela regained confidence. The nuns, who did not know the nature of their retreatants, declared themselves edified by the good behaviour of the group. Father Philip—a real St. Antony of Padua—found words which went straight home, and between the lectures organised games on the neighbouring racecourse. The decisive day came: "This evening," he announced, "I shall hear confessions." It was a miraculous draught of fishes: all the retreatants made their peace with God, including two Protestant girls who asked to be received into the Church. All this raised a torturing problem. What was to be done after the retreat with these sheep that had returned to the fold? To send them back to Blank Street would be to lose all the fruit of these days of retreat. A lodging must be found for them—but where? The problem of housing was an impossible one in those first years of national independence, after the civil war. It was decided to go and see Mr. Cosgrave, then Minister for Local Government, and explain the situation to him. He listened to the Legionary messengers, walking up and down his office as the story was recounted to him in detail. Much moved by the recital, he replied that he had no premises at his disposal, but that he would do everything possible to help. "This evening," he

said, "there will be a meeting of the Executive Council. Write me a note; I shall put the case and you shall have my answer to-morrow." The next day a letter from Mr. Cosgrave handed over to the Legion for three months a house in Harcourt Street which had served as an annex to his own department. They were saved.

The house was empty. In great haste, for the retreat was now over, the operation of furnishing is accomplished by the emergency expedient of stripping Myra House of much of its equipment—without leave. The retreatants arrived from Baldoyle, set to, cleaned the house from garret to cellar, and settled in. That same evening, the enthronement of the Sacred Heart took place. Miss Plunkett and Miss Scratton, the two Legionaries of the first hour who had lived through the days of retreat with the girls, took over the direction of the house without a moment's notice: Sancta Maria was founded.

This home, as we have said, was destined to play a principal rôle in Edel Quinn's life. She would one day be given charge of a very special apostolate among street girls and would do wonders with them. For the moment Sancta Maria was only a provisional home for the twenty-three rescued ones from Blank Street who were returning to a normal life. With the exception of one, they all held out.

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This first experience turned the Legionaries' activities in a new direction and led to a still wider unfolding of their apostolate. The development was brought about in seemingly accidental fashion. One day, two new inmates of Sancta Maria betook themselves to their original lodging, Bentley Place. The place was known not alone in Dublin, but beyond the sea, as a den of every vice. The need for following up the two fugitives fixed the attention of the Legionaries on this dangerous plague spot. They resolved to make a move against it. It was a centre of evil living and of drunkenness, sorrowfully renowned, a relic of the armies of occupation. Three whole streets, made up entirely of suspect houses, formed a kind of "no man's land". Laws and police stood helpless before this citadel of vice. Things had been so for a century and a quarter. In vain the police had tried to bring order to the place; they had had to desist before the opposition that was stirred up. No one had ventured to enter there in the name of Christ. When the Legionaries of Sancta Maria one day raised the question of entering Bentley Place, everyone insisted that it was pure madness. They added: "You would not come alive out of that inferno." A sort of police force of its own terrorised the

inhabitants of the place themselves and compelled them to respect the established illegality. There was no trifling allowed in the matter and it happened from time to time that trouble makers paid with their lives for their attempts at nonconformity.

"Still," insisted the Legionaries obstinately, "we must do our very utmost to save these souls. Are we or are we not soldiers of the Immaculate Virgin? And is she not terrible as an army set in battle array?"

They began by making inquiries. Unfortunately, the information to be gleaned was of the vaguest. No one knew anything precise about the dwellers in Bentley Place, or even their numbers. At last, one name and address was mentioned, that of a poor girl called Mary. Nothing definite was known about her.

The wise ones persisted that no action be taken, that nothing be done that would risk dispersing and spreading that centre of infection.

One day, Frank Duff, accompanied by Miss Plunkett, ventured into Bentley Place at midday. Interrogated by a man on watch, he asked to be brought to Mary's lodging. The man recognised him—Frank Duff had done him a good turn once—and without any further question, he piloted them to where Mary lived. They went in. There were five girls in a room, one in bed, the others up.

As an introduction, Frank Duff asked if he might see Mary. They answered yes, but that she was dying; and they pointed to the sick girl in the bed. A friendly conversation was begun with her; the poor creature was in extremis. Yet such was the horror of the place that a doctor had not even been sent for. The Legionaries proposed taking her to hospital; and she accepted. A cab was secured and she was put into it, while her companions thanked the good Samaritans. In hospital Mary saw the priest, made her Confession with touching sincerity, and died a few weeks later, serene and joyful.

That was the first cast of the net of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, in Bentley Place; and such was its result.

Mary's funeral put the Legionaries in touch with many members of her sinister world. The ice was now broken and there was no trace of mistrust of the Legionaries. From that time on, with unflinching regularity, the Legionaries moved freely through the district, visiting the houses one after the other, and room by room. They found there about two hundred girls of Mary's type. With untiring patience and good humour, and with an almost unreasoning confidence in Our Lady, the Legionaries won over the girls, one after another, prevailing on them to make a few days' enclosed retreat at Sancta Maria, and then to stay in the hostel and eventually look for work.

Two years went by. Thanks to the steady process we have

described, the number of the girls had been reduced to about forty-five. The annual Mission in the parish was given that year by three Jesuit Fathers, Ernest Mackey, Richard Devane and Daniel Roche. This was a special aid from Providence, for these truly great men made the Bentley Place area the focus of the Mission, mobilised a campaign of prayer against it and, together with the Legionaries, interviewed all the prominent personages of that underworld. During the three weeks of the Mission, the Legionary visitation was carried on with intensity every day and all day long. The effect of the campaign was wonderful. A wave of repentance swept over the district. Most of the owners and of the girls professed themselves anxious to live good lives, and a universal agreement was arrived at to close down the whole district on the Tuesday of the third week of the Mission. That day came. All of the houses but five closed their doors, and the greater part of the girls entered the Sancta Maria Hostel.

This was a triumph, but a triumph containing the germ of failure. For the fire of evil which would continue to burn in those five houses would menace the remainder of Bentley Place. That evil might recommunicate itself to the regenerate section. Such a consummation must be provided against. But the proprietors obstinately refused to close. An epic struggle began with them, but they resisted all arguments. One last solution remained: recourse to the police. General Murphy, Chief Commissioner of the Police, promised to intervene. One night the police forcibly closed down those last few houses that had remained open.

Next day, the Dublin newspapers announced the nocturnal raid in large headings. The attack lit a blaze of excitement and revolt in Bentley Place. The Legionaries were accused of having instigated the raid, and threats of death were uttered against them.

The raid had taken place on a Thursday night. Friday was the customary day for the Legionary visitation of the area. From many quarters the Legionaries were warned that if they went there that night, they would not get away alive. There was every likelihood of this happening, and well they knew it. They held council and they weighed the pros and cons. To go to Bentley Place in that atmosphere, inflamed by the events of the night before, was to risk the worst. To stay away was to show that the Legionaries were afraid. That would only harden the opposition and would cut away the possibility of further visitation at the very moment when it was more necessary than ever before. The decision was taken to go ahead with the visiting. But Frank Duff would not have his companions for that evening arbitrarily determined. For he went regularly every week on

the visitation with two girl Legionaries, these being changed from time to time. The two whose turn had come round that Friday could not have foreseen the danger. Therefore, it was decided to call for volunteers. He went to a church where many Legionaries used to meet before proceeding to their different duties. He gathered those who happened to be there and explained what had occurred in Bentley Place, the danger of going there that evening, the threats that had been uttered, and the decision that had been taken to go ahead in spite of everything. "Only," he concluded, "I do not want anyone to come with me merely because it is her turn. I want two to volunteer for this evening." There were sixteen Legionaries present. Without a shadow of hesitation, they all raised their hands to signify desire to go. Deeply moved by their spontaneous heroism, Frank Duff hesitated to make a selection. Then the two girls whose turn it was to go that night pushed forward, declaring peremptorily that no one had any right to deprive them of their duty. They set off with Frank Duff for Bentley Place.

They had only taken a few steps when someone called out to them to go no further, unless they wished to provoke a tragedy. The little group walked on, their hearts beating, but "smiling bravely all the same". From all sides the inhabitants appeared at their doors: the atmosphere was heavy with threats, for popular feeling had gone solid against the Legionaries. Suddenly an angry woman ran towards them, her hair flying and uttering fearful curses. She was in a state of violent frenzy. Everyone stopped breathing. She made for the three Legionaries, but when she came to them, she fell, frothing at the mouth, in an epileptic fit. People rushed to help her, the Legionaries among them. This explosion relieved the nervous tension. Quietly Frank Duff began to talk and reassure them on the subject of the previous night's alarms, and to explain that the arrests would be of short duration. The atmosphere grew calm, and all began to chat, friends once more. The battle was won.

To mark the victory by a dramatic gesture, the priests who were preaching the Mission nearby, decided to have a final ceremony in the heart of Bentley Place. So a procession went through the streets where, two years before, no priest would have dared to pass. The streets were sprinkled with holy water; Frank Duff hung a crucifix on a high wall; the missionary preached a sermon, standing on a table, while the crowd, won over, pacified and happy, listened to him in silence.

Such is the story of Bentley Place and its disappearance. The evil never returned; the district remained decent to the end, that is, till it was demolished in a housing scheme.

Taken with the miraculous success at Baldoyle, this new act of grace formed positive proof that Our Lady does not allow herself to be outdone in generosity and that she knows how to respond in queenly fashion to her children's confidence.

More than enough had been done to give the new-born movement the seal of Heaven's approval.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort had dreamed of seeing arise "a great legion of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, of both sexes, to combat the world, the devil and corrupted nature in those more than ever perilous times which are about to come".

The little Marian army that had just won its first victories was happy to place itself under his patronage and to continue his deeds of apostolic daring.

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Such was the state of development when Edel discovered the Legion, which was to turn her life upside down.

The discovery was a chance one.

At a Children of Mary meeting, Edel met Mona Tierney. Years before in the West, Mona had known the Quinn family. In fact, the two families had been friends for several generations. Edel and Mona both knew of that happy relation, so quite naturally at this first encounter Edel invited Mona to come and see her people on the following Thursday.

"I cannot go on Thursday," said Mona. "That is the day of my Legion of Mary meeting."

Edel wanted to know what was this meeting, which interfered so disappointingly with her invitation. It had to be explained to her in detail. Edel listened eagerly and finally said: "Do let me assist at the meeting".

Mona went to Miss Nancy Hogg, president of her branch, who instructed her to invite Edel. Mona thought it her duty to tell Miss Hogg that this new recruit, whom she had known for a few hours only, seemed to her so full of life and gaiety that she would surely be put off by unattractive and regular work such as the Legion might offer her.

Very honestly Mona told Edel of her own doubts as to her persevering, but passed to her the desired invitation.

Edel said she would go on Thursday. After that, they would know Edel's reactions and be able to assess Mona Tierney's pessimistic prognostications.

CHAPTER V

AN ACTIVE MEMBER

"I venture to promise a faithful service."
LEGIONARY PROMISE.

THE following Thursday Edel met Mona at No. 6 Gardiner's Row. Miss Hogg, the active and most devoted President, gave her a cordial welcome; and punctually at the appointed hour, the weekly meeting of the Præsidium began.¹

Everyone had knelt round the statue of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces, which was enthroned on the table in the middle of the room.

The priest began by an invocation to the Holy Ghost: "Come, O Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love. . . . Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created. . . ."

With one voice the group responded: "And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

The words were spoken quite naturally, but with conviction. Who were these persons that they should venture to pray thus? A few women, coming after a long day's work, from factory, shop or office. One could feel that they were tired, but recollected. Still on their knees, they said the Rosary. As the mysteries were unfolded, it seemed as though there were a change over from the day's worries to the new spiritual world that opened to all.

¹ For the better understanding of what follows, here are some features of the scheme of the organisation. The basis of the Legion of Mary is the local branch, comprising from four to a score of members and named the Præsidium. The officers are: a priest appointed by the ecclesiastical authority as Spiritual Director, a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer. There is a weekly meeting with unvarying procedure: prayer to the Holy Ghost, rosary, spiritual reading, minutes of the last meeting, report from each member of apostolic work done, Magnificat, allocutio or brief spiritual talk, assignment of work, discussion of other business, final prayers, Spiritual Director's blessing. The Præsidia of a town or district depend on a higher council, called the Curia, and composed of the officers of the different Præsidia. Lastly, higher up there are: for a diocese, the Comitium; for a whole country, the Senatus; for all countries, Concilium Legionis, which has its seat in Dublin, the mother-city of the Legion of Mary. A glossary of Legionary terms is included on page 271.

When the opening prayers were said, all took their seats round the table.

Edel sat down with the rest. No one took notice of her; she had nothing to do but watch. She listened attentively. Each member in turn described how the task entrusted to her had been performed. Briefly, because time was precious, they told of their visitation, their misadventures, their rebuffs, the unforeseen happenings, their successes. Here and there, a vivid detail or a humorous touch provoked a laugh. No one sought to make an impression: one felt that it was not the Legionaries who were doing the apostolic work, but their Queen through them; they were on duty, acting in union with her. Sometimes the account of a rebuff ended with a word that revealed their supernatural confidence: "We will go back."

Half-way through the meeting, Miss Hogg rose; everyone followed her example, and Edel heard for the first time in her life the "Catena", that triumphant prayer which binds all Legionaries to their Mother and to one another. It was like a spring-time breeze, blowing through that confined, overheated room and breathing sweetness into it.

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?"

The tone of the voices had changed, the antiphon sounded forth like a festal song. And the next words broke out, weighted with joyful gratitude: "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

That Magnificat, as one may guess, has given heart to all those present. It was as if a ray of sunshine lit up their faces; they seemed refreshed.

All resumed their seats. The priest, the Spiritual Director of the group, spoke. He reminded his listeners that man is powerless for good himself, but that the secret of success is union with God. To draw near to God, we must be united to His Mother; that is the path He chose Himself, once for all, that He might come to us. With her and in her, we can be wonderful instruments for the salvation of souls. . . .

After a few minutes, he stopped speaking and all made the sign of the cross.

The reports continued.

There was question of visits to be paid in a district, to prepare for an approaching Mission. Twenty houses had been visited, but many people were not at home. The work must be done again. The case was mentioned of a poor outcast who had shouted insults at the visitors; but then had suddenly softened, and had made no objection

when they told him laughingly that they would come again for a chat with him.

The girls spoke rather low, from natural shyness. The President asked them to raise their voices; it was important, she said, for everyone to understand, and humility did not consist in mumbling under one's breath. When all had finished their reports, Miss Hogg gave out the work for the coming week.

Two sisters—as all are called—would go and look up Jenny and Molly, who had given up Sunday Mass and who, it was feared, had returned to a bad life.

A sister would go to instruct a Protestant lady, whom they had met in a tenement house and who had received them well.

Two others were to visit a family where there was an irregular marriage to be set right. The enthronement of the Sacred Heart was being arranged for in some homes. A few words more were said, to make certain of the members' time of meeting, of some doubtful address, of the name of a street. No one raised any objections: it was understood that each member would go where the Blessed Virgin sent her. She it is who would give the grace to touch hardened hearts. She who would whisper the words a sister should speak at the right time, because the Holy Ghost is always with her.

They all stood up, but only that the little group might kneel again before their Queen, and Edel caught the hurrying words of a prayer that spoke of a courageous faith, capable of undertaking great things for God, of a faith that makes us see and serve Christ in our neighbour, of a faith like a Pillar of Fire to guide our feet. . . .

She heard the Legionaries offer themselves to God, for the seeking of souls who are in darkness, for the kindling everywhere of the fires of Divine Love. . . .

Some of the words escaped her, but she had grasped the essentials. The atmosphere of that meeting, where prayers and action mingled so closely, had completely captured Edel. In the little group she had recognised the spirit of the Upper Room in Jerusalem and of the first Christians, of whom it was said that "they were persevering with one mind in prayer, with Mary, the Mother of Jesus". Edel felt that the Acts of the Apostles were continuing there under her eyes. Her mind was made up: She would ask to be admitted to the Legion.

At the conclusion of the meeting, she notified her decision to her friend Mona, who was surprised and delighted to have been such a bad prophet.

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Edel had no trouble in harmonising this new vocation with her vocation to the Poor Clares. The one, she thought, would lead on to the other. She longed one day to consecrate her life to God; meanwhile the Legion offered her an opportunity of loving and serving God directly in the souls of others. Another girl perhaps would have sought to cut herself off from the world and so prepare herself for the life of contemplation. But the Love of God sent Edel out into the busy world, there to wait the moment when the Master would call her to come and live with Him alone.

The good works in which she had been interested up to this were those of moral protection. She saw in the Legion a unique chance of going straight to the goal, of serving and loving Christ in those souls that were spiritually distressed. Edel blessed the Lord for this unhopd for privilege that had been offered to her.

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The first Præsidium of which she was now an active member bore the title of Our Lady of Victories.

Quickly she drew to herself the affection of all, so winning was her natural and supernatural charm. Souls, like flowers, have their perfume, and one does not mistake them. Without knowing why, everyone sensed in the newcomer a treasure of kindness and of devotedness. At the second meeting she was already one with the whole body, as if she had always belonged to it—a fact which was the more remarkable because she had a strong personality. They felt that she was resolute and could defend her point of view, but without ever offending another, so docile was she to truth when she recognised it. She knew how to insist without impatience, to plead a cause without hurting another's feelings.

Here are, set down at random, some of the impressions of her, gathered from her friends in "Our Lady of Victories".

"She was attractive, always smartly dressed and exquisitely pretty. She was not robust. Indeed, she looked a little like a person with a weak heart; her face often took a purplish blue colour. Her tendency was towards reserve."

"She had a distinctive personality. When reporting at a meeting, she was not eloquent, but even somewhat hesitant; yet what she had to say carried weight by the radiation of her own individuality."

"My recollection of Edel in those days is that she was very quiet and unobtrusive, leaving most of the talking to her partner when out on visitation. Very rarely did she refer to her family. Indeed, she

seemed rather afraid that they would get to know too much about how she was spending her spare time."

"She kept on trying to persuade me to read the 'Secret of Mary'."

"The first thing that struck me about her, as she sat near me at the meeting, was the constant moving of her lips in what was evidently ejaculatory prayer of some kind. At each successive meeting, I noticed the same thing, which convinced me of her spirit of prayer. My interest thus aroused, I watched her closely and was struck by the extraordinary brightness of her face. A spiritual radiance shone out from her eyes, almost as though streams of light were emanating from some hidden source. There was something in her expression reminiscent of the Little Flower, as seen in her best portraits. Now I can well believe Céline, when she tells how one day when they were conversing about the Holy Ghost and the Sacrament of Confirmation, she had to lower her eyes before the dazzling brilliance of those of her sister Thérèse. Edel had something of that same quality. In fact, I had the general impression that Edel and the Little Flower were spiritually twin sisters; and my subsequent intercourse with her only helped to strengthen that impression."

This comparison will come again in the words of many who knew her. We shall content ourselves with merely mentioning it; but it is to be remembered.

In the domain of action, Edel was about to rise to her full stature.

The Minutes of the Præsidium are not available, so that we cannot follow Edel's work day by day.

The Legion, as we know, requires of its members at least two hours of apostolic work in the week. Edel very soon exceeded this minimum. She used to devote five evenings a week to her Legion work, and often more. Not for the world would she have missed a visit to a soul in trouble.

She—who confessed one day to P.L.,: "I have to get in two visits to people, the second a horrible ordeal. I hate visiting don't you?"—would later write, never dreaming that the two texts would one day be brought together: "Nearly all my evenings seem to be spent in seeing people, and as most of them are old, I could not bear to disappoint them." "I hate visiting"—there is the natural Edel. "All my evenings are spent in visiting"—there is the supernatural Edel. Notice those lines which reveal a marked preference for lonely or deserted souls, for old people and invalids. Among such people, too, Edel inspired great affection. She joyfully sacrificed to them her Sunday evenings in particular, because on that day no one else thought of going to them.

Her first work was the approaching of families for the purpose of

inducing them to have the Sacred Heart enthroned in their homes. The work was overwhelming, and the group of Legion workers was unable to cope with it, more especially as they had also undertaken the regular visitation of several wards in the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital. Another regular activity of the Præsidium was the visitation of the slum tenements in the neighbourhood of Gardiner Street. Edel took her full share of this work, and if anyone rightly protested against her excess of zeal, her invariable retort was a hearty and disarming laugh. She had her own way of warding off praise or thanks, which was to keep in the background and to minimise the difficulties she had overcome. Nothing made her give in. As a friend of hers said, she would at need have waded a river in order to do a kindness, or not to miss her meeting. When she had to report on her work at the meeting, she spoke quickly. She often lost her voice as the result of a cold. She was most at home in the personal contacts; there she more easily got the better of her shyness. Besides the regular Legionary visitation which was made in pairs, Edel had a number of cases of her own, independent of the Legion.

Some of her cases are still remembered. There was, for example, the case of Miss Y., a poor lonely creature living by herself in a room in the Cuffe Street area, not far from Sancta Maria. This woman suffered grievously from a hallucination: she imagined that her opposite neighbours persecuted her, knocking at her door, making her life a torment. The case had been mentioned to Edel by members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. She devoted herself to it. For months and months with exemplary regularity she used to go and sit with the invalid, and by long-continued kindness succeeded in calming her obsession. Her patience may be realised when it is remembered that Miss Y. was never satisfied with a visit that lasted less than two or three hours.

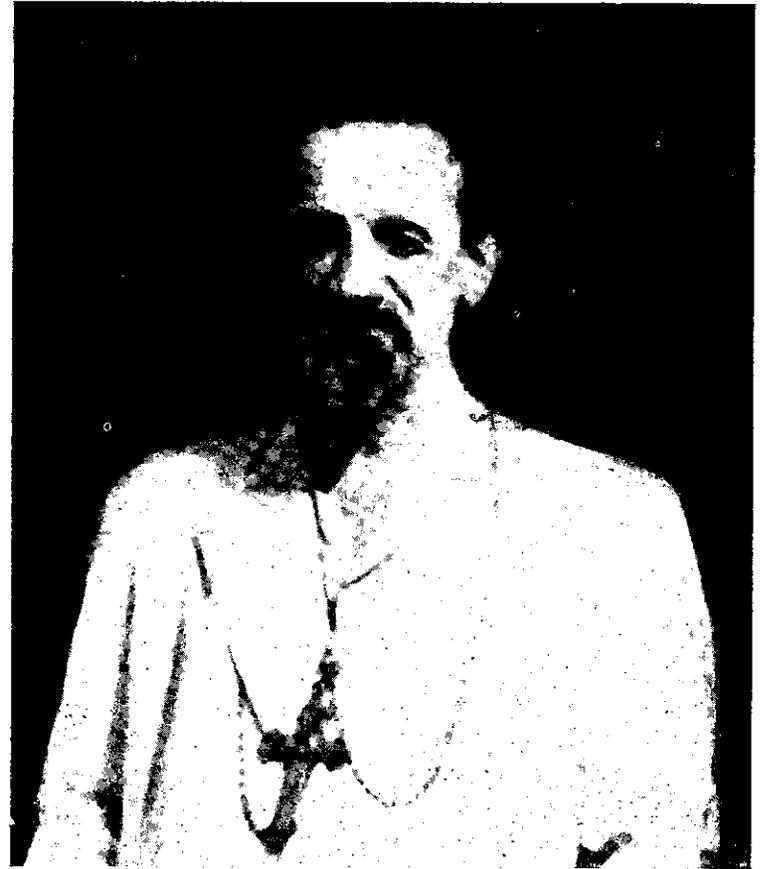
Another lonely woman, living in the same street, occupied a great part of Edel's time and sympathy. She was a convert, very pious, fond of spiritual books, particularly the works of St. Paul of the Cross. Edel listened to her tirelessly and supplied her with congenial literature.

To such errands of mercy Edel liked to devote, as we have said, her Sunday evenings. It was her way of keeping the Lord's Day holy to the end: in the morning, Eucharistic Communion; in the evening, Communion with the Lord in the person of some poor or lonely soul. Her faith assured her that under the one appearance as under the other it was the Master Whom she was meeting. And what else mattered!



After having served for two years in the ranks of the Legion as an ordinary active member, she was made President of the Præsidium "Our Lady Refuge of Sinners". This group had charge of a particularly arduous and delicate work: the rescue of prostitutes. Called upon to fill this important post, the Legion authorities had turned to Edel, and she had accepted. But, when the members of "Our Lady Refuge of Sinners" saw a young girl, hardly twenty years of age, arriving in Myra House where the meetings were held, there was absolute consternation. They had asked for an experienced and mature person to take charge of this daring apostolate, and here was Headquarters sending them a young one who seemed to have nothing to recommend her but her infectious spirits and her innocence! They did not like to say anything during the meeting at which she presided, but when it was over, they let her go, and they said plenty. At this council of war it was decided that the Spiritual Director should go in the name of them all, to protest to Headquarters against such an appointment, and recall those authorities to a sense of the elementary laws of prudence and wisdom. He fulfilled his mission, duly transmitted all fears and apprehensions, and then came back to his members to report that Headquarters were adamant and unshamed and unyielding. In such manner did Edel become and remain President of "Our Lady Refuge of Sinners". The appointment, which might indeed be imprudent from a human point of view, was proved to be a most judicious one; and the group were not long in seeing that Edel handled things in a masterly fashion. The sureness of her touch and of her judgment compelled agreement. With what joy did she give herself to this ministry of mercy! How attentively she must have read and meditated upon the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son. She knew better than anyone that, of herself, she was not capable of undertaking such a special apostolate. But the Legionary is not alone. It is in and by Mary that he approaches souls. This idea of union with Mary gave her such assurance that she was able to smile at pitfalls and difficulties. Later, in Africa, she would often ask for news of her clients in "Our Lady Refuge of Sinners": she kept for them to the end a privileged corner in her heart.

Edel was an efficient President. The task is a complex one: to preside at the meeting, to receive reports, to allocate the work in hand, to check the following up of cases. It was for her to see that rules and discipline were observed, to train the other officers, and



CAST TO AFFECT THE DESTINIES OF COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF MEN: ARCHBISHOP RIBERI.

In Edel's time Apostolic Delegate to Missionary Africa: later, Internuncio to China. He contributes the Preface. *This photograph was taken immediately after his release from captivity.*

even to give the talk, called the Allocutio, if the Spiritual Director was absent. All this demands considerable skill. Edel impressed everyone by her recollection during prayer; one felt her absorbed in God, and that was worth more than the best sermon. Under her influence, the group grew in numbers and the earnestness of its members steadily increased; those are signs which cannot deceive.

She gave an example of utter generosity. Her position as President required her to exact from all the other members a wholehearted and faithful service, and in this she did not fail. One of her Legionaries writes in this connection: "Edel gave of her best and she could not put up with half-measures from others. She was very patient, but I have seen her displeased with Legionaries who showed signs of slackness. My first introduction to Legion work was as a member of 'Our Lady Refuge of Sinners' where Edel was President. I was told off for visitation in a district off Waterford Street. I was to meet my co-visitor at Dorset Street on Sunday morning. It was a cold, wet morning, but I arrived punctually. I walked up and down for an hour: no sign of my co-visitor. At the next meeting, my co-visitor reported that she had waited twenty minutes for me, but that I had not turned up. I was called on to explain, and it was only then we discovered that I was walking at one end of Dorset Street while my co-visitor kept vigil at the other! There was a short word from our President about making appointments definite. I thought it had ended there, but I did not know my President! On our way home I got a lecture from her—a Legion appointment was an appointment with Our Lady to do a certain work with Her. As ours was the visitation of a lodging house, it might have meant getting at least one woman to Mass and so preventing one mortal sin. With inexorable logic Edel drove home the possible consequences of even one omission. Can we ever know how much good follows from a single act of virtue! It is most true that good, as well as evil, leads on to an infinity of consequences. Our Lady could not normally do the work, concluded Edel, without our help. We must co-operate with her in the saving of souls; she stands in need of that collaboration. Such was the lesson drawn by the President from that lost opportunity. I never forgot it."

Edel herself was unfailingly punctual. Her Legion work was sacred. Yet she managed to reconcile it with her duties to her family. When the necessity arose, she would go with her family to special engagements, and apparently with full enjoyment. Her co-workers still remember seeing her come in evening dress to a Legion meeting, and after it go off to a dance in honour of her brother's twenty-first birthday.



Edel had a very real gift of understanding other people. Sometimes this compelled her friends to perform acts of virtue somewhat above their level. One of her particular friends freely confesses this: "When in her company I sometimes felt my patience tried. For instance, if we were pressed for time and we met someone who wanted to talk to Edel, she would stop and listen with cheerful sympathy, making her own contribution to the conversation and apparently as much wrapped up in it as if she had nothing else to do for the day. Sometimes those sessions were drawn out to undue length.

"Once she visited a poor family and left me waiting in the hall of the house. (It was not a Legion visit.) She said she only wanted to look in for a minute or two. I had to stand for nothing less than twenty minutes! When at last the door opened, I heard the sound of laughing voices, as the family said 'good-bye' to Edel, and she replied as though she were taking leave of near relations. In fact, I always noticed that she had the same cordial, simple manner with everyone, rich or poor, attractive or the reverse, interesting or tiresome. Edel knew no distinctions. She gave of her best to all. Her soul went out to every soul she met and she seemed unconscious of all merely external differences. Though of a very delicate conscience, she was not in the least narrow-minded and she was sweetly tolerant of the little weaknesses in people. When dealing with those who did not seem called to walk the higher paths, she took an interest in their amusements and even contrived to put innocent pleasures in their way."

From the same pen we have this penetrating observation: "Her wholehearted sympathy made itself so evident in her attitude that she was one of the very few people who could smile without offending, when speaking to one in distress. Her words, her looks, her tone, all showed that she felt deeply and was sharing the other's grief. One felt that if she smiled, it was a smile of love intended to dispel the gloom of a heavy heart. The consequence was that souls easily opened themselves to her and she enjoyed, as all knew, an immense popularity."

Edel had some marvellous successes. When she entered even the most difficult home, at once the ice melted. Her kindness, her disinterested love, had the effect of enchantment on those numbed or refractory souls. They accepted her as one receives a true friend. Some souls, like flowers, open only in the heat of the sun. Edel radiated sympathy. All who came near her expanded in her warmth.

Her youth, her purity, far from being an obstacle to the confidence of sin-laden souls, seemed to attract them. Like the Master, she came, not to judge, but to save. In her company, the most wretched felt themselves in safety. And from her to God there was but a short step.

Edel visited Sancta Maria two or three evenings every week and got on splendidly with the girls there. She applied herself enthusiastically to the difficult task of entertaining them. A succession of amusements had to be invented for them. Every possibility must be availed of that could make life in the hostel less trying for these souls, so recently snatched from the licence of the streets. Edel used to play the piano for them and to dance with them as if they were her equals, and she quickly won their hearts. She organised charades with marked success. She would plan a play and give out the parts: "You'll be the mother, Mary, and you, Kitty, the father. The others will be the children. Now listen. This is what you'll do." And Edel developed her theme, taking care that each girl had the part most suitable to her in the opinion of the others, or the one she thought herself most capable of playing. For one there would be a song, for another a dance, and so on. She would get them all to enter wholeheartedly into the game and contrive to make it last as long as possible.

Edel sacrificed to them, without a thought, her few free hours. "I recollect various occasions," writes Mona Tierney, "when, coming in late from tennis, Edel would part with us at 76 Harcourt Street in order to visit her friends in there." These girls felt instinctively that she was always ready to do anything for them and they loved her intensely. They always wanted her to stay with them. One evening, when Mona Tierney and Edel called at Sancta Maria looking for bunting for some festivity, the girls did not want to let Edel depart. It was quite a job to make them understand that this time she could not stay. This sort of ascendancy of hers was precious, for the girls were not always tractable. Generally Edel's gay spirits succeeded in controlling the many changes of mood in that little community whose nerves were always on edge. But someone remembers a stormy evening, when the tempest was not stilled in the usual way. Edel was spending a week-end at Sancta Maria with a few other volunteers, so as to allow the indoor sisters a couple of days off by way of breathing space. "On Sunday evening," we are told, "there was a scene among the women. I forget what it was about, but one of the Legionaries, describing it to me afterwards, said: 'You can imagine what it was like when Edel cried. That was the only time I ever saw her crying. I spoke to her about it, but she cut the conversation short, evidently anxious to avoid a painful topic. I surmised that what

had so much afflicted her was her glimpse into the awful depths of degradation to which certain souls had sunk.' ”

Edel, as has been said, ended by spending nearly all her evenings at this work of moral rescue and reconquest. Her friends and her family grew anxious about this overwork. One of the older Legionaries, Miss Cully, gave the alarm to Miss Hogg who had some influence with Edel, and begged her to intervene. It was not possible, she said, to let Edel come every night to Sancta Maria after a heavy day's work in the office, stay there until midnight, and then travel five miles to her home. Miss Hogg promised to induce Edel to moderate her pace. A favourable opportunity presented itself soon afterwards. Meeting Edel at the funeral of a deceased Legionary in Whitefriar Street, Miss Hogg took the offensive with a few leading questions: "Had she been at Sancta Maria the evening before? At what hour had she left? What would her family think of this excess of zeal?"

Edel was her usual cheerful self.

"My family!" she said. "Oh, they have given me up as a bad job."

"If you are not careful!" said Miss Hogg, "we'll be having Mass offered for another dead Legionary."

Edel burst out laughing.

"That would be fine," she replied.

And that was all; she continued giving herself body and soul as before. She never counted the cost, for she was absorbed in what had to be done, and what had to be done was more than the eye could take in.

Her Præsidium, "Our Lady Refuge of Sinners", which was responsible for the visitation of disreputable lodging houses, regularly supplied a picket on the city streets. It was a harassing duty, not devoid of unexpected shocks.

Emmy Colgan, a seasoned Legionary, later President of Sancta Maria, still remembers the first visit that she and Edel paid together to No. 48 Newmarket. As they entered, a talking parrot received them with the words: "Get out, you . . ."

As soon as Nora O'Mahony—one of the "lady boarders"—heard the parrot, she jumped out of bed, made straight for them with upraised fists and, towering above Edel, she poured forth a torrent of invective, such as even Emmy, who was inoculated in that sort of thing, had never heard before.

Unruffled, Edel proceeded to argue with her. Nora's hands came down, a conversation ensued which with each sentence took a friendlier tone. On leaving the house, Edel said to her smilingly:

"God bless you, Nora, I'll be back next Sunday." The promise was kept, Sunday after Sunday, with no apparent result. Some Legionaries told her she was wasting her time. Edel replied that such was a defeatist thought, only fit for immediate expulsion; and she continued on the track of Nora.

Emmy Colgan also recalls having accompanied Edel to a well-known lodging house, literally packed with street girls. There must have been at least twenty of them, living there in a few foul rooms. Edel used to speak to each girl separately, using words of great tenderness, and usually succeeded in carrying off some of them to Mass. Emmy Colgan concludes by saying: "Edel persuaded many of the girls to give up their life of sin and to come and live in Sancta Maria."

God alone knows at what price!

CHAPTER VI

THE CROSS

"God writes straight with crooked lines."
PORTUGUESE PROVERB.

THIS exhausting work in no wise prevented Edel from preparing for her entry to the Poor Clares in Belfast. Her soul recognised no distinction between her Legionary vocation and her vocation to the religious life. A total giving of herself to God was her constant dream. It was God that she saw in the souls that crossed her path; she loved them, not alone for the love of God, but more profoundly with God's own love. What she sought in the cloister was neither a congenial atmosphere nor the satisfaction of her own peculiar tastes; it was the freedom to belong wholly to God. What she desired before all else was the tabernacle, the continuous Eucharistic communion, in a word, union with God. She had found her Beloved; His dwelling would be hers. Edel did not cling to her personal inclinations, God's Will was enough for her, and God's Will showed her the road to Belfast, that is to say, the road of penance, poverty and sacrifice.

Already her Legion work was a harsh school of mortification. The apostolate required from her a continual self-sacrifice, that she might keep her heart open to others, enter into their thoughts, share their troubles. Her open manner and ready smile should not veil from us the underlying renunciation. The Legion *Handbook*, which became her bedside book, emphasises from the start the self-denial inherent in every apostolic work: "Sour looks, the sting of insult and rebuff, ridicule and adverse criticism, weariness of body and spirit, pangs from failure and from base ingratitude, the bitter cold and the blinding rain, dirt and vermin and evil smells, dark passages and sordid surroundings, the laying aside of pleasures, the taking on of the anxieties which come in plenty with the work, the anguish which the contemplation of irreligion and depravity brings to the sensitive soul, sorrow from sorrow wholeheartedly shared."

For Edel these were no empty words; she lived them intensely. The apostolate offered her a kind of hair shirt which she accepted bravely and which prepared her for the penitential exercises of the Franciscan rule.

Eagerly she was watching for the hour when her dream of the contemplative life would be possible of realisation. That hour was drawing near. Already her religious habit was ready; she had shown it to friends. In a letter to P.L. she accounts for the involuntary delay:

"I know you must wonder why I have not entered before, instead of holding on to office work. Well, when I left school, circumstances intervened which showed plainly that my duty, at the time and since, was to stay with my parents. About the beginning of this year, I believed I was free to follow my vocation. It was then I made arrangements. However, when I told Mother, she said I was still needed at home, and that it would not be right for me to go.

"After reflection and the taking of advice, I saw my duty was for the present at home, and that being so, I could not conscientiously go away. So that is why I am still where I am. Please forgive, Pierre, this long writing about myself. I would not have spoken, and never have to anyone, about this matter, which is so intimate. But I felt I owed it to you, who have been so frank with me."

We can see that if she was consenting to postpone her departure, she did not intend to delay indefinitely. Like St. Clare, she was in haste to offer to God her joyous youth, her very precious friendships, her tenderly loved home. She would forsake them for the love of God, but also for the love of man. Does not the world, for its very life, need souls who rise above its vanity and greed and know that through the portals of voluntary poverty they can enter into the liberty of the children of God?

At last a date was fixed. She would enter in the beginning of 1932. She prepared to make her round of farewell visits as a prelude to Belfast.

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At that very moment, God was about to put aside all her arrangements and to impose His own thought, His disconcerting Will.

Edel fell suddenly ill. A hæmorrhage which seemed to have a suspicious origin obliged her to submit to a thorough medical examination. The doctor was downright in his decision; there must be complete rest in a sanatorium. There was little hope of cure; the patient was in an advanced state of tuberculosis. He spoke without evasion. There could be no further question of her entering the convent. Like a mournful Calvary, rising suddenly at a turn of the road in the midst of flowering orchards, her own cross stood up starkly, barring her way. It was not for nothing that she was born

on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and that she entertained an ardent devotion to the Passion of Our Saviour. Thence she drew her love of the Mass and learned to unite her suffering with His. The hour had come for her to unite herself to the great Sacrifice by her own sacrifice, and she did not flinch under the blow.

With a smile of welcome for the Will of God, she accepted the verdict which tortured her soul. She loved God and His Divine ordinance above all things. She believed with a lively faith that abandonment to Providence, day by day and hour by hour, is the key to all holiness. "Everything that happens is adorable"—she knew it; and "circumstances are," as she wrote one day, "the sacraments of God's Will." That loving Will alone matters, for it is the sanctifying element in our round of duties. To be united with the Will of God is to be united with His Love, to be united with the Holy Ghost. She uttered her fiat with Mary's heart, with a confidence that did not shake. She seemed even to suffer no shock, so instantaneous was her consent. Everything seemed to her so simple; why should she complain? She turns the pages of her book of life; God cuts off her reading of a chapter; at once with all that childlike abandonment which was typical of her, she offers Him a fresh page. Learning of her plan to enter the Poor Clares, a friend had once said to her: "It is a calamity. I do hope you will think it over and change your mind." Soon after the breakdown, Edel went to her and said jokingly: "You have had your wish. I am not entering. I have had a hæmorrhage and have to go away to a sanatorium for a while." It was thrown out as a casual and unimportant item, and with the obvious intention of making little of the trouble and sparing others.

Edel may invariably be recognised by this trait: what concerns herself matters not at all. The trial did not find her unready. Is not suffering a mark of God's special favour, and does He not measure it out freely to those souls whom He has chosen for Himself? Must one not drink of His chalice if one is to become the friend of God? "Let Him do His Will," says a writer beloved by Edel, St. Louis Marie de Montfort, "He loves you, He knows what He is doing, He has experience, each of His blows is skilful and loving. He gives no useless blow, unless you make them useless by your impatience."

Edel knew that royal road of the Cross. How many times had she read the famous chapter of the Imitation which tells of its mysterious import! As though she foresaw what was coming, she had written shortly before to P.L. that trials are the food of the strong and that he should hold firm.

"It is only to be expected, I think, that one should not find one's course very smooth. Even to an ordinary individual it is a constant

struggle to press on in the teeth of the everyday trials. So it is inevitable that souls particularly capable and gifted will encounter difficulties and trials that lesser souls would not experience. The greatest saints have always had the most to suffer."

One day during a retreat she will write these lines which even now she has begun to live intensely:

"Of ourselves we know not what we desire, but the Paraclete will teach us.

"The spouse delights to be one with the Beloved—she makes His wishes hers.

"Sufferings are precious.

"Rejoice to imitate Our Lord in joyful acceptance of suffering: Difficulties of health, daily upsets, are His choicest gifts.

"Our Mother's most precious gift to her children is the Cross. Let us pray for grace to accept it gladly and willingly 'in the likeness of Christ'."

When she announced her departure to the sanatorium and bade farewell to her Præsidium, tongues were loosened. Everyone had noticed her acts of mortification. It was not astonishing, they said, that she should collapse under such conditions. It was pointed out that she took neither milk nor sugar in her tea nor butter on her bread, that she skipped meals with a disconcerting ease . . . the list of complaints was long and explicit.

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Edel was taken to Newcastle Sanatorium, Co. Wicklow, on February 5, 1932. She stayed there eighteen months.

There again she soon won the affection of the other patients. One of them, Winnie Leavy, with whom she kept up a correspondence, even in Africa, describes Edel at this time:

"Her attitude was one of kindness and helpfulness to all. Anyone in trouble in the sanatorium would at once go to her for consolation. She was plainly a very strong character. Always in good humour, she made everyone round her happy. She was never seen in a state of depression and would often laugh till the tears came. This contagious gaiety was irresistible. Her illness did not appear to weigh on her; she never spoke of it and never complained. One would have thought she was there on a holiday. Although she suffered greatly from the cold, she would not have a hot water bottle in her bed, nor did she have many bedclothes. Her passion for mortification

did not desert her in hospital. She did not regard herself as dispensed by illness from the practice of penance, but adroitly she sought to conceal her efforts in that direction.

"It was quite evident," says this companion of Edel's in the sanatorium, "that she was a most exceptional being and of the stuff of which saints are made."

Her best friend in the sanatorium was a young Protestant girl, Miss W. They were together a great deal, and she was intimate with another Protestant girl there, Miss S. The matron was a Protestant, too, and Edel was extremely friendly with her.

When she left, the matron declared that she was the nicest person who had ever come to the sanatorium.

Miss W. was no less enthusiastic. "Edel," she writes, "was a charming girl, jolly and friendly. She loved life and enjoyed it. She was a home girl, and her family was the centre of her being; each member of it had a special place in her heart. If one had never met the family, one would know them from Edel's words; one could picture them about the house. She saw good in everybody. She loved dancing and enjoyed books."

Edel was at everyone's service; it seemed quite natural to call on her. A patient died suddenly one night. The nurse, a young Protestant, was seized by panic, but instead of going to the matron or anyone else on the staff, she ran to Edel and sought her help. Edel got up immediately and went to her aid. This incident shows the confidence of all around her in her unwearied charity.

It was impossible to express pity for her—she would not have allowed it. It was her visitors always who benefited by her joyous spirit and her comforting sympathy. "She would blind you completely," says one of them, trying to express Edel's art of turning the conversation away from herself. You could not get any information about her state of health. Everything was always 'all right' or 'very funny'. Those were her favourite phrases. She always saw the bright side of things, though God knows the reverse of the medal was often dark enough. Many things in her life at the sanatorium were far from cheering. In spite of gloves and furs, the visitors complained of the cold in the patients' chalets. Edel must have suffered from it, but we can only guess. Her companions, for the most part, were not of the same upbringing and way of life as herself. Yet she behaved with them as though they were her closest friends, and she recruited among them many auxiliary members for the Legion. She occupied a little room intended for four or six patients, but stayed very seldom in bed, so that even the doctor found it difficult to treat her as a serious case. Yet, she certainly did

belong to this category. One of her lungs was badly infected and the other, though in a lesser degree, was also attacked. After a particularly bad night, she confessed one day to a friend that she did not know how she had managed to get up for Mass. But her will overcame her weaknesses.

At a retreat in Baldoyle, she had heard Father O'Leary make a statement which she often quoted:

"It is the will, the will, the will, that matters." The words did not fall on deaf ears; Edel's will was a finely tempered instrument.

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She devoted a good deal of her compulsory rest to books. She was hungry for the nourishment of strong spiritual doctrine and anxious to share with others the joy of her discoveries. She brought to her reading a soul fresh and eager, wide open for the heavenly aid, waiting only for light before passing to action. But she firmly refused to play the part of spiritual counsellor, even to an intimate friend who asked her advice. "Edel," writes this friend, "was too diffident of her own powers to be willing to take on the job. Her advice usually went no further than the recommending of certain books. Our tastes in spiritual reading were almost identical: St. John of the Cross, the Little Flower, Dom Marmion, St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, Dom Vonier, Fr. Plus, Blossius etc. She was also very fond of Mother Juliana of Norwich, Elisabeth Lesueur and some others whose works she had in her private possession. She had in French *L'Esprit de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus*, and evidently had resolved to live according to it. It goes without saying that the New Testament and the *Imitation* came before all other books. She read some of the great St. Teresa's works; but she resolutely refused to read the *Interior Castle*. She may, perhaps, have read the first few chapters, but when it came to treating of extraordinary graces, such as visions and ecstasies, she said she did not see the use in reading about such things. She had too much regard for the value of time to indulge a mere curiosity. She was too realistic and practical to explore paths which she was not likely to travel."

Another of her intimate friends speaks in similar terms of her spiritual likings:

"Edel," she writes, "had great devotion to the Little Flower. She had a large volume of her life written in French, and she used it constantly for spiritual reading. Once she lent it to me. I returned

it rather soon, as my knowledge of French was not as good as Edel's, and she seemed disappointed. I remember noticing at the time that here and there throughout favourite passages were underlined and had pencil notes in the margin. It seemed to have been a well-used book. When I was entering, her gifts to me were *The Spirit of the Little Flower* and *The Virtue of Trust*. In the latter book the chapter she constantly referred to was 'Trust in Mary'.

This is not the first time we find Edel's name and that of the Little Flower linked together. The most varied witnesses make the comparison spontaneously, and it is of great value for us as an introduction to her inner life. In one of his letters, P.L. had even ventured on the comparison. Edel objected at once:

"I am sure St. Thérèse would not be what she is, if she had been in the slightest way like me. You do not know me at all, if you could even for a moment imagine such a thing. You know, the Little Flower was a saint, and I am not even on the first rung of the ladder. The only affinity between us is in our writing inasmuch as she was supposed to write badly. But there the comparison ends, for what our writings contain are as poles apart."

Her correspondent did not press the point, but he remained of the same mind. Edel invited him to read the life of the Little Flower: "I am sure," she wrote, "you would enjoy the life of St. Thérèse. Like the book you gave me, it has a lot in it. Of course, like so many other saints, she was French."

A little later she heard that P.L.'s impressions of the book confirmed her forecast. Delighted with this agreement in their views, she writes:

"I am not surprised that you like the Life of the Little Flower. I find it bears reading over and over again. I have read and re-read it, and now I am at it again. Yes, the Martins were a lovely family, and it would seem as if the fineness of the parents made the children what they are. I agree with you that Pauline and Marie were just as saintly as the Little Flower."

Edel's devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux was a special one. An incident will show it. When she had to give her first public talk on the Legion, she held tightly in her hand to give her courage, a relic of the saint. From love to resemblance there is but a step.

We have seen by her answer to P.L., when he compared her to St. Thérèse, how entirely she repudiates any resemblance. Fundamental humility is a marked trait of her spiritual life. She had a horror of speaking about herself or of letting God's gifts to her be guessed. She takes her place in that category of humble souls who may be called silent. They are the ones who bury in the depths of their

hearts the graces they have received and, like St. Francis of Assisi and St. Philip Neri, take pleasure in being despised. There are others, who might be called the radiant-humble who, the better to glorify the wonderful works of God, show forth outwardly the graces they have received and proclaim their gratitude for God's free gifts to them. "God hath done great things to me," sang the humblest of all creatures in her Magnificat. And it is well that there should be this diversity. God's gifts are worthy of the double homage, that of silence and that of praise. Edel's humility issued in silence and in self-effacement.

A witness of her life gives us this description of her: "Her humility was manifested chiefly by her desire to remain hidden and to pass as 'one of the crowd'. Her extreme reserve in spiritual matters sprang from this desire. She liked to appear to her casual acquaintances as a rather light-headed creature, given to laughing and joking. She had a perfect horror of being taken for a very spiritual person, even by priests and nuns, perhaps especially by them, because it would make her an object of esteem. I noticed this very strongly in her letters to me after I entered. She no longer discussed as formerly her favourite themes, but merely gave me Legion news, accompanied by general remarks. I knew that she acted in this way for fear of revealing her soul to others who might read the letters. A remark she once made to me about Confession is rather enlightening. We were discussing certain opinions concerning the manner of confessing one's sins, and Edel said: 'It seems to me that in every Confession one should aim at self-humiliation.' She thought that the avowal of faults ought to be of a humiliating nature, and she did not see why anyone should go to Confession without this end in view."

She loved to exchange spiritual books and to share her discoveries with her friends. Mother Thomas Aquinas, her former class-mistress in Enniscorthy, used to receive books from her, and Edel even tried to make her enjoy the works of Dom Marmion. One day, when Mother Thomas spoke to her Superior of these exchanges, the latter congratulated her on having maintained such a good influence over her old pupil. "Not at all," Mother Thomas hastened to explain, "it is Edel who has a good influence on me and not the other way about. Make no mistake about it." Edel liked substantial doctrine based on dogmatic teaching. She also read the lives of the saints with enjoyment.

The list of her favourite works seems at first sight somewhat miscellaneous. A biographer with a desire for methodical classification would have some difficulty in placing her in a particular school of spirituality. St. Thérèse of Lisieux and Dom Vonier, St. Louis

Marie and Dom Marmion, St. John of the Cross and Père Plus, all mingle in the most natural way in the world. Edel had the gift of simple souls; she went straight to the heart of things, to the common Christian spirit hidden under the variety of external graces. She was at home everywhere, because she had a Catholic soul. What she sought in all these authors was the pure spirit of the Gospel, the substance of vital dogmas. That was enough for her heart and her faith. She adopted with a sure instinct all that was of the Church, and mistrusted extraordinary paths.

"She had no taste for fancy devotions," says a witness. "She preferred solid things." A mere glance at her library would suffice to assure us that this was true.

Her very keen taste for reading was, however, always sacrificed to the duties of charity.

She occupied her enforced leisure by reading her favourite authors, but still more by cheering up the other patients. Her own health appeared to be of no consequence. Months passed thus; progress was slow and the doctors had not yet given her any hope of leaving the sanatorium.

After eighteen months of this régime, Edel decided to alter what she felt to be an idle and inactive life. She believed in the doctors, but she also believed in God, and it appeared to her that the Divine point of view and that of the medical faculty were not identical. She did not see why she should not continue to follow the prescribed treatment at home; it would be one heavy expense the less for her family. And, without waiting any longer, she decided to go home.

Her people were astonished at this determined act. They said later that Edel had almost run away from the sanatorium. It was a risky step, the more so that the doctors held out no hope of a complete cure. However, Edel's sweet and brave smile disarmed all objections and she resumed her place at home.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE GOES ON

"To do small things as though they were great, because of the majesty of Jesus Christ, who does them in us, and who lives our life; and great things as though they were small and easy, because of his Almighty Power."

PASCAL.

FOR a while after returning home, Edel observed the doctor's orders. But, when a few months had passed and her health did not noticeably improve, she decided to concern herself about it no further. That she might no longer be a burden on her people, she looked for a position and went as secretary to Callow's, a motor engineering firm in Westland Row. It was an entirely unsuitable place for delicate lungs. Edel worked there above the garage, in a dark office with the electric light always on, and directly in the path of the smell and fumes of cellulose. Her doctor besought her to give up the work immediately, but Edel treated this appeal to prudence with a light gaiety, using once more her favourite phrase that: "Everything was all right." She looked well, too, and everyone was led to believe that she had recovered her health. Edel, delighted with this general misapprehension which left her a certain amount of uncontrolled freedom, decided not to waste what was left to her of strength and of life, but to spend them for God. Since the doctors could do nothing for her, she would get on without them. In practice she lived like anyone else. Contrary to all pessimistic forecasts, her health improved slightly. But never was she to regain a normal power of resistance. She remained a fragile plant, that would require to be treated with great care. She continued her life, as though this problem had been solved. Sometimes her permanent state of fatigue betrayed her, but her unalterable cheerfulness soon recreated the illusion.

Her soul controlled her body by main force, no one will ever know at what cost. Edel was the strong, virile woman who did her duty—

and far beyond it—with the perfect elegance that disguises effort and virtue. It was for God to shape her life according to His Plan; her one ambition was to leave all that to Him. Her ideal had not changed: Whether she would be in the Belfast convent or in Callow's office; whether chanting the Divine Office or typing out business letters: her soul would be vowed to God and would sing to Him a constant hymn of love which nothing could silence nor interrupt. Her joy overcame her suffering: she was outside the reach of men and circumstances. Her serenity showed itself in a sense of humour always keen, even in the most distressing conditions.

"She thoroughly enjoyed a joke," says one of her friends. "She even found material for merriment in all sorts of little incidents. It seemed to me sometimes she laughed too much over such things, and I told her so. Once, after an outburst of mirth, I asked her: 'Are you like that naturally, or do you practise it as a virtue?' She replied: 'It is about three-quarters natural.' I understood then that her constant high spirits were not merely the effect of a naturally cheerful disposition. Perhaps she wilfully exaggerated sometimes when in my company, in order to make me less serious. Shortly before I entered, we were discussing my chances of admission. 'Do you think,' I asked her, 'that they will find me sufficiently cheerful?' Edel answered with a mischievous twinkle: 'Oh, I think you'll do. You have improved in that respect since I came to know you!'"

Edel rose early every morning and attended Mass in the Carmelite Convent, Blackrock. Before or after the Mass she spent half an hour in meditation. It required the direct order of her Spiritual Director to make her get up a little less early and choose a later Mass.

When she had her meals at home, she took what was offered her. But if she was free to "dine" as she liked, tea and bread or sandwiches were the fare.

One day a friend, visiting Edel in her room, lay for a moment on the bed but found it so hard that she uttered a cry of surprise: "How do you manage to sleep on such a bed? It is nothing but a wooden bench." Edel's only reply was to laugh and to pull the questioner off the bed, plainly confused at the discovery. A little later, at a retreat, the two girls shared a room. It was winter-time and the nuns used to put hot water bottles in the beds each evening. Edel quietly removed hers and laid it on the floor. It would have been useless to question her action.

Another close friend also remarks on Edel's love for penance and the care she took to conceal it.

"I do not think," she writes, "that Edel ever took the easier



THE AUTHOR HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP SUENENS.

This photograph of the author is inserted on the insistence of the Legion of Mary which wishes to add its own word of thanks.

course, but it was all done in that simple unobtrusive way that escapes attention. Mortification was second nature to her, and any remonstrance brought the disarming smile and the joke, so as to change the subject. That she practised some exterior penances I am certain, but she was too reserved to speak about it. Once she told me she did nothing without the permission of her confessor—a Clarendon Street Carmelite, and I gather that he did not allow her much latitude in that respect. In any case, her state of health would have precluded it." In spite of this handicap, as we have seen, she missed no opportunity within her reach, and she was most ingeniously inventive. She understood the value of the little victories over oneself that give no room to self-love, and of which God alone knows the secret and the redemptive value. It was not for nothing that she belonged to the land of the Lough Derg pilgrimage!

But not for the world would she have allowed that thirst for penance to be guessed at. With consummate art she hid her acts of self-denial and played her part in social life easily and gracefully.

She took a prominent share in the entertainments organised periodically on behalf of the Legion hostels, particularly Sancta Maria. She went to great trouble to get prizes for raffles; she attended whist drives; she helped in concerts. It all seemed so natural to her: was not the whole of life with all its many facets to be offered to God?

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The apostolate did not seem to Edel to be a luxury of the spiritual life, something to be taken up or left aside at will—it was simply part of normal Christian duty. So she kept in mind the resumption of her activities in the Legion of Mary. As soon as she felt able, she joined the Præsidium of "Our Lady of the Cenacle". They did not venture at first to confide to her any tasks which might be too heavy for her limited strength. Those who knew her before her stay in the sanatorium judged that she was a little more retired into herself than of old. Though her face was ever lit up by at least the suggestion of a smile, close scrutiny would reveal in it the traces of a maturity that suffering had brought. With the intention of sparing her in spite of herself, they made her Vice-President of a Junior Præsidium. Edel would have wished for harder work: she laughingly complained that "they had her sitting up in a coffin". But seeing that she was not given into, she threw herself heart and soul into the job appointed. The Præsidium that had been confided to her had just started with a group of young probationer nurses in the infants' hospital at Temple

Hill, Blackrock. This hospital was quite near the Quinns' home, and her friend, Mona McCarthy, was President of the group. There was no visitation to be done, the weekly work assignment would be light; she would not have to curtail the hours prescribed for rest. Her friend would keep a watch over her and try to moderate her too great zeal. Everything was wisely foreseen and arranged for. But who could preach moderation to Edel? Like an impetuous overflowing river, the love of God which filled her would soon burst its banks. Since she could not serve God within the walls of the cloister, she would serve Him in the world. Her soul alone would remain cloistered.

It was a strange paradox that this pre-eminently active soul should be essentially contemplative, always hankering after "the better part", the rôle of silent, hidden attention to the Master. Though she had to relinquish her dream of being a Poor Clare, her spirit of union with God was unflinching. But it was to lead her into the ferment of activity. Before we see her take that flight, let us pause and probe the enigma of her great love. As we have said, it is not easy to penetrate the sanctuary of her soul. Everyone who knew her speaks of a barrier which interposes and which turns her inner life into a mystery. Direct glimpses are rare. One must seize on revealing words let fall almost accidentally; learn to interpret her silences, which are so full of meaning; detect in the bantering words which camouflage her heroisms the burning flame that fills her soul.

Though we may not be able to enter the holy of holies, it is permissible to cross the threshold. Edel had a few very special friends, two in particular, who later entered Religious Orders, one contemplative, the other active. Independently, each attempted an appraisal of her spiritual life. Let us hear what they have got to say.

"When Edel came home from the sanatorium as incurable, we saw a great deal of each other, usually three or four times a week; and when one or other was absent from Dublin, we wrote long and frequent letters.

"Although she never spoke to me about her state of prayer, it was quite clear to me, from her manner of talking about spiritual things, that she was a deeply interior soul. Her degree of union with God was to be judged rather by its effects than by anything she said about it. She was extremely careful to hide her inner life from all our ordinary friends. When she and I were alone, she would 'let herself go'. But the moment a third person came on the scene, she immediately erected the 'barrier' which everyone had remarked on. We then talked Legion news, or something else according to the taste of the newcomer. I knew of only one exception to this rule. She

invited me to accompany her on a visit to a young nun, Mother Celine, of the Loreto Convent, Dalkey, if I remember aright.

"Edel introduced me to her and said, indicating me: 'She is one of us.' We then talked as freely as Edel and I were accustomed to do in our most intimate talks. Edel made me repeat for the Mother's benefit a sermon which I had heard in Clarendon Street the previous Good Friday, and which I had already shared with her. The preacher had brought home to his hearers the fact that the Passion is not to be considered as an event that is past and done with, but as an ever-present reality. He strove to make us seize the inner substance of the event as an eternal Fact, always present before God, and indeed always present in a spiritual sense for those who rise above the mere accidents of time and place.

"Edel practised interior recollection and strove to live in the presence of God. She loved to turn inwards to her Divine Guest. Her conversation revealed a choice understanding of divine truths. She saw far into the great mysteries of religion and seemed to have an experimental knowledge of some of these. She had the purely spiritual conception of the divine Immensity that I have since learned to be characteristic of the Flemish school of mystics; Ruysbroek, Denis the Carthusian, etc. I do not know how she came to see so clearly into this mystery. I remember that on one occasion, when we were speaking about someone who had received a sudden interior light on this point, she said that she had had no such sudden illumination. She did not seem to know how or when she had been enlightened. I had the impression at the time that the Holy Ghost must have favoured her from early childhood with a clear comprehension of this mystery. She had also a singular insight into the mystery of Eternity; that is why she so appreciated the sermon to which I have referred. She liked Dom Vonier's book, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, because it brings out so clearly the emancipation from the temporal limitations which is the miracle of the Sacraments. She had a great love for the Mass, which was truly for her the 'Re-presentation' of the Sacrifice of the Cross. 'I could assist at Mass the whole day long,' she one time wrote.

"All that I have just written seems to me to constitute a proof that the first two gifts of the Holy Ghost were continually fruitful in Edel, and that as a consequence she reached a certain degree of contemplative prayer and of union with God.

"She also seemed to possess the gift of Counsel in a very high degree. Her parents consulted her about all the family affairs; for instance, when her brother or her younger sisters were to be sent to school, the negotiations were entrusted to Edel. She was notably free

from uncertainty or hesitation, always seeming very sure of what she ought to do. This last trait caused me some misgiving at the time, as I did not think of attributing it to the gift of Counsel. It was Miss Martin (now Mother Mary Martin, foundress and Mother-General of the Medical Missionaries of Mary), who gave me the clue quite unexpectedly. I knew her extremely well, but she had only a passing acquaintance with Edel. One day after Father Boylan's departure for Parkminster, I spoke to her about Edel's difficulty in finding a Spiritual Director. She said in reply that she thought Miss Quinn was probably one of those special souls who do not need much direction, because they are guided directly by the Holy Ghost. She added: 'I have observed her . . . she is very near to God.'

"Those words, coming from such a person as Miss Martin, made a deep impression on me.

"I think I could say with a certain degree of moral certainty that Edel had personal experience of the 'Prayer of Simplicity'. Beyond that, I venture nothing."

The second testimony, written independently of the foregoing, yet gives a picture identical with it.

"Edel's spiritual life was so simple that one can hardly analyse it. Her big devotion was the Blessed Sacrament. Daily Mass and Communion formed for her an absolute necessity. She could not pass a church without calling in for a 'short visit', as she said. I well remember those visits on our way to Legion meetings in Myra House. She would kneel, rapt in prayer before the altar in Francis Street Church, and frequently I had to whisper a gentle reminder that we were going to be late. Outside, she would joke to divert my attention from the incident. She was always jesting in that way, so that it was only after her departure that we realised the depth of her holiness.

"No matter how busy her day, she fitted in at least a quarter of an hour's meditation, but her general rule was half an hour.

"The doctrine of the Mystical Body took me a little out of my depth. Of late it has often struck me that whereas we believe Our Lord's words: 'As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to Me,' Edel not only believed it but realised it, and based her whole spiritual life upon it.

"On her way into town, she always said her Rosary, if she could find a quiet corner in the train. Come what might, she recited the fifteen mysteries daily, and frequently got in the Præsidium Rosary in addition.

"I have already mentioned her devotion to the Eucharist, and, in that connection, there is one incident I should like to tell. The year before I entered, I had an attack of scruples, which frequently kept

me from Communion. Edel noticed this and tackled me on the subject. With wonderful patience she reasoned away my difficulties, only to find me going over the same ground again. It became a nightly discussion, and she would never part from me till I had given a promise to receive next morning. Few would have had the patience and perseverance she had. I am convinced I owe my vocation to her, for I could never have entered while in that state. After I entered, she questioned me about this at each visit, and even her last letter from Africa inquired: 'No more brain waves, I hope?' That was her way of referring to the scruples. Thanks to her prayers, I have never had that trouble since.

"Her love for the Blessed Virgin need not be emphasised, because her Legion work shows how intense it was. Every free moment was given to Our Lady. Once, when we had an evening off, she decided that we should go and see a Legion 'friend' of hers in High Park. The protégée was in a particularly atrocious mood, so Edel arranged to take her out to tea and the pictures. Undoubtedly, I showed some of the disappointment which I felt. For on our way home she held forth on the charity of Our Blessed Lady who would always subordinate her own likings to the helping of others. Then she spoke of the value of an immortal soul and the wonderful opportunity we had of becoming co-redeemers, as Mary was. It was only later on, as a nun, that I realised what firm grasp she had of the doctrine of the Mystical Body."



Those two sketches are the fullest accounts we have of Edel's interior life. They present a diversity of memories, and view their subject from different angles, but the resemblance between the two testimonies is striking. We find in them in embryo the whole substance of a spiritual life which was to go on developing and maturing. It is remarkable how little Edel is given to speculation in this domain. She is altogether bent on acquiring a practical, daily conformity with the Will of God. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" St. Paul's question expresses her fundamental attitude. In her there is no gap between the recognition of truth and the faithful following of it. The years will only accentuate her dominant characteristics: intense love of the Blessed Eucharist, union with Mary, unrelaxed mortification, disregard of self in the service of others.

That basic spirituality developed in an atmosphere of youthful freshness of spontaneity, and of humour which hid from the super-

ficial observer the intense union with God which animated even her most impulsive act. Edel never complicated things, and her interior life bears the mark of that simplicity: she was led by her faith, she clung to it, and did not let herself be tempted by unnecessary curiosity.

Nothing is more amazing than the Eucharist, yet nothing is more ordinary: a little bread, a little wine, are sufficient for the miracle. Similarly the extraordinary love of God hides under the appearance of our commonplace, everyday duties. This truth was always present to Edel.

The realism of her sturdy faith made her pierce through the Master's disguises and recognise His presence everywhere.

She believed, too, that the love of God is expressed in the love of our neighbour. The same impulse that drew her to Him led her even to the most wretched sinners: instinctively she adopted the Master's preferences and obeyed the order to go into the highways and by-ways, seeking souls in distress, in order to conduct them to the Lord's banquet.

The apostolate was for her a way of prolonging her thanksgiving and of preparing for the morrow's Communion.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD DISPOSES: THE CALL OF AFRICA

"The thought of those millions of pagans who know not God or Christ leaves us no rest by day or by night."

HIS HOLINESS PIUS XI.

FROM its inception the Legion had increased in numbers and in daring, but without as yet going beyond the Diocese of Dublin. Six years after its foundation there were only thirteen Præsidia in the capital.

Then a Pentecostal wind rose suddenly: in 1927 the Legion began to invade all the Irish Dioceses; in 1928 it crossed the sea and took root in Scotland. That was the signal for the great expansion which was to conquer the five continents. Everyone was surprised except Frank Duff, who had divined from the first that the Legion possessed a dynamism capable of revolutionising the world.

The sudden extension made it necessary to formulate the principles of the organisation and to define its methods. The first edition of the Handbook appeared in 1928. It was not an abstract scheme, but the living sketch of a vast Marian system, which aimed at the approaching of all souls, especially by personal contact.

Its pages laid down the law. The Legion would accept neither modifications nor compromises. But was there not the risk that such inflexibility, which admitted of no adaptations, might hinder the success of the movement? Time would tell. In 1930 a start was made in Madras. It was decisive. The soil of the Indies was seen to be amazingly fertile: to-day the Legion prayers are said there in a multitude of languages. The catholicity of the Legion has been proved. Each country in turn was to give a certificate of naturalisation. In 1931 the Legion began its career in America.

An American Vincentian, Dr. J. P. Donovan, of the Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, came to Europe. He visited England and Ireland where, strange to say, he heard nothing of the Legion; then he went to Paris. At the Rue du Bac, an American nun spoke to him of the Legion and lent him a Handbook. He read it and returned it, saying that all this was very fine in theory; but were people to be found who would put it into practice? It was a beautiful dream, he thought.

He was told that he was mistaken; that experience in Ireland had proved that the scheme was not Utopian. Father Donovan, much interested but sternly practical, decided to go and see for himself, though he had but a few days more to spend in Europe. He went back to Dublin, observed, listened, interrogated. On his return to the United States, he published an article which created a sensation: "Is this the long-awaited Church Society?" A priest in Raton, New Mexico, read the article and decided to try it out.

The first Præsidium in the New World, composed of men, came into being on the 27th November, 1931, with the title of "Our Lady of Mercy". After it had been four months in existence, its first report sent to Dublin began by telling of sixty returns to the Sacraments, after many years of neglect, and concluded by announcing the creation of a second group at the mining camp of Van Houten.

In 1932, Father Donovan himself, who was to play a great part in the promotion of the Legion, founded a group at St. Louis.

In 1933, a wealthy Catholic, Mr. Oliver, wrote to Dublin, asking that there be sent at his expense one, then two, and finally three, Legionaries, to extend the Legion throughout the United States. Three were sent: Miss Mary Duffy, Mr. John Murray, Miss Una O'Byrne. They spent many years moving over that great territory and Canada. Out of their labouring thousands of branches have sprung up, filled with the same spirit of conquest and encouraged by visible results. A great wind from the sea was blowing over the Continent! But let us return to Ireland.

It was 1934. The Legion, starting from Dublin, had spread over Ireland. Edel had her share in that campaign of extension. Many a week-end did she spend, travelling through the counties that had not yet been touched, and organising first attempts.

The little group in Myra House had grown into a legion through the unaided motive power of its own quality. It was at this time that the idea came of organising a Legionary pilgrimage to Lourdes. It would be a mark of vitality and also a means of strengthening the family spirit and of enabling the members to know one another. Would not Lourdes be a perfect meeting place for Legionaries?

One of the group of invalids was Edel. The crossing was difficult, the sea hostile, the journey through France exhausting.

They stopped in Paris and Edel had the joy of going to pray in the chapel of the Rue du Bac, in the heart of Paris. "I like this place as much as Lourdes," she wrote.

That chapel of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, a haven of prayer, was the scene of Our Lady's apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré.

There in 1830, the Immaculate Virgin asked to have a medal struck in her honour.

"Those who wear it," she said, "will receive great graces." The Blessed Virgin herself showed the design and inscription for the medal—an incredible challenge to the pride of the 19th century, infatuated as it was with science and rationalism.

The medal was struck. It was for Our Lady to keep her word. She did it with superabundant generosity; and has continued to do it since that distant date in 1830. That medal, known as the miraculous medal, was inserted by the Legion of Mary in its standard in place of the emperor's effigy, just as the Dove, symbol of the Holy Ghost, replaced the Roman eagle. That was the believing response of the Legion to the message of the Rue du Bac, a homage to the universal Mediation of Mary. Edel prayed long in that chapel, her soul in jubilee. She confided her future to Mary. She did not know what was now God's Will for her. Her vocation to be a Poor Clare had been brought to nothing by the failure of her health. She could not see how to give God her whole life; yet in her heart the gift had never been revoked.

After a long day's travelling, they neared the end of their journey toward 11 o'clock at night. Edel, stirred to the depths, saw the great cross shining over the Pic du Ger and its light reddening the clouds. Her soul opened radiantly to the graces of Lourdes. The next day she knelt at the Grotto. She came to the feet of the Virgin of Massabielle to pray, not for herself, but for others. She did not come to beg for a cure. She offered herself for the accomplishment of the Will of God, known to her or unknown. Does not Mary understand better than we what the glory of God requires of us?

With a childlike faith, Edel conformed to all the ceremonies of Lourdes; was plunged in the baths, took part in the invocations, in the Way of the Cross, in the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament for the sick. She mingled her voice in the endless stream of Aves arising before the holy Grotto. What a joy it must have been for her to breathe freely that Marian atmosphere, which is veritably a spiritual tonic, to be able to repeat her Rosary all through the day! She forgot everything except Mary and her neighbour. But here, as so often elsewhere, she was caught red-handed, so to speak, at her usual game of mortification; her companions found out by chance one evening that she had not yet broken her fast.

Heavenly days!

The holiness of Lourdes saturated her, the bond between herself and Mary grew closer. When leaving Lourdes, she was already dreaming of returning there, a joy which would not be denied her.



Edel had taken up once more the double burden of office work and of apostolate. It was now the beginning of 1936.

The central council of the Legion had just received an urgent appeal from England: the Legionaries there wanted volunteers who would help in an extension campaign.

Edel heard the news. Without a moment's hesitation, she went to the Legion headquarters, de Montfort House, in Morning Star Avenue. This must be the Dublin street best known to foreigners to-day—not for its beauty indeed; there are only a few undistinguished houses in it, a hospital and the block of Legion buildings. All its glory is within. The central building, Regina Cœli, serves as a hostel for unmarried mothers, and at the same time as headquarters of the Legion. A narrow staircase leads to the upper floor, where two small rooms and four still smaller cubicles constitute the office. The heart of the Legion is there, and its brain. In Edel's time the walls were even barer than they are to-day; they were not yet decorated with the photographs of the Envoys, those travelling Legionaries who perambulate the continents to spread the reign of God. Nor did those walls yet carry the picture of a certain tomb in Nairobi. . . .

"I should like to go on the extension drive in England," explained Edel. "I can take my fortnight's holiday then. Please let me go."

Edel dearly loved a joke; they thought that this was one. So she repeated her request with a gravity that admitted of no misapprehension. Forthwith there was an outcry: "Pure madness. Invalids cannot be sent off to face the risks of such an expedition." Did she understand the fatigues and the difficulties to which she would be subjected? They almost promised her the Pauline litany of hardships: shipwreck and ambush, and forty strokes save one!

Edel held out: they were wrong, she said, to be anxious about her health. She pleaded; then, weary of arguing, exclaimed: "You are killing me by your precautions." In the face of such obstinacy, what course was open but to bow to it? Edel got leave to take part in the extension campaign. One precautionary stipulation was insisted on: while each of the other Irish volunteers was to make a pair with an English Legionary, Edel was to go with her friend Muriel Wailes, whose mission it would be to watch vigilantly over her and to bring her home at the first sign of weakness. Edel accepted this honourable compromise with all her heart. A part of the extensive Diocese of Menevia, in North Wales, was assigned to them as a centre of operations: His Excellency Dr. McGrath, Bishop of the diocese, had

strongly encouraged the enterprise. Edel and her human guardian angel started off on the appointed task. Truly, indeed, it was no pleasure trip! A fortnight's holiday was a small contribution to the work which lay before them. In that short space of time they must see many priests, knock at many doors, go over the same explanation again and again, and refute the same objections; give explanatory talks to different types of audiences; tempt their listeners to believe in Mary's action; and all the time endeavour to awaken a sense of the importance of the apostolate, too often blunted even in the best Catholics. They must explain the machinery of the Legion, inculcate a respect for discipline and, as far as possible, leave behind them a Præsidium in embryo. The work would be exhausting, not to speak of the rebuffs, incomprehensions, disappointments they would meet. The very speed with which the extension had to be done, the constant mental strain, the fear of making a mistake that would destroy the chance of success, all these entail a vast output of energy. From dawn to dusk, Edel and her friend ploughed the field that had been assigned to them. Their efforts met with success; groups were created; promises were given. A breach had been made through which others could follow.

In the course of their peregrinations, they paid a visit to His Excellency Dr. Moriarty, Bishop of Shrewsbury, who received them very kindly and made plans with them for the future extension of the Legion in his diocese.

Such was the balance sheet of that harassing "holiday".

In Dublin they were wondering anxiously in what condition Edel would come back. More dead than alive, probably. To the general amazement, she came home in good form. The fortnight's labours had not worn her out; the sunshine in her soul had overcome the weariness of her body and had given her new vigour.

Edel resumed her daily work, as if nothing had happened, and began adding up columns of figures again. But her thoughts and her heart were in Wales. She could not cease thinking of the spiritual distress of the diocese she had worked in. The religious indifference, the dense materialism she had met haunted her. So many souls to save, she thought, and so few priests. She had no more than scratched the surface of the possibilities which lay in a mobilising of the courageous laity which would cover with Præsidia that spiritual desert. If in a short two weeks so much could be effected, what would be the harvest if one could spend one's life there?

The idea took shape in her mind and did not leave her. Was it not an appeal of grace, a call? She believed it was; she made her decision.

A few weeks after her homecoming she presented herself at the Legion headquarters and came straight to the point:

"I should like," she said, "to return to England, settle in Chester, and, with that place as centre, work to plant the Legion everywhere."

They looked at her in astonishment. There was no mistaking her; she was not jesting; she had deliberately weighed the consequences of her proposal.

"I am aware," she replied to objections, "that it means voluntary exile, unknown surroundings, parting from my friends, leaving my family, but I know, too, that the harvest is awaiting labourers. So I beg of you to let me go."

She explained that Chester was an important railway junction, affording easy access to every place around; moreover, she would readily find employment there. She had foreseen everything. It was, of course, the making of an act of faith. But what else can one do in darkness! And so they need not detail for her the risks. The winnings would be worth them all. So——? The authorities replied that they would think over this unexpected proposition and speak to her about it later.

Man proposes and God disposes.

Once again, the Lord was to interpose—and in a manner quite decisive. He will say to her as He said to St. Peter: "Launch out into the deep". As yet that saying of the Master is in the future, unsuspected by Edel. But even before she knows them, His wishes are hers. Her soul is ever on tip-toe, so to speak, to correspond to the most devastating interventions of the Love of God.

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The answer came in the form of an appeal from Africa. The Legion had taken root there, in Nigeria, in 1933. The Bishop of Calabar, Mgr. Moynagh, had written concerning the Legion: "One of the most remarkable results of the Legion, and one which is often overlooked because of the striking spectacular work, is its wonderful effect on the souls who devote themselves to it. I can only define it by saying that they get the Catholic spirit. Seeing the quality and extent of the work accomplished, my priests and I are convinced that it is Our Lady herself who is guiding the Legionaries."

The Legion had started also in South Africa at about the same time: the first branches were those in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. Little by little all the towns in the Union established Præsidia: Capetown, East London, Durban, King Williamstown,

Aliwal, and others in different parts of the territory. The Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Gijlswijk, a Dominican Archbishop, had earnestly recommended the Legion to the Ordinaries of South Africa. From 1935 an Envoy from Dublin, Miss Ruby Dennison, was organising this extensive territory. The other parts of the Dark Continent had not yet been touched, at least not notably so.

Such was the Legionary map of Africa at the time when Edel Quinn's destiny was in the balance.

At the very moment when she was taking the initiative and offering herself for Wales, a letter from Miss Dennison, Envoy in South Africa, came to the Concilium (the Central Council). It was an S.O.S. She begged for an assistant who would plough with her the vast territory that had been assigned to her.

A mere glance at the map made it evident that this appeal was well founded. But how was it to be dealt with? The Legion is not a religious congregation: it has no reserve of men or women whose time is their own and who can be sent off at a word. It can only call for volunteers who are willing to sacrifice their occupation and their time to the lonely task of a lay missionary. That needed thinking over.

Out of that the plan emerged. Since Edel had volunteered for extension work in England, why not propose to her to go to Africa? At first the idea seemed to be outside the bounds of possibility. But it was discussed and viewed from every angle by the officers, of course unknown to Edel. The problem bristled with unknown quantities. The most ticklish point of all was Edel's poor health. Even if she accepted the proposal, could they take the responsibility of such a venture? Was a missionary's life with its journeyings through jungle and forest, deserts and mountains, compatible with the physical state of this fragile young girl? Might they not be despatching her to her death? On the other hand, the climate of Dublin can be hard, especially in winter: from that point of view South Africa was far from unacceptable. Her experience in Wales formed testimony to her staying power. But could one judge from a fortnight's trial and conclude that she was fit to face Africa? They weighed the pros and cons; they prayed for light. Finally a decision was come to at a meeting of the officers: they would put it to Edel herself. What would she think of an extension campaign, not in Chester—but on the Veldt?

All this time Edel was awaiting an answer to her offer in regard to Wales, and wondering at the hesitation of the officers.

One day she was summoned to Regina Cæli. "Edel," they said to her, "you have demanded Chester. What would you say if,

instead, we asked you to undertake extension in South Africa?" Edel's face lit up.

"With all my heart," she said, without a second's hesitation. She was radiant.

"Never," said a witness of the scene, "have I seen a happier person."

In a flash Edel recognised that now the Lord had spoken to her. She saw that she was going to be able to realise her ideal of a religious vocation. It would be on another plane, in other surroundings, but offering full scope to her love of God. She would have the opportunity of loving Him and serving Him in the souls of men, not for a few hours after her office work, but without ceasing from morning to night, her life no longer carved into many ill-assorted slices. She would be a Poor Clare in her heart, but her convent would be the roads of Africa, wide open to every wind that might blow!

Her reply betrayed a joy of soul that was palpable to all who were present.

They saw in it a sign that Heaven smiled on what they had arranged.

When she left Regina Coeli, Edel made haste to resign her post, as if she feared that the decision might be reversed; and at once she began to make her preparations for departure.

The newspapers announced that a young Irish girl named Edel Quinn was to leave Dublin towards the middle of September as Envoy for the Legion of Mary. She would go to Alexandria, they said, and thence through Egypt to Central Africa. Eventually, after working through Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, she would join Miss Dennison in Rhodesia. Such was, indeed, the earlier intention, but circumstances were once again to enter in and modify the plans which had been made.

The Legion authorities had communicated Edel's projected itinerary to various Religious who had missions on the route she was taking, and had asked them to facilitate her in her Envoyship. The correspondence that ensued made clear the difficulties of the enterprise. The journey from Egypt to the south by land did not appear to be a practicable proposition; the way was blocked by difficulties. While this focusing was taking place, inquiries about the Legion were pouring in from Central Africa and making people hesitate and think. Did it not seem as if Edel should be sent to that part of the Continent rather than to South Africa, where the work was already in hand and doing well? From the point of view of extension, Central Africa seemed the more desirable. The officers knew from experi-

ence how dangerous it is to launch Præsidia unless an authorised and qualified person is present to superintend the start. A false initial step is often sufficient to ruin all chance of success. And if groups begin on wrong lines, they soon contract habits which it is difficult to eradicate. It is better to make a slow but sure beginning on the proper lines. These were all motives for preferring Eastern Equatorial Africa, that enormous expanse of territory, untouched so far by the Legion. But that meant yet another sacrificial step for Edel. In South Africa she could count on help and support; in Central Africa she would be plunging blindly into the unknown. Would it be fair to ask that of her? Edel was not setting off on her mission supported by a religious congregation which would uphold her, open its houses to her on the way, and show her the exact work demanded of her. She would be travelling by herself, thrown on her own resources, trusting in God's grace alone.

They resolved once more to put the question to Edel herself.

"Would you be disposed to set off alone for Central Africa instead of South Africa?" she was asked. "At once," she replied joyfully and without hesitation, as though a week-end of enjoyment were being offered to her. "This," she exclaimed, "is the happiest day of my life."

In spite of the cruel sacrifice which was being asked of them, Edel's parents, when consulted, did not oppose her wish, and gave their generous consent.

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All these deliberations took place privately. There now remained the ultimate step: the project must be brought before the highest council of the Legion, the Concilium. This supreme body has all the ways and trappings of a parliament. It would have the final word; how would it look on the proposal to send Edel to Central Africa?

As soon as news of the plan got about, a sharp hostility to it was forthwith evident. A fierce storm of protest began to blow up against this "mad business".

Someone who knew Africa particularly well roused opinion against the risks involved. Edel herself felt gusts of that hostile wind. Miss Hogg had spoken disapprovingly to her of the dangers of the enterprise. She had retorted that the doctors gave her only a year to live in the Irish climate. "Therefore," she argued, "I would have a 50-50 chance in Africa."

The next Concilium meeting promised to be a hectic one, so strong was the growing opposition.

Hectic, it was indeed!

At the appointed hour, all knelt down and the prayers were begun. The invocation of the Holy Ghost came first; then the Rosary unfolded its mysteries. A new atmosphere gradually asserted itself. The members had come there as separate individuals, each one on his own. No longer were they that, but an army, disciplined, united to its Queen, eager to know and carry out Her orders.

"Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Our Lord has said. A spiritual unanimity had been arrived at, and the common decisions would be inspired by it.

Prayer over, the Spiritual Director read a page of the *Handbook*. The big minute book was opened and the secretary read the detailed account of the preceding meeting. Then a very full agenda was attacked. All countries had sent in their reports, which were read or summarised by members of the assembly; the most startling names of places were heard. The Legion was developing or beginning in all the continents. As the reports were given, various problems that required consideration were put before the body. Everything was carried through in an orderly and methodical manner; not a moment must be wasted. At a point, the President announced that they had come to an important question, the sending of an Envoy to Central Africa.

A deep, deep silence descended on the hall.

The President set forth slowly and clearly the past history of the proposal, and the reasons for and against its acceptance. He said that Miss Quinn would be willing to go, and he asked the meeting to voice its opinion. At this point a priest rose to speak, one of great authority in the Legion and throughout the country, the Very Rev. Dr. Magennis, ex-General of the Calced Carmelites, who had devoted himself wholeheartedly to the Legion since his return to Ireland from the Generalate in Rome. He was a strong-willed, big-hearted, faithful friend of the Legion, and besides a Northerner, impetuous and downright of speech. His regular attendance at Concilium meetings and his ardent belief in the Legion allowed no doubt of his zeal and courage. He is on his feet now, declaring with impressive vigour that to send Edel Quinn to Africa would be sheer folly. Truly a formidable foe! He spoke of the territories in Africa which he had himself traversed, enumerated the obstacles and the perils that lay in wait there—particularly for a woman travelling alone. He spoke of the deadly climate, of the vast distances to be

covered under appalling conditions; he quoted the opinion of Cardinal Hinsley himself, who had formerly been Apostolic Delegate in that country. If evidence is evidence, he concluded, this project must not be proceeded with. Or, if someone must be sent, let it be a man of more than average strength, and not a fragile young girl. One must not tempt God.

Dr. Magennis was eloquent, and the picture he painted of the conditions of life in Africa was terrifying; the whole assembly was swayed by his forceful words. It seemed as if the majority agreed with him. The speaker, who had grown more and more heated in the course of his denunciation, stopped for a moment to take breath.

Just then Edel rose from her place in the body of the hall. "All those difficulties have been explained to me in detail," she interjected. "I know what is before me. It is exactly what I am looking for. I am going with my eyes open. I don't want to go on any picnic."

At the term "picnic", the tension lightened. The meeting smiled at the duel of words.

Even Dr. Magennis himself was checked in his headlong course by this disarming humour.

"Picnic! picnic!" he shouted, taken aback but unable to resist a joke. "You'll make a nice picnic for someone out there."

Fresh laughter greeted this sally. While strained nerves relaxed, the President of the Concilium wittily remarked: "I call on all of you to witness that the picnic will not be a substantial one."

Poor Fr. Magennis! The effect of his oratory was swept away—and partly by himself. The question was put to the vote—apparently everybody was in favour! Then the President demanded: "Does anyone oppose Edel Quinn's appointment as Envoy to Central Africa?" In the face of Edel's confident determination, no one, not even Dr. Magennis, ventured to vote against the proposal.

Edel had won, but it looked like a miracle!

Two days later, the episode at the Concilium had a sequel. By her humorous reply Edel had got the amused assembly on her side against the kindly, much-loved Carmelite. Her interruption had been in no wise disrespectful. Her delicate conscience, however, exacted an act of reparation.

The following Tuesday, she came in unexpectedly to a meeting of the Præsidium in Whitefriar Street, of which Dr. Magennis was the Spiritual Director. Her sudden appearance puzzled all present. What brought her there? The scene that followed supplied the key. Edel went up to the priest and knelt down before him; she was

visibly much moved. "I want to beg your pardon for my levity of Sunday," she began.

But Dr. Magennis, overwhelmed at the sight of Miss Quinn on her knees before him, lifted her up quickly, protesting his own regret for his too-vehement intervention. Then he added: "Go off on your mission, Edel. God Himself summons you to it. He will look after you. As for myself, I will pray for you in my Mass every day of my life."

Edel thanked him. Then putting her arms round each of the girls present, she bade them good-bye. Not one of them has ever forgotten the occurrence; it revealed Edel's inmost self and her reverence for the priesthood. Wherever she would go, that reverence would be felt, piercing through appearances and venerating Christ in his representatives. God will bring her into touch with innumerable priests, and many another duel she will have to fight to win them to her cause. Her exalted faith in the priesthood would nearly always blunt the edge of opposition and allay doubts.

How could one resist the humility that kneels to ask pardon for having won a victory?

CHAPTER IX

FAREWELL

"Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee."

GENESIS XII, 1.

BEFORE leaving Ireland on her great African expedition, Edel wished to take part for the last time in a Legion pilgrimage to Lourdes. The second one was about to take place. Was it not right and proper for her to commend her mission to Our Lady of Lourdes, and to begin her round of farewell visits by taking leave of Her? So behold her once again at the grotto of Massabielle, trying this time to comport herself as an able-bodied pilgrim. Everyone knew that she was soon to set off as Envoy to Africa, and under that title she was presented to His Excellency, Monseigneur Gerlier, then Bishop of Lourdes.

Edel spent a good part of her time looking after the invalids and stimulating their devotion to Our Lady. She took particular care of an Auxiliary Legionary, Tim Barry, who lived near her in Monkstown. He had been gardener in the Carmelite Convent where Edel often went to Mass. He was far gone in consumption and was soon to die of it. Edel made much of him and gave him all the attention she could. She took part in all the ceremonies, too, and seemed to be everywhere at once. Some of the Legionaries decided to spend a night in prayer at the grotto; she joined them. Her friend, Mona McCarthy, met her the next morning returning from the night adoration. "She was as gay as a lark," she writes. No trace of fatigue betrayed her imprudence. She did not, however, succeed in maintaining to the end her masquerade of normal strength. One morning the Bishop of Lourdes received the pilgrims. Edel, who was one of the group at the audience, stood rather a long time in the sun . . . and fainted. She was put for shelter under a tree. When questioned, she ended by admitting that she had not yet had breakfast. The indisposition quickly passed off. As soon as she was able to stand again, she laughed heartily at the mistake made by a priest, who scolded the group that had come to her assistance, taking them for late-comers to the audience.

We know nothing of the exchanges that took place at the grotto between Edel and Our Lady. It is only reported that she consecrated to Mary the work which lay ahead, and that she came back radiant from that first of her farewell visits.

From that time on, Edel had nothing to do but make her preparations for departure. The reversal of opinion that had taken place at the Concilium meeting left her mind much freer; unflinching faith had gained the victory. It now remained to translate into concrete action the decision that had been taken. Which would be the best route to follow and where should she go first? For want of experience and of precise information, the question bristled with difficulties.

But Providence was about to present the solution of these difficulties, and in an unexpected form.

A letter arrived from Africa, which was going to shed light and to set things moving in right earnest. This historic epistle, dated 14 September, 1936, was addressed to Mr. Duff, by Dr. Heffernan, the Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar. Here it is:

St. Austin's Catholic Mission,
P.O. Box 423,
Nairobi, Kenya.
14 September, 1936.

My Dear Frank,

You may, and you may not, remember me; it does not matter. But I remember you well, and I have just had a communication from Fr. Kearney which set my heart throbbing.

The Legion has been in my prayers and my dreams for the last four years: and now it will soon be a reality in the barren land of Kenya. Deo gratias!

I have read your letter to Fr. Kearney and would offer a suggestion. You propose to send Miss Quinn inland from Alexandria? With all due respect, I suggest that you get in touch with my missionaries coming out in October, and that she come with them and with the Loreto nuns (from Rathfarnham) coming out at the same time. She would land at Mombasa and work her way inland to the Nile and Uganda. Landing here, she would be in touch with scores of priests who know about the Legion: Holy Ghost Fathers, Mill Hill Fathers, White Fathers, and the Loreto nuns. I ask it as a favour that you allow us to work out her itinerary, and that you let her travel with our people, following the Red Sea route. They are due to sail at the end of October. If Miss Quinn is booked for an earlier start, she might make contacts at Alexandria, and at Cairo, and pick up our

group again at Port Said. You will get all the necessary information from Father Michael Finnegan, at Blackrock or at Kimmage or from Bishop Neville.

The route I propose is the one followed by all missionaries for these parts. Having "done" Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, Miss Quinn could go on south through Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, and meet Miss Dennison in South Africa.

Now, may God direct you and bless your great work! Please put Zanzibar Vicariate in your prayer-list, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

J. W. HEFFERNAN, C.S.Sp.
Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar.

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On receipt of this providential message, it was decided at once that Edel should accompany the missionary group, via the Red Sea to Mombasa. No case now of starting off for the unknown!—since the Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar would welcome her with all the enthusiasm shown in his letter. Neither would she be going alone; her travelling companions would be seven Holy Ghost Fathers, seven Mill Hill Fathers, eight Loreto nuns, and two Franciscian Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph. The Lord was making smooth her ways. This decision precipitated events, for the departure was now fixed for October 29th. At the eleventh hour, there was another scare: all berths were engaged on the *Llangibby Castle*. Fortunately, a few days later a cancelled reservation allowed a first-class cabin, the only one vacant, to be engaged.

The hour of departure was drawing near. Some days before Edel left Ireland, a visitor of note arrived in Dublin, one who was to play a pivotal part in her apostolate. It was His Excellency, Mgr. Riberi, Archbishop of Dara.

At that time he was Apostolic Delegate in Africa, successor in this charge to Cardinal Hinsley, who had been promoted Archbishop of Westminster. He was revisiting Ireland as an old friend, for he had been four years auditor at the Nunciature in Dublin.

He knew the Legion as few others did, having closely followed its growth from the beginning, and having been captured by its dynamism, both natural and supernatural. A man of energy and of action, he had quickly discerned the apostolic power of the instrument that had made good before his eyes. His support was destined to be a

most precious aid in the extension of the Legion throughout the world.

When later on His Excellency Archbishop Riberi became Intercuncio in China, his faithful friendship did not fail. He requested all the Bishops to establish the Legion of Mary in their dioceses as soon as possible, so as to create islands of religious vitality in the midst of the devastating flood. At his call, there rose a thousand Præsidia, a veritable spiritual "resistance" in the Church of China. "The Legion," he will then declare, "brings out the inner essence of Catholic Action; it is one of the best things for the Church in our times. It is one of the greatest gifts of Our Lady to the world. I am very deeply convinced of that. I could venture to call it the miracle of the modern world."

That conviction was not of yesterday. At the time when Edel was preparing for departure, Archbishop Riberi had charge of the territory of Equatorial Africa; he believed that the Legion would be a precious gift for missionaries; this was why Edel Quinn's expedition interested him keenly. During his short stay on a holiday at the Nunciature, where he was the guest of His Excellency Mgr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., Archbishop Riberi invited Miss Quinn, Mr. Duff and Mr. Nagle to visit him, and straightway promised them his full support.

He undertook to prepare a letter of introduction, recommending the Envoy and her mission, and further to write directly to the Vicars Apostolic. We shall see later how magnificently this promise was fulfilled. His only regret was that Miss Quinn was not to start in West Africa; he was due to go there shortly and would have liked to be on the spot to help her. But he understood that arrangements were too far advanced to allow of this change, and he did not persist in his suggestion.

Edel's last days were spent in farewell visits. She went about them quietly; she had a horror of attracting attention. She treated the whole situation with that lightness of touch and that infectious good humour which can ameliorate every problem, softening its more grievous aspects, sometimes solving it altogether.

As the time drew near, her people felt more deeply the sorrow of parting. For Edel that was the excruciating part of her sacrifice. Her whole heart was with them; she loved her family with every fibre in her. But she was careful not to betray her suffering, for fear of increasing the others' pain. In fact, all vied with each other in maintaining a bold front at this trying moment. In those last hours, Edel had no thought but for them. What least concerned her was herself. One of her sisters tells laughingly that Edel did her

packing barely an hour before starting, and exactly in the manner of one going off on a picnic! But for all that, she was perfectly aware that the adventure was a hazardous one, and that her strength might desert her at any point along the road. But she gave herself up to God so completely as to leave little room for worrying.

In a letter of condolence written to a friend during those crucial weeks, we meet these words that disclose her serenity: "Winnie, doesn't it make you feel more and more that nothing really matters in this world? Even the worst pains, sorrows, and disappointments are only for a time. So long as God's Will is done, it matters not where He places us or what He asks us to bear."

Edel had an acute sense of eternity and measured all things by that standard. Suffering did not intimidate her; she knew that love lives by sacrifice, and that God attaches to suffering a redemptive value.

One of her friends writes in that connection:

"Edel's spirit of self-sacrifice was something she could not cover up. 'To suffer for love of Our Lord,' she wrote to me, 'is my very greatest joy.' This joy was apparent to all who knew her. She was so full of mirth and good humour that she was like a sunbeam, shining on everyone who encountered her. She kept the thorns of life for herself; the flower and its fragrance she gave to others.

"Love was the mainspring of her life, love of God and love of others for the sake of God. Her letters exhaled this love, and likewise showed her conformity with the Divine Will. Her life was one continuous act of love. This I can assert at least in respect of the period of my acquaintance with her."

This careful hiding of her intimate emotions must not send us off on a false track. There was nothing hard or headstrong in Edel. Her finely sensitive nature vibrated to every impression, but she gave no outward sign of it.

"Personally," writes one who knew her well, "I never saw Edel shed a tear. I saw her cheerfulness dimmed on two occasions only. Her habitual strength of soul was not due to an unfeeling nature, but rather to her highly supernatural outlook and to the assistance of grace.

"In her affections as in all else, the supernatural note was dominant. First and foremost, she was attentive to the spiritual welfare of her friends, without ever a thought of her own personal satisfaction. Her approach and her general manner were overflowing with friendliness, affability and kindness, but free from all soft sentimentality. She did not indulge in caresses or in terms of endearment.

"She submitted her intimate friendship with me to Father Boylan

for approval. If she had failed to obtain this, she would certainly have broken off. She came to see me off at Dun Laoghaire with my brothers and sisters and a cluster of friends. She gave no sign of grief at parting, but, a few days before, she gave me a book in which she had inserted a little picture, with the date of my departure and the words 'Fiat Voluntas tua', written on the back. In one of her first letters to me after my entering the convent, she said how pleased she was with all I had told her about our life, and she added: 'I think that in religious life, through obedience and mortification, the soul must surely in a short time be transformed into another Christ. That is why I can never cry or be sorry when any of my friends enter religion.' These words reveal both the unworldly nature of her friendships and the ideal she strove to attain—transformation into Christ."

Edel was not going into a convent, but she was leaving all for her Lord; there could be no tears over that vocation either. It was not for nothing that she had read and re-read the life of her favourite saint, Thérèse of Lisieux. That study, too, was a school of courage. What a contrast in the external circumstances of the two lives! What a similarity of spirit!

Thérèse, the contemplative, enclosed in her monastery by the love of God, and yet proclaimed patron of the missions.

Edel, a contemplative also, led by the love of God to the heart of the Dark Continent.

Thérèse, the worn-out invalid, "walking for a missionary" as she drags herself from the infirmary to the garden.

Edel, likewise broken by infirmity, undertaking missionary life and wearing herself out in superhuman journeyings.

Thérèse, who said one day in regard to the Blessed Virgin: "If I had been a priest, how much I should have spoken of her!"

Edel, who moved from one mission post to another as the Envoy of Our Lady.

"Souls and chances meet," it has been said, but it was by no chance that Edel had a devotion to the saint of Lisieux: they were cast from identical metal.

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On Saturday, 24th October, at about eight o'clock in the evening, Edel left Ireland. Her family were on the embarkation pier, and a host of friends who had gathered to see her off. The ship began to move; it was a heart-stirring moment. Would Edel ever return?

Would her health sustain the stress of the long voyage? That was the heart-burning question which forced itself on everyone, or rather on all except the chief figure herself.

Edel smiling imperturbably, as the ship drew away from her native shores and plunged into the darkness—such was the final photograph of her imprinted on the minds of those whom she left behind.

A little group of Legionaries were escorting her on this first stage of her long voyage; they were going as far as London. The night crossing from Dublin to Liverpool promised to be unpleasant. Wind and rain gave dismal prospect of rough seas. Nevertheless, the ship reached Liverpool at the appointed hour. There the Customs provided considerable trouble: all the baggage had to be opened and searched. Edel was carrying a stock of Legion *Handbooks* and of useful literature. In view of the long sea voyage, everything had been carefully packed, and now at the very first stage, all that precaution was brought to nothing. In spite of assurances that the parcels were entirely harmless, the Customs officers insisted on the regulations, opened all—and stopped only after a thorough search.

The party then went off to Mass at the Pro-Cathedral, and thence immediately to the railway station.

In London the group divided. Edel had received an invitation to the Carthusian Monastery at Parkminster. She went there to bid a last farewell to some of the monks who had been closely connected with the Legion. Special among these was Father Stephen Mary Boylan, who had been Spiritual Director of several Præsidia in Dublin, and Edel's own director. She and Mr. Duff spent the day at Parkminster. The community were not only interested but deeply impressed by this enterprise and the tranquil courage of the invalid missionary. They promised to give her, for as long as her campaign in Africa should last, two Masses a week in the monastery; and we know that the promise was faithfully kept. For Edel that was an incomparable treasure, for no one understood better than she the value of the Sacrifice of the Altar. It was, besides, a spiritual link, binding her to the great family of St. Bruno.

The following lines, written from St. Hugh's Charterhouse, impart to us the memory they have kept of her there:

"Edel Quinn was one of the most remarkable souls of our time. At the basis of her spiritual life, we can, I think, distinguish a four-fold motive power:

— a generosity in God's service which was absolutely unbounded;
— a burning love for our Crucified Saviour, which led her to embrace with visible joy all the sufferings which He saw fit to send her, and to thirst for still more;

— hundred per cent. membership of the Legion of Mary;
 — implicit in No. 3, the dedication of herself in total holocaust to Our Lady, and through Our Lady to the Blessed Trinity.

“Edel Quinn is a concrete proof of the sanctifying power of the Legion; which is as much as to say that the Holy Ghost is in the Legion, and makes use of it as an instrument, thus giving it the Divine approval.”

Back in London, the time was devoted to a few important visits. Edel went to the headquarters of the African White Fathers. The sons of Cardinal Lavigerie knew the Legion; at Heston several Præsidia were working under their direction. The letters of introduction which they wrote for Edel were warm and explanatory.

The Superior at Heston had written some days previously the following significant lines, which he confirmed orally in the course of his interview with her:

“I think that the Legion of Mary is a grand response to the Holy Father’s call for Catholic Action.

“Here in the White Father’s parish of Heston, we look upon the Legion as our best nucleus of apostolic workers!”

This was a valuable contact, for Edel would have to visit many missions belonging to the White Fathers. In one of them, at a future day, she would be received with special kindness by His Excellency Bishop Julien.

She also met Cardinal Hinsley, the Archbishop of Westminster. During the audience, the Cardinal showed the most fatherly interest in Edel; he advised her about the best routes to take, the methods to employ, and gave her a letter of support and encouragement. Her mission touched him all the more by reason of the fact that he had formerly been Apostolic Delegate in Africa; this interview revived his own memories of that country. Like his predecessor, Cardinal Bourne, he valued the Legion highly. “It will be one of the most powerful forces for the reconstruction of society,” he had said once.

The little group that had come to London went with Edel to visit the Mill Hill Fathers at their Missionary College of Saint Joseph. She wished to meet the head of that congregation, which has charge of vast territories in Africa. The Superior-General, Father O’Callaghan, was more than helpful; he promised Edel the support of all his missionaries, priests and nuns. “The Legion,” he said, “is an integral part of a missionary’s equipment.”

On Wednesday, the eve of her departure, a few more Legionaries arrived from Dublin to join the group, and spend with her the last hours of her stay in London.

That evening, the Legionaries of Ireland and England met for an

intimate and affecting farewell gathering in the new Legion hostel at Haverstock Hill. Father Creedon, the Spiritual Director of the Concilium, in his address sought to show the importance to the Church of Edel’s mission. After him, Mr. Nagle, then President of the Concilium, on whom would fall the heaviest part of the correspondence with Edel, expressed the inmost thoughts of all present. A work for God was about to be accomplished; they remembered the Acts of the Apostles, in which the Holy Ghost chose his instruments, and sent them afar. Now that same Gospel was having its sequel and continuation. When her turn came, Edel spoke a few simple, unaffected words; she asked the great Legionary family to pray for her mission, because “without God we can do nothing”. Mrs. De la Mare, President of the Senatus of England, answered this appeal in the name of all. But she began by saying how great her surprise was at seeing Miss Quinn again, and alive.

“Some years ago,” she recalled, “I was on a visit to Ireland. One day some Legionaries said to me: ‘Will you come with us to Newcastle Sanatorium, where we are visiting a Legionary who is very ill.’ I accompanied them and found, as they said, a very seriously affected patient. I forgot her name, but ever after I retained an indelible mental picture of that Legionary, so near to death and yet so radiantly cheerful. So you can imagine my stupefaction,” concluded Mrs. De la Mere, “at now seeing before me in the intrepid adventurer of Africa the poor invalid of Newcastle!”

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The *Llangibby Castle*, a 12,000-ton liner, belonging to the Union-Castle Line, was to weigh anchor on Thursday. At the last moment the date of departure was postponed to Friday morning.

This unexpected delay enabled Edel to do some indispensable last-minute shopping, but, unfortunately, prevented some of the Legionaries from seeing her off at the boat. Instead, Edel saw them off at Euston. After that forestalled farewell, the remainder spent that last evening with her.

Friday, 30th October, was a glorious day of bright sunshine and clear air. A special train brought the travellers from St. Pancras to the ship. At 11.30 the party reached Tilbury. They went aboard, helped Edel to arrange her light luggage in the cabin, which they inspected thoroughly in order to judge if she would be comfortable. Then they went on deck to look over the ship and inquire for the missionaries who were to be Edel’s fellow-travellers. Snapshots were

taken so as to register permanently those last memories. Everybody sought to look unconcerned, and talked away for the sake of talking.

A blast of the siren warned non-travellers that the time had come to go ashore.

Everyone lingers on to the very last moment.

Edel had said to one of those who spent those last days with her: "Pray for me and keep on joking, as much as you can, so that I shall not break down." The moment was a poignant one; all were fighting for self-control and striving to hide their emotion. Edel, near the gangway, threw her arms round her friends without speaking. All those who had come with her had tears in their eyes as they waved to her from a distance.

The ship moved slowly out

CHAPTER X

THE VOYAGE BEGINS

*"To every man there openeth
A way and ways and a way,
And the High Soul climbs the High way
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And, in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
And to every man there openeth
A High way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The way his Soul shall go."*

JOHN OXENHAM.

EDEL was at last in possession of her dream of total self-oblation. Had she not confessed one day that she prayed unceasingly that God would give her the grace of loving Him greatly, of making Him loved, and of dying as a martyr in His service? In the darkest hours at the sanatorium she did not lose confidence. Now God had granted her desire.

Humanly speaking, her going was a gamble. To propose it required the spirit of faith and the calm, sure courage of Mr. Duff. Edel was aware of this: her heart was overflowing with thankfulness to the man who had "dared". On board the ship that was bearing her to Mombasa, she wished her first act to be an expression of gratitude to him. At the moment of parting she had not had the strength to speak the words she ought to have spoken to him, because they were too deeply laden with emotion, too sacred. She took up her pen. That letter, which unlocked her wealth of feeling, had in her eyes the status of a last testament. Here it is:

"I could not say thanks, as I was afraid of breaking down, perhaps, but it is good to feel one is trusted, and it will be a help in the days to come. I would like you to remember always, whatever happens, that I am *glad* you gave me the opportunity of going. I realise it is a privilege and also that, had you not persisted, I would never have been sent. I only hope I do not fail the Legion when the work comes to be done. I am counting on all the prayers to counteract that danger.

"Whatever be the consequence, *rejoice* that you had the courage to emulate Our Lord in His choice of weak things, in Faith. Any

sorrow caused to others was worth it. Remember, I knew that you felt pretty badly that others were suffering. Have no regrets. I am not going to refer to this again. I am glad you let me go—the others will be glad later.”

“Whatever be the consequences. . . .” Those words were well weighed. Edel was risking her life; well she knew it; she had offered to God a holocaust that she would not recall.

“Rejoice that you had the courage to emulate Our Lord in His choice of weak things, in Faith.” Mr. Duff, in supporting her, had acted with a wisdom that the “wise and prudent” could not understand. She was thinking of the shock he would suffer one day on hearing of her death: her letter sought to mitigate it in advance.

Her word of “thanks” is sublime in its delicate tactfulness. “The others will be glad later.”

Edel was fully aware how great a sacrifice her departure imposed on her own people; her faith enabled her to look beyond the separation and feel even here below the promised hundredfold reward. God does not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity. She believed that and drew from it that serene sureness of hers which the future would so amply justify.

Edel did not write her spiritual autobiography: that was not her mission or her special gift. But that letter of hers is, as it were, her life in miniature. By reading its few lines, and between the lines, one can touch the very substance of her soul.

This glimpse of her deepest feelings reveals to us what is hidden under that ever-valiant gaiety. “I am not going to refer to this again” —what an eloquent description of her those words convey! God and souls will be her only consideration: she herself does not exist. We are all the time left guessing as to what she is really feeling and thinking. All through her correspondence, she was to appear as the strong-minded woman, immersed in her business—but which was also the “Father’s business”. Her letters have nothing lyrical about them. On the contrary, they are very matter of fact, always in a hurry, full of questions and of information. Her correspondence with the Central Council was voluminous: for nearly eight years she sent her frequent bulletins. One has to search them carefully to find, here and there, her own personal reactions. These come out sometimes in a humorous conclusion or in the turn of a phrase; but one has to be on the alert to discover her in the deliberately unemotional, conventional style. To understand her, we must study the life she lived.

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After having written with her pen that letter to Mr. Duff, Edel opened up her typewriter and continued writing letters until 5 o’clock in the evening. It was, as she admitted to one of her correspondents, an inconvenient operation. For she was typing lying down, her typewriter on her chest, trying to avoid sea-sickness; which did not prevent her from saying “Everything is O.K.” or from signing herself “yours floatingly, Edel.” The truth was that she was feeling very ill and required exceptional resolve to be up for Mass the following morning. She was there, however—but the effort was too much for her and immediately after Mass she had to go back to bed.

Providence had a happy surprise in store for her. The saloon where all the priests said Mass was too small; besides, it had to be cleared by 7.30 a.m. As Edel was travelling first class, “for want of anything better”, and as her cabin was very suitable, it was decided that two Masses should be celebrated every morning in her “cell”. The Lord was bestowing a precious favour on her! “It is glorious,” she writes, “and I am enraptured.” Much to her delight, she was made sacristan. Not unlike Martha in Bethany, she was able to offer hospitality to the Master. She was too attentive to God’s slightest signs not to recognise this “chance” as Providence in disguise. Edel stayed in her cabin only for the two Masses and when she was writing. The rest of the time she spent with the Loreto nuns, whom she joined in the “tourist” section of the ship. Meals were taken in common and were full of jollity. There was an international touch about them that had its own piquant charm: her table included two Anglican deacons, four Mill Hill Fathers, a Catholic lady from Nice with her Protestant husband, six Holy Ghost Fathers, two Franciscan Sisters, and an Anglican clergyman.

This cocktail of travellers amused Edel. Very soon they were on general good terms and she wrote: “We have blended well.” Since the essence of Legionary technique is personal contact, she set to work at once.

“I have decided,” she wrote on 30th October, “that it would be as well for me to have my meals tourist; it really brings me more in contact. I can always bring the nuns into the first class for afternoon tea! So you can see, I am going to make good use of all the feeding; I hope this satisfies you.” A little later she wrote the following lines, which give an idea of the atmosphere:

“Talking of meals reminds me to tell you a good joke. I was so busy writing to-day that I forgot all about lunch (do not get annoyed—this is a reassurance) until it was too late. When I went to tea, each priest coming in wanted to know had I been ill, what had happened, etc. It seems that at lunch the fear was expressed that I

was left ashore at Palma. But as most of them had seen me since, they were reassured on that score. The nuns said they had gone in search of me but had to give up through not knowing the number of my cabin. On top of this, one of the old hands, a Mill Hill Father, who looks about seventeen at most, gave me a lecture on fattening up, etc. I assure you, the atmosphere is just like home, authentic Legion: so now I trust you are satisfied that I cannot go far off the straight and narrow path."

Edel had received orders to keep a traveller's log. The editor of the Legion journal, *Maria Legionis*, insisted on it, telling her that that was the best way of getting prayers for her expedition. She did not care much for this sort of exercise, but did as she was asked, which allows us to follow her life on board the *Llangibby Castle*.

The crossing of the English Channel was favoured by a warm sun, which seemed a foretaste of the Mediterranean. The Bay of Biscay, unfortunately, put an end to the pleasant spell, and the sea became rough. Edel got up for Mass, but had to leave the chapel before it was ended, and return to bed. She tried to type lying down, but it was too awkward and she was obliged to surrender. She apologises for the mass of mistakes: "I seem to have perpetrated every possible variety of fault." The attacks of sea-sickness were so intense that one of the Loreto nuns wondered whether it would really be suicide to stay in bed if orders were given to evacuate the ship. After dinner—Edel did not venture to attend meals in the saloon—two missionaries came to enquire about her and to offer their services, "in case," she jokingly writes, "I should be in need of the last sacraments." Happily the coast of Portugal came in sight and the sun with it.

On 2nd November, the feast of All Souls, conditions on board were better. Edel rose for Mass and was able to go to the saloon for meals. They teased her about the funeral that did not come off. She spent all day with the priests and nuns, and spoke to them about the Legion of Mary. For some, it was a revelation. Others listened without too much attention, but Edel would come back to the charge again and again. "I feel quite cheered up," she wrote one day, "now that Father W. himself has manifested interest in the Legion. I find that I have all the instinct of a commercial traveller."

One of the missionaries in the party put down on paper his impressions of her: "An absolute apostle! How could we expect her to act otherwise! I accepted Miss Quinn as one of God's good gifts to the Missions."

His contact with Edel was not without its sequel: a few years later, he gave her the surprise of exhibiting to her five flourishing *Præsidia* in his Mission centre.

*I could not say 'thanks'
as I was afraid of breaking down 'tearfully',
but it is good to feel one is wanted &
it will be a help in the days to come.*

*I would like you to remember always,
whatever happens, that I am glad you
gave me the opportunity of going, &
realize it is a privilege and also that
only you persisted I, presumably, would never
have been sent. I only hope I do not fail the
Legion when the work comes to be done. I
am counting on all the prayers to
counteract that danger, whatever be the
consequence, rejoice you had the courage
to emulate our Lord, in His choice of weak
things, in faith. Any sorrow caused to others was
worth it, remember; I know that you felt pretty
badly the fact that others were suffering.*

*Have no regrets, I am not going to
refer to this again - I am glad you let me go - the
others will be glad later.*

Very Sincerely thanks,

*Pray for
Edel.*

HER FIRST ENVOY BULLETIN.

"She took up her pen. That letter, which unlocked her wealth of feeling, had in her eyes the status of a last testament." - (*The Life*, p. 91.)

Edel did not fight shy of the amusements got up on board. Though she did not play tennis or quoits or cards, she did assist at some of the concerts and looked on at the dancing. The most popular entertainment, because it was the rarest, was the encountering of other ships: then everybody came on deck to contemplate the spectacle.

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On Thursday, 5th November, the passengers were awakened by the sound of planes wheeling about the ship. They were entering the harbour of Palma; the planes had come to inspect the new arrival. The harbour was full of warships, Italian, Spanish, English and German. This was the period after the Ethiopian War and the sanctions against Italy, and the race of armaments had started afresh. The Mediterranean was no longer an English lake—events had proved that—and the future protagonists of the Rome-Berlin axis were making warlike speeches, occasionally punctuated by the rattling of weapons. The two sides were watching one another, premonitory symptoms of the second world conflict.

Edel sets down some of the things she has observed: "The German cruiser which we saw at quite close quarters had an aeroplane on board. The Italian boat was absolutely bristling with guns and seemed to be equipped with torpedoes. On the German boat this morning there was a parade of troops, and they played 'God Save the King'. We were told it was in our honour, as we were quite close. After breakfast we had two hours on shore. The quay was full of Spanish troops, all heavily armed, and we were well scrutinised." On Friday, 6th November, there was a halt at Marseilles. Her little party went up to pray in the church of "Notre Dame de la Garde" which dominates the harbour from on high. Edel stood gazing at the long wires hanging from the arches and supporting miniature ships, aeroplanes, hydroplanes, and even a parachute. It was perhaps not very artistic, but it was very touching. They wandered round Marseilles. It seemed odd to be on land, in a whirlpool of trams and automobiles! "Only this day week we left London, but it feels like years ago," she writes.

They re-embarked and next day called at Genoa. There a visit was paid to the cemetery, and Edel sets down her impressions: "Quaint monuments are to be seen; one of them is a tiny replica of the Milan Cathedral. There is also a crematorium; those who so desire are allowed to see their relations being cremated, which process takes two

hours. One particular monument over a grave represented a man and his wife. She alone was deceased, but he was also represented, life-size, and wearing a bowler hat."

After that they had to go aboard and enjoy once more the doubtful charm of the ship's rolling. Edel put up the best fight she could, and had some periods of success. The ship passed between Corsica and Sardinia on one hand, and the island of Elba on the other. "Poor Napoleon must have had a dull time there," writes Edel, at the sight of that pitifully lonely and deserted island.

On Monday, 9th, the log notes: "Was up for Mass and felt well to-day. We passed Stromboli, which was only smoking, and then down the Messina Straits, with Italy on one side and Sicily on the other. We saw Mount Etna, but its head was in the clouds, and there were no fireworks. To-day there was a sweepstake on board, based on the number of miles the ship would cover. Also, a sports committee was formed and arrangements were made to celebrate the 11th of November suitably. To-day was mild but too cold for light clothes. There was an exquisite sunset, which came very quickly. We had to put our watches on by half-an-hour.

"Excitement, because a stowaway has been discovered! He came on at Genoa and got away with it until he ate somebody else's dinner, and then the fat was in the fire. He is being kept until the boat gets to Port Said, when he will be sent back. He had spent all the day on the deck, mixing with people, and no one suspected him."

"Wednesday, 11th November—Armistice Day! Day fine but breezy. At 10.55 a.m. the Last Post was sounded and there was two minutes' silence. The boat slackened speed; everyone paraded on the top decks. Wrote practically all day and have nearly all my arrears in order. Have decided, from general observation, that when it comes to freakish clothing the men on board are not outdistanced by the women."

"Thursday, 12th November. Got a letter by Air Mail most unexpectedly, as I did not think it would be possible to catch up on the boat. Enjoyed it very much.

"Port Said is far from impressive. Palm trees border the street which runs along the quay, and the people, brown-faced, with red fez, are in throngs. One cannot move without being pestered by them to buy Turkish delight, jewellery or sponges. They ask fancy prices but usually come down to a few pence in the end. They are very persistent, and follow one along the road with their wares, unless a policeman shouts a warning at them. Then they retreat a little, but only to return anew to the attack. They speak a mixture of languages, and several of them use a Scottish name when addressing one, i.e. :

'Please, Mrs. McIntyre, etc.' One said to me: 'Please buy, Mrs. Harry Lauder,' to the intense amusement of the nuns."

The *Llangibby Castle* slowly entered the Suez Canal. On the horizon was a mountain, barely visible. It was Mount Sinai. After a short halt at Suez, the voyage continued through the Red Sea.

On Sunday, 15th November, the ship entered the roadstead of Port Soudan. The bay resembled a coral reef. One part was arranged as a marine garden for the pleasure of passing travellers. There could be admired the marine flowers intertwined with the sponges, and fish of every colour and every dimension. Halt had to be made while cargo was discharged. Edel watched the unloading of cement: "It was funny," she writes. "The men have a song for every movement they make and they work in perfect rhythm with it. It is a high-pitched drone and gets very monotonous. When a bag of cement burst, two of them got down to stitch it up; the others formed a circle round them, chanting a song and clapping their hands in time with it, while two or three others gave an impromptu dance. Then, when the damage was repaired, with a shout they hoisted the sack on one man's back: one would think it was all a game."

As the halt at Port Soudan was prolonged, Edel took advantage of it to accomplish then and there her first Legion mission. She had been told of an Italian Convent in the town, belonging to the "Pious Mothers of the Negroes". Why should she not try to set up a branch of the Legion there? But how was she to find it? She set off at random, tried in vain to get directions from a policeman, from two passing Africans, from an Egyptian. Finally, she had recourse to the language of signs, took a book out of her pocket, showed the portrait of the Foundress of the Order and by dint of gestures managed to make her meaning clear to the Egyptian, who pointed out the way to the Italian church. Edel found it at last; it was closed; she knocked at a nearby door, but got no sign of life. Just then three little Italian urchins came up from Heaven knows where, and hastened to help her by ringing the bell violently. A nun appeared and brought her in. The school was not a big one. It combined Italian, Egyptian and Mahometan children. Edel was brought through it as a mark of honour, and she managed to speak of the Legion of Mary. She was brought to the priest, who took an interest in the Legion, and wondered if he could make use of it to give life to a men's club that he was about to organise. At the end of the interview, the priest, who had to go and give Benediction, told Edel his grief at having no congregation but the six nuns from the school. Edel begged him to delay for a few minutes so that she could add to that attendance. Then she hurried back to the ship to rally some of the passengers.

Soon she was back in triumph with them. "That was my first Benediction on African soil," she writes.

They had to race back to the ship at top speed, for it was about to hoist anchor.

The voyage progressed without incidents. They called at Aden, then entered the Indian Ocean. The end of the journey was coming in sight. Edel was anxious to finish all requisite letters and wrote steadily in spite of the heat—now become stifling. Now that her adventure was about to begin, she felt more than ever the need of being in close communication with her superiors. She told them again how eager she was to receive orders: "Will you be sure to let me know if I am making *faux pas*, because even if you are too late in one instance, the advice will be useful for future reference. It is such a help to know, when on one's own, your views on these things."

She was slow to follow her own judgment. She had a passion for obedience. Before leaving Ireland, when saying good-bye to a religious community, Edel had asked them to pray that she might do God's Will in all things. "It is so hard to know," she said, "and life is too short for mistakes."

Such was her attitude of mind at this time when she was about to begin her new life. Nothing had more value in her eyes than the Will of God as expressed by her superiors. She knew that obedience was the guarantee of purity of intention and likewise an infallible source of grace. Africa was opening before her, unknown, immense. She begged God Himself to trace her path and to lead her by His ways.

Very early in the morning of the 23rd of November the *Llangibby Castle* entered the harbour of Mombasa, one of the great ports of the African East Coast, and the gateway to Kenya and Uganda.

On the landing stage, Dr. Heffernan, Bishop of Zanzibar, was awaiting the travellers. He had a specially cordial welcome for Edel, who had responded so unhesitatingly to his call.

When the formalities of disembarkation were completed, Dr. Heffernan explained to Edel that Mombasa was not to be the end of her journey. On reflection, he felt that Nairobi, situated more in the centre of the country, was more suitable for extension work. He proposed therefore that Edel should accompany the group of Loreto nuns who were continuing the journey to Nairobi that same afternoon. Edel immediately agreed to this change in her plans. What mattered to her was that she had at last reached the land of Africa and that her mission was about to begin. The rest was a detail. While awaiting the hour of departure of the train to Nairobi, she would go off and explore Mombasa.

CHAPTER XI

HER FIELD OF ACTION

"For the Lord thy God will bring thee into a good land, of brooks and of waters, and of fountains; in the plains of which and the hills deep rivers break out . . . where the stones are iron, and out of its hills are dug mines of brass."

DEUTERONOMY VIII. 7-9.

MOMBASA is a microcosm, or better, a cross-roads where several worlds meet. Walking through its streets, Edel saw in miniature the vast field of action that awaited her. From the very first step, she was met by the crucial problem which all through would threaten the success of her Envoyship: the mixture of races.

The eastern coast, to which Mombasa is the door, belonged formerly to the world of Asia. Ships anchored there, coming not only from the Persian Gulf and from India, but also from China and Malaya. The Arabs settled there and married African wives. Their descendants are the Swahili of to-day who have given their language to all East Africa, from the Nile to the Ocean, and from the River Juba to the River Rovuma.

After the Arabs came the Portuguese with Vasco da Gama. They, in their turn, were driven out, and then the decline began.

One after another the towns became detached from the centre and this disintegration ruined their prestige. After the first world war, all the territory lying between the Juba and Rovuma Rivers on the one hand, and between the Indian Ocean and the Great Lakes on the other, came under British control.

This region, divided into four territories, is governed in various ways, according to the empirical and supple methods of British colonial policy.

Zanzibar is a protectorate; the Sultan is always nominally its head. He has preserved several of his sovereign rights, but he no longer has an army nor the right to declare war. A British Resident assists him.

Uganda is also a British protectorate, but has a more complicated system of government. The old kingdom of Buganda still exists, with

its king, its prime minister, its parliament and its system of chiefs and subordinate chiefs. Within the protectorate there are several minor states with rudimentary institutions, so that Uganda is really a federation of African states, unequally developed. Of the four territories, Uganda is the most prosperous. It has numerous schools, its roads are kept in better repair. This comparative prosperity is due to the intelligence of the inhabitants, to the cultivation of cotton, to the climate, and to its rich soil.

Tanganyika enjoys a special form of government: it is a mandated territory. Its inhabitants belong to more than 119 different tribes; its customs and modes of government are of well-nigh infinite variety, and the work of the apostolate will call for a multiplicity of expedients.

Finally, Kenya, the first territory that Edel was to visit, is the only real Crown colony among them and, as such, is more directly under British control. This vast tract of Africa, which extends for over 1,000 miles from north to south, and more than 750 from east to west, has a population of about 13,000,000 Africans of very diverse races.

These four countries cover a surface greater than England, France, Spain and Italy together. Such was the principal field of action that Edel, the semi-invalid, had been commissioned to cover in the name of the Blessed Virgin. And she was to go even further afield, for she would work also in Nyasaland and spend some months in Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean.

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She was now in the streets of Mombasa, observing with an eye that missed no detail, the multi-coloured and noisy crowd. It was a strange spectacle! She passed bearded Arabs, draped in their long white cotton robes called the Kanzu, and wearing embroidered jackets and red belts. These were of the former dominant race, descendants of the wealthy slave dealers and ivory traders. Seeing them, the mind switches back to the time when East Africa, from Mogadishu to Mosambique, belonged to the Sultan of Muscat. That time is past, but it has left them a courteous, reserved, aristocratic bearing, with occasional gleams of cold arrogance in their glance.

Mingling with this Arab crowd were the Indians. Their ancestors may have come from Bombay, but they were born in Africa. They have kept up family relations with India and send money home to their people, in much the same way as the Italian in America

remembers his mother-country. For them the Indian Ocean is not a barrier; at most it is an inland lake separating two branches of the same family. They are peaceful people; their minds are set on business. For them East Africa is an immense market, where, in exchange for the different textiles, one can buy cheaply maize, millet and skins.

Edel would not have much contact with the Arab and Indian sections. Her apostolate would be directed chiefly to the Africans. What struck her from the first moment was the diversity. Every type of African was to be seen, and the full scale of civilisation from top to bottom was represented. Some (not many in the town itself) were still wearing the dress of their own locality, the men attired in skins or blankets, the women in cloaks and goatskins dyed in red ochre. At the other end of the social scale she met the Europeanised and educated Africans; they, too, were a minority. The great mass of the Africans that she passed in the street ranked between these two extremes. They wore Khaki shorts, cotton shirts of different colours, felt hats; they were barefooted or wearing sandals. There is a more marked physical contrast between these races than between the European peoples. A Kavirondo is a very different type from a beribboned Somali from the North. The former has a broad face, thick red lips, high cheek-bones, a winning smile. The Somali, on the other hand, has equine features, an elegant bearing, a copper-tinted skin: he is cold, polite, reserved. One must never confuse the two races and one must be able to distinguish their characteristics. Edel would have to do with most diverse peoples, having the most opposite customs and the most tender susceptibilities.

She would go to them with the heart of Mary, that is, with a mother's heart, wide open with love of all her children. With a smile, too, more eloquent than the dialects of which she was ignorant, and with a faith able to move the mountains of prejudice.

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At Mombasa Edel made only a short stay. By 4 o'clock that afternoon, according to the wish expressed by Bishop Heffernan, she took the train for Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. It was a long journey: the train climbed up slowly from 50 to 5,500 feet. At the start Edel admired the diversified landscape, with its luxuriant foliage and its brilliant colours. Then the country became less attractive and there was nothing to be seen but stretches of barren plains. Half-way through the Game Preserve, Edel stated in a letter that the only wild

animals she had seen were a few fallow deer and gazelle, roaming about freely. "What a disappointment! I am sure that the prophets of evil at home will be disappointed at such a tame beginning."

The next morning at 10.30 she reached Nairobi. At last she had come to the end of her long journey.

She was invited to stay at first at the Loreto Convent. But as it was outside the town, she eventually arranged to stay at St. Teresa's Convent, Eastleigh, which belonged to the Sisters of the Precious Blood. This convent was attached to the Mission of St. Peter Claver. It was a boarding school with 120 African pupils. When Edel arrived, the church had just been completed; beside the sacristy a little parlour was unoccupied, and there Edel settled down, more than happy to be so near the Master and to live under His roof.

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Nairobi! How often this name was to recur in her correspondence! During the first phase of her African expedition, Nairobi would be the starting-point and the end of every journey, and her place of resting in between. It was to play the same part in respect of her mission as a whole. Her campaign opened there; it was to Nairobi that she finally crept to die; and there her poor body rests in peace. Likewise it was in Nairobi that the Senatus, or Legion Council, for British Equatorial Africa, would be born.

The first impression given by the town is its rusty galvanised iron roofs, scattered over a dusty plain. Patches of green break the monotony of the landscape, particularly the silvery grey trunks of the eucalyptus. The principal streets are strewn with the petals of the mauve jacaranda. Modern six-storey hotels rub elbows with wooden bungalows, Indian shops bursting with goods, native huts. For Nairobi has grown quite suddenly from a little marketing and camping outpost into a commercial and political capital. This forced growth has deprived it of all grace; it is a feverishly active mushroom-town. The population to-day amounts to 100,000; six-tenths of these are Africans, three-tenths Indians, and the remaining tenth Europeans. In spite of these figures, Nairobi looks like an Indian city. For it is the Indians who possess the greater part of the land and business houses; it is they who work hardest and most successfully. Nevertheless, a great mixture of languages is heard there: Hindustani, Gugerati, Swahili, English, Kikuyu, Luo, with occasionally a flavouring of German, Polish, French and Italian.

Nairobi, like Mombasa, is a city of contrasts. You may meet there

the most up-to-date European, and the African countrywoman coming to the market, bowed under the weight of sacks of grain or clusters of bananas. To-day, the African women wear European dresses; a few years ago they were still to be seen clad in goatskins, with spirals of copper gleaming on their arms and ankles. In the heart of the city one may think oneself in a second-class capital, but a few miles away, lions, zebras and giraffes wander at will. With its clash of civilisations and its contrasting landscapes, Nairobi is a city of transition, with no soul of its own, and exhaling a pagan materialistic atmosphere. A letter of 23rd November, 1936, gives Edel's first impressions of the place:

"Nairobi is like an up-to-date town; the buildings are more futuristic in design than ours, particularly the petrol stations (which are as numerous as at home). The altitude makes the air beautifully light. Flowers are in profusion everywhere, huge clusters in mauve and red, and trees uncountable. Night begins to fall at 6 p.m. and then one hears the chirp of the crickets, while the frogs are almost deafening. The hottest period will be around Christmas."

Some days after her arrival, Edel was advised as to the important persons she should go and see, and appointments began to follow each other. She met Sir Joseph Sheridan, Chief Justice and President of the Catholic Association; the contact was an excellent one. "He is a very charming man," writes Edel. "He said he had expected to see a nun's habit; I must be well disguised. He told me he was an Auxiliary member of the Legion and that he had recruited another man. Father Howell W.F. had enrolled him in Uganda. Can you ever get away from the Legion?" She saw other notable Catholics who received her very kindly, but did not disguise from her that her cause was a hopeless one. "They voiced their hopes that I would be successful, but implied I would not be." People were afraid she might be too optimistic. Even the Bishop himself said to her gently, as he gave her full powers and privileges: "Remember, this is not Dublin or Ireland."

And, indeed, Catholic life among the Europeans was far from intense: the feverishly commercial atmosphere was not conducive to the practice of religion. Edel was given tons of advice about the need for prudence and tact. She was told that it would be best to recruit her first Legionaries from among the leading Catholics who were already members of other Catholic Associations. She argued strongly against this point of view: "I keep rubbing it in that the Legion is for everyone and that by starting with the upper classes, one might cut out the ordinary run of people." It is a point of honour with the Legion to recruit its members in all the social grades and to make

appeal to all men of goodwill. Edel wished to give a practical demonstration of this attitude at the very beginning.

There was a more serious matter. At her first steps she was met by a new problem: the segregation and hostility of the different races. She discovered that Nairobi had many centres of Christian life, each with its own churches, that of the Europeans, that of the Goans and that of the Africans. Each division is a closed world. It would be impossible, she was told, to get the Europeans and the Goans to come together into the Legion of Mary. And even more certainly would it be impossible to create mixed groups which would include Africans. You must choose! The Goans are relatively numerous in Nairobi and they are generally deeply religious. They come from Goa, the great centre of Missionary expansion in the East, ever since the time when St. Francis Xavier established his headquarters there. They are at once near the Europeans and very far from them. That is not all. There is another world-apart in Nairobi: the Seychellois, who refuse to be identified with any other ethnic group.

Should she opt for the Europeans? But they were often very much scattered through the city. Could she hope to bring them together and get them to undertake the weekly work of visitation? Would the necessary generosity be found among them?

Edel's correspondence is full of references to this thorny question.

On 16th December, 1936, she writes:

"To give you an idea of the colour question. One day I had arranged to meet the Goan Treasurer, as I wanted to speak to her among other things about her duties. There was not a restaurant or an hotel in Nairobi that we could go into to discuss matters without placing her in the position of being asked to leave. Eventually we applied to the manager of an hotel whom the President knew and as a very special favour he gave us his private office at the top of the building." This episode brings home to us very sharply the inter-racial divisions.

There remained the Africans, concentrated in the parish of St. Peter Claver. How many of them were there? There were about 3,000 fluctuating or seasonal Christians and 1,500 stable parishioners. A good many of them stayed two or three months in Nairobi and then returned to the interior where they spent the next month with their tribe. In such circumstances can one speak of a parish? The term ill describes such a fluid body. And what is more, Edel was told, this floating parish itself is not homogeneous: there are about twenty different tribes there, each priding itself on its special characteristics and its isolationism.

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All these difficulties were condensed in one cry that Edel heard constantly: "Ah! you do not know Nairobi." It was as much as to say: "Give it up." Indeed this advice was offered to her bluntly in as many words. Edel reported on this to Dublin on 3rd December, 1936: "Pessimistic is a mild term to apply to the lot of them. When it comes to organisation and asking them to work, everywhere it is the same: 'You do not know Nairobi.'" As an encouragement to her to accept defeat and leave things as they were, she was even told: "Our Lord's Life was a failure, so why wonder if you have the same fate?" Edel stood up to the prophets of failure. "If it was not the Legion," she concludes, "and if one had not heard the like before, retreat would be the solution."

It was the only solution that she never contemplated.

The Legion has great experience of "the impossible". At every step of its history, the wise and prudent have tried to curb its daring efforts by calling them "impossible": You can't bring street girls on an enclosed retreat, you can't convert a city of sin like Bentley Place, you can't found a Morning Star Hostel or a Sancta Maria. Edel knew a great list of impossibilities—all of which had been overcome. She knew, too, that the Legion teaches that every major impossibility may be divided into a series of minor possibilities, and that one can always attempt the first step. If it is impossible to reach the summit of a mountain in a single stride, one can always climb the first rock, and go from it to the second, and so on. Edel proceeded then with the requisite prudence, by successive steps. Having reconnoitred the ground; having been encouraged by the Bishop in her desire to unite Europeans and non-Africans in the first branch, she launched the offensive. Because of the diversity of tongues, the different races could not work together in the one Præsidium. Edel realised this and resigned herself to it, but still hoped to obtain unity on the higher level, that of the Curia. She kept this bright ideal before her and set to work.

In order to avoid offending susceptibilities by addressing one group before the other, Edel had her talk on the Legion of Mary announced simultaneously in the Goan and European churches. A few people responded to the invitation, perhaps chiefly from curiosity. This was the first contact, a getting down to tin-tacks. After this combined preliminary meeting, Edel invited possible volunteers to a smaller meeting where she could go into details with them. It was a crucial moment—would they respond to this direct invitation, which was a

half-engagement? Would they undertake the entire experiment? At the very entrance to the meeting, someone pointed out to her that the *Handbook* itself declares that the Legion should not be launched, except there is a reasonable chance of success. They left her to draw the obvious conclusion. "Just imagine having the *Handbook* quoted against you!" she writes. She waited with beating heart. For the occasion she had learnt almost by heart her opening address. She waited—and was rewarded for her confidence. To the surprise of everyone, twenty-five persons came to the meeting, among them five Goans. She had not yet carried the day, however. She had to plead Our Lady's cause and answer a multitude of objections and questions. There were already too many associations in existence. The field for apostolic work was already fully occupied. Edel read into those objections the words which had been spoken to Our Lady on Christmas Eve: "There is no room in the inn." Somebody, thinking to give the finishing stroke to the proposal, declared that anyway there was no religious work to be done in Nairobi! At this point Edel got a reinforcement which won the victory. Miss Gannon, who had travelled with her in the *Llangibby Castle* and who was now present in the hall, observed that in her own immediate circle there were fourteen children who needed religious instruction. This statement struck home and roused some sleeping consciences. "Are there any volunteers for a first group?" asked Edel. Six women offered themselves. The first Præsidium of the Legion in Kenya was founded. The name chosen, "Præsidium of the Immaculate Conception" was the obvious one, as the start was made on the vigil of December 8th. The next thing was to get to work. The first activities were the visitation of the hospital and the teaching of catechism on Sunday. A few new volunteers added themselves to the six original members, so that a second Præsidium was started in another parish. The activities were widened: care of the church, distribution of Catholic papers, census of the parish. Little by little the members gained courage. The Europeans often lived at a distance from one another and that obstacle was got over in elegant style; it was decided that in case of need the Legionaries would pay their joint visits by motor car.

On the Sunday within the octave of the Immaculate Conception, the first African Præsidium came into being in its turn. Edel wrote of its beginnings:

"The Legion was first explained to the Children of Mary and to the elders of the Mission, one of the priests acting as interpreter. There were about 100 persons present, of whom 40 were women. An animated discussion followed, during which numerous questions were asked. Then a week was given for reflection.

"The following Sunday, thirteen men and three women expressed their desire to become members of the Legion. The work undertaken by the women was the teaching of catechism and the visitation of the women's wards in the hospital. The men's work was to consist in visitation of the homes, the following up of lukewarm or non-practising Christians, regularisation of marriages, recruiting of catechumens, and teaching of catechism to any catechumens who were in prison."¹

Father Maher, Superior of the Mission, became the Spiritual Director of this first African group. The prayers of the Tesseræ were translated into Swahili. This was the first translation. But Edel would have to arrange for many others as she proceeded to new territories.²

Edel announced to Dublin the good news of these beginnings and added: "If there is failure, the blame is mine. The impossible has happened in other places—why not here? Let us give scope to grace and faith."

Rightly, she attached supreme importance to this first experiment in the East African world: it was a test.

In a letter of 28th December, 1936, she emphasised the apologetic value of this step:

"The importance of the start in Kenya is that, as far as I can see, it is a backward region from the Church viewpoint. I mean by this, that the Catholic religion is young here amongst the Africans. I believe this is correct. In Uganda it is well established and the Church is flourishing. Therefore, to have the Legion working successfully amongst the people here will be a trump-card when I go elsewhere. In Uganda they will probably point out that in Nigeria³ English is generally spoken, so that it is not so difficult for the African to take to the Legion. But they will have no answer to the fact that the Legion has taken root in East Africa, where the people know no English and have not as long a Church tradition as themselves. This would also hold good for Bagamayo and Kilimanjaro which, though older I *think*, than Zanzibar, are still not as advanced as Uganda."

Edel concluded her letter by describing how she had spent Christmas Day among the Africans; one feels that already she is heart and soul wrapped up in them:

"Christmas eve was delightful," she writes. "I think I told you

¹ Article by Edel Quinn in *La Vie Catholique* (February 11, 1940) edited in Port-Louis.

² The *Handbook* now exists in Swahili and Luganda.

³ The Legion was at that time solidly established in Nigeria, and this fact was known.

that Father Maher insisted that I come to the African church for Midnight Mass. Accordingly I took a room in the hotel.

"It was a High Mass. The church was packed with Africans—about 1,500 were there, I was told. The people sang, of course. It was a treat to see the African boys as acolytes, perfect discipline and reverence, not a mistake. When it came to Communion, practically everyone in the church must have gone up to the rails, because the two priests took half an hour before they finished. It was certainly an unforgettable sight. I would not have missed it for anything. Then they all went to the Crib afterwards. They were conspicuously reverent in church and joined in singing the Latin responses and the Credo in irreproachable fashion.

"At the 6 a.m. Mass, the whole top of the church was packed with women, their babies, as usual, on their backs or in their arms. None of these had been at the Midnight Mass; theirs was the 6 a.m. Mass. Again large numbers at Communion, and the same at the later Masses. It was fine to see all these mothers and babies go up to the altar rails. Most of the babies were asleep, but the ones who were awake made up for the others!

"After the last Mass I joined Father Maher at his breakfast; it was a quick affair, as there were forty adult catechumens awaiting Baptism."

That Christmas in the land of Africa was one of Edel's happiest memories. The only European in that crowd, her presence there was symbolical: the Africans instinctively understood its meaning and its importance.

Some days after Christmas, Edel visited their quarters in Nairobi. Through the picturesque description one glimpses the dawn of her love for the people which was to grow ever greater.

"Yesterday I visited a section of the African location," she wrote on January 14th to Jack Nagle. "These are the houses rented by the Government to Africans. It was an interesting experience. The priest whose district it was came with me, and also the head catechist who knew everybody. The houses have mud walls with a sort of zinc roof. Each house would have about six families in it. A narrow passage from the door leads in to six rooms, three on either side. For coolness and ventilation, they were much better than many poor houses I have visited at home. The priest, with whom we discussed it, agreed that this was so. They were very well kept and tidy. The visit itself was amusing: we had an escort of about six children, joined later by a teacher from the African Mission. When we visited the houses of some of the Legionaries, they also swelled the throng. One of our Legionaries was a veritable Queen of Sheba: coloured handkerchief,

ear-rings, sari effect, and two other coloured draperies made up the ensemble. She carried herself superbly and had a very fine, pleasing face. She led the procession from the time we met her. She was the second wife of a Nandi tribesman and the mother of seven children; but is now a widow. One would have imagined that she was only about twenty. Everything was very interesting. Many of the women were at needlework when we called. Others were just awake after the usual siesta, and others were gossiping. Nearly all the houses had a cat or kitten in evidence, to say nothing of children and babies. We spent about two hours there, and have to go back next week to finish the calls to Christians who have not been visited. It seems the Europeans never visit these quarters at all; of course, Legio Mariæ was mentioned by the priest wherever we called, when the person visited was not a member of the Legion.

She ended by a hope that seemed generously Utopian: "I was wondering if we could not have the Acies⁴ in March, composed of the African and non-African Præsidia. It would be great if we could."

⁴The Acies is the great annual gathering of the Legion at which the consecration to Our Lady is renewed, individually and collectively.

CHAPTER XII

THE OBSTACLE RACE

"Lord, teach me to be generous, teach me to love and serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and to look for no reward, save that of knowing that I do Thy Holy Will."

ST. IGNATIUS.

EDEL had to grapple with a superhuman task. To have the Legion accepted and its spirit and methods respected, to root it firmly, to watch over its development and the perseverance of its members: all this was a constant struggle, a veritable obstacle race.

She had to begin by trying to convince every missionary and to persuade him to read the *Handbook*. That was the first battle. Almost everywhere the answer given her was that they had too much work to do and no time for reading the book. By dint of smiling obstinacy, Edel often won this first skirmish. Then the real fight began. The *Handbook* was too uncompromising, they told her. This was a refrain with a thousand variations which she heard everywhere. One must select and adapt. "You do not know Nairobi." And everyone had an improvement to suggest; the meetings should be monthly, not weekly; visitation should be done by Legionaries singly and not in pairs. One wants this; another wants that. Edel, in the presence of a veteran missionary, could not speak in the name of experience or discuss matters as with an equal. She remembered always that the priest is the representative of God, and she showed him a never-failing respect. Edel on her knees before Fr. Magennis is ever the image of her faith in the Church. She argued as little as possible. She simply offered an instrument of conquest. Her trump cards were the heroism of her life, her manifest self-forgetfulness, her smile, and her sense of humour.

Here is how Rev. Fr. Reidy, C.S.Sp., describes Edel's first contacts:

"It is almost impossible to conceive how enormous was her task. With her fine sensitivity and keen realistic mind, she must have felt and actually discovered that, notwithstanding the goodwill of a



EDEL QUINN AT THE AGE OF 4.

"An extraordinary goodness shines out from the face, framed in its abundant tresses."—(*The Life*, p. 4.)

very small group of friends, she faced a gigantic undertaking practically alone. Her outward manner was far from showing this. Her cheerful and happy disposition carried with it a certain lightheartedness which was infectious. Her keen sense of humour was ever on the alert. She laughed and made others laugh. She inspired fun, but never frivolousness. Even in her lightest moments, there was an undercurrent that revealed her serious mind.

"Almost always, except when circumstances made it imprudent or less wise to do so, the conversation came around to the Legion. The transition had taken place before one realised it. Then it was business. You could still joke, but it was a different matter if in any way it could be interpreted as treating the Legion lightly. One felt reproved, not so much by her reply—and she could be very quick in good-humoured repartee—but by the fact that her refined, sensitive nature was hurt.

"The inevitable objections to starting the Legion were many. As soon as they were put forward, they were answered. She welcomed these objections, when she saw they were sincerely meant. She realised that they were made by people who knew little, if anything, about the Legion. In countering them, she was patient, clear and precise.

"Difficulties nearly always attend the starting of the Legion anywhere. There were many difficulties proper to East Africa which were entirely new to her. She never quailed before difficulties. Her immediate reaction to newly-suggested obstacles was to see how they could be overcome.

"The idea of a lady coming to inaugurate the Legion was a surprise, even to many Europeans. To the Africans, the arrival of Miss Quinn as Legion organiser must have seemed not only strange but absurd. Let it be recorded that this prejudice melted like snow under a tropical sun the moment she made contact with them. Not only did prejudice vanish, but it was replaced by esteem and admiration. They were quick to discern that this European "Bibi" was different from the others. In the first place, she showed a deep and practical interest in them. She talked and laughed with them, unmistakably happy in their company, without any of that aloofness to which they were accustomed from the European. Her tireless activity was free from self-interest or desire for gain. Of the self-sacrifice demanded by the Legion she was an outstanding example. Her mission was not only purely spiritual, but concerned itself intimately with the Blessed Virgin, and this struck in them a responsive chord. In an inconceivably short time she won their supreme esteem and, greater achievement still, that esteem has lived on. Her work brought her into touch

with every nationality and type of character and with clergy and laity. Seldom if ever did she fail to awaken their admiration and sympathy, and nearly always she secured their co-operation. She brought to bear the full force of her unusually sound common sense in dealing with their difficulties. No power on earth, however, could make her modify a ruling of the *Handbook*—one might as well try to get a river to flow up a hill.

"I speak of issues already clearly fixed by the Legion higher authority. In minor points she was not only open to suggestions, but welcomed and encouraged them. The speed with which she moved about and her facility for doing things rapidly were but the visible reflexes of a mind that was ever active and clear. Once she had decided on a certain line of action, those around her regarded it as just as good as done.

"It was but natural that she expected something similar from others. She did not want a Præsidium started until she had reasonable grounds for thinking it would succeed. When, notwithstanding her best efforts, the wished-for Præsidium did not materialise, she accepted the situation patiently and with sweet reasonableness. Disappointed she would be, but it would have to be an acute observer who could see it, or some intimate associate to whom she would admit it. In such a case, however, her disappointment arose not from a sense of her own failure, but because an opportunity of bringing souls nearer to God and to His Mother was lost, at least for the time being. She never gave up hope. She awaited the time when circumstances would change for the better, and often that waiting was rewarded."

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When the preliminary battles had been won, Edel had to introduce the Legion to the would-be members.

First obstacle: the variety of the languages, often as numerous as the tribes themselves. It was not easy to translate the Legion prayers satisfactorily. Edel had to see to getting versions of these prepared in Swahili, Luganda, Kikuyu, Luo, Luhang, Kimeru, Kikamba. In her extensive Legion correspondence we meet sentences like this, which speak volumes: "As the Hindoo printer did not know Swahili, we had to revise the Tesseræ¹ carefully. I think we corrected the proofs eight or nine times before getting the official proof."

¹ Text of the official Legion prayers.

She drew up a brief synopsis of the Legionary regulations in English, and it was translated into Swahili, but she resisted the temptation to write a résumé of the *Handbook*. "If we produced sketches of the *Handbook*," she writes, "people would give up the book for its shadow." To provide for the need for familiarising the Legionaries with the *Handbook*, it was decided that the Spiritual Director should render the book in sections to the meeting by way of the Allocutio, or weekly spiritual talk. Edel was keenly alive to the vital part played by the priest in transmitting the Legion spirit to the members.

"After all," she wrote to a priest, "a Præsidium is what its Spiritual Director makes it. That is particularly the case in Africa where the people depend for training and guidance, for methods and Legion spirit, altogether on the priest. It makes all the difference in the world when the latter really interests himself in the work and helps the members. The fruit of that interest appears abundantly."

Sometimes, when there was no missionary present to interpret for her, Edel had to call on the services of an emergency translator who knew a few words of English. This arrangement was not without its risks of misinterpretation. Edel tells how, one day at Kabaa, when she explained that she could not remain long with the Præsidium as she did not know Wakamba, her audience broke into vehement applause. "I nearly faded away," she writes. "I asked the interpreter: 'Whatever did you say?' 'The people are all very pleased, Mother, that you are going to learn Wakamba,' was the ingenuous reply."

Edel concludes the story in her typically humorous way: "The best moment was when he said: 'Mother, it is getting hot, you had better go into the car.' I assure you 'Mother' went, and with a sigh of relief."

The language barrier was not the only one. When it had been surmounted, the Africans had to be made accept the missionary idea, that is, their duty of handing on the Faith to their pagan brothers. That demand was an unfamiliar one. They understood that the missionaries or even the catechists should have this duty. But that each of themselves had a mission to save his brothers and that they were bound to respond to the Pope's insistent summons to the apostolate—that was beyond their present state of knowledge, and it bewildered them. So here was a fresh battle to wage and win.

The principle had first to be got home—and this caused a brisk fire of questions. The Africans are unwilling to enter lightly into obligations, and so they dissected the proposition in all its aspects.

"The questions," writes Edel, "are sometimes amusing and usually

very varied. The discussion may be prolonged indefinitely, for the African has not the same notion of time as the European.

"After I had explained that a Legionary has no subscription to pay and must not give money to those he visits, the following question was put to me: 'While I am doing Legion work, it begins to rain and my clothes are soiled; who will pay for the soap to wash them?' And here is another: 'I see that there must be a secretary. Who will pay for the ink he uses?'"

"The girls generally inquire about clothes and dancing. For example: 'If I join the Legion, may I go on wearing pretty clothes?' 'May I go on dancing?' 'May I get married?'"

When all the questions had been answered, goodwill enlisted, and the work got under way, Edel often had to fight against indolence and lack of staying-power. Eternally she had to be correcting defects; setting herself against the idea of the easy way out; opposing the universal tendency to half-measures. She heard endlessly: "You do not know Nairobi!" and likewise she would be told: "You do not realise how changeable the Africans are!" She trusted them, however, and in 1939 when on her way to Dar-es-Salaam she visited nearly all the branches she had founded a few years before, she was able to pay them this tribute: "In nearly every case, not only were the first members still there, but their numbers had increased, and sometimes new Præsidia had been formed."

Edel had not only to deal with the objections of individuals. There were also the social shackles, the stifling weight of what Bergson calls the silent moral code. The Christians lived in an atmosphere that was still quite pagan. In certain regions those who undertook the apostolate were truly heroic. They had to brave the dread of poison which roused an intense and warranted fear. The visitation of certain houses could not be done without danger; and many were the traps laid for them. They must set at defiance a host of customs, and even in case of need, defy the charms of the local witch doctor, who menaced children, herds and crops. It must not be forgotten how new Christianity is among them. Their own parents might be pagan still.

Why should we expect a first, or even a second, generation of Christians to shake off entirely a belief in omens and superstitious practices? The Christians who in the teeth of all that sinister ritual undertake the Legion work, doubly deserve the title of apostles.

Again, each country has its own peculiarities, and missionary work must adapt itself to the most varied situations. "Each region and each tribe," writes Edel, "has its own special difficulties. For example, among the Kikuyus, where a family's whole wealth consists

in its herds, and when until recently, education exercised little attraction, the boys are in theory allowed to go to school, but likewise the cattle have to be grazed all day long. Theory yields to hard fact, and Legion work in this tribe—where the young people play a very important part—consists in assembling these little boys and girls in the village at night, instructing them in the rudiments of the catechism, and teaching them to pray."

There was sometimes a further difficulty, that of learning even the simplest prayers. Edel writes: "A Legionary, who had been regularly visiting an old woman every week for a year and a half, said to me: 'It is always the same; what I teach her one week is forgotten the next. When, after keeping to one point for a long time, I go on to the next, she immediately forgets the first. Up to now she has only just managed to memorise the principal prayers.'"

"As the old lady shows no sign of approaching death, it looks as if that Legionary has a few more years of work before her."

Still another obstacle was the position of women in those countries. Edel exhorted them to do apostolic work as well as the men. Can we realise the revolutionary character of this appeal in a land where women play such a subordinate part? What would their menfolk think of such emancipation?

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And finally, over and above all those social obstacles, there remained to be vanquished the topographical difficulties. The rains constitute a major handicap for all who travel in Africa. Certain regions are completely isolated for six months of the year. All of them have a rainy season, lasting at least two or three months, during which it is impossible to get from one mission to another. Except in part of Uganda and around Nairobi, few roads are then passable, on account of the absence of bridges which have been carried off by the floods. Often even, the missions cannot be reached by the principal roads. The traveller must take short-cuts or footpaths, leaving his vehicle behind. This is far from pleasant, as Edel freely admits.

"The rainy season has set in. When it rains, it rains I assure you. And the roads! you could not believe what they develop into! An aristocratic car would never deign to negotiate them. I am sure you travel through as much field as mud to escape the bad bits. You skid around like anything; you would almost enjoy it. The variety of the cars is something which goes beyond the power of imagining. There is a particular one in which I have travelled plenty. I have to hold

the lower part of the windscreen to the side to stop the deafening din, but the priest-owner takes it quite placidly. The car goes, and at a fair speed, too, so little things like that don't matter. That car is only held together by twine—if I am to credit the statements of his colleagues."

Father Maher, who knew Edel very well at Nairobi, asserted one day that this sick girl used to do what no missionary could manage: long journeys of 100 miles, in uncomfortable lorries, through heat and dust. She would set off in the morning and return at about one o'clock. Then while the missionaries who had done the same trip were taking a rest, Edel would re-start work and keep at it till evening.

Those innumerable hours on the roads were not unprofitable time. Edel transfigured them into hours of recollection and prayer. In this kind of roving retreat, her soul found peaceful union with God. Appropriate is the following, found in her notes:

"To be with Him in union with Mary—just loving Him in my soul during the day, during travelling, uniting my actions with the similar actions done by Him whilst on earth.

'Master, where dwellest Thou? And they abode with Him.' My privilege is the same.

Rest in His presence, and my Guardian Angel will adore Him for me.

Silence.

Everything is His, through Mary.

Delight to give oneself more and more in everything to Him through Her."

From this silent prayer she drew the strength which so visibly "supercharged" her and astonished all observers. One missionary comments on the "Pauline" flavour of Edel's journeys. Then he goes on: "When one speaks of 'Safari', of travelling in Africa, one must have lived there in order to realise what it entails. A journey of, say, a hundred miles in a good car on the good roads of Europe may be a pleasure, but for many—and I am included in the many—the pleasure dwindles if the distance be three hundred miles. Now one may find the same car in Africa, but not the same roads. African roads in many cases are just untended earthen tracks. The bone-shaking experience over such roads in such vehicles severely taxes the endurance of the average person. What a racking it must have been for Edel's frail constitution! Yet no one ever heard her complain. On the contrary, she unvaryingly returned from a trip flowing over with good humour."

An incident shows her vividly to us, at grips with nature unleashed.

She had hired a seat in a lorry travelling from Arusha to Nairobi, a distance of about 150 miles. Her fellow-passengers were Africans and some few Indians. It was the rainy season, when most people would hesitate to take such a journey, even in a good car, for fear of getting stuck in the mud, or of slithering into a roadside ditch. Two friends, who knew she was making that journey, left Nairobi in the evening about 5 o'clock with the hopeful intention of meeting her some thirty or forty miles out and taking her by car to Nairobi. The threatening storm soon broke. Thunder and lightning preceded a real tropical downpour. Darkness soon fell. The car which had set out to meet Edel speeded on through a morass of black mud. At times, the track, now almost undiscernible, broke up into branches leading in several directions. There was no question of slowing up to find the right one; stopping in such circumstances would almost certainly have meant sinking down, until the chassis rested on the ground. By sheer good fortune they finally contacted the Arusha lorry shortly before midnight.

Edel emerged from it, full of fun and life as usual. She climbed into the car and the trio set off for Nairobi.

At first all went well. Then as they were entering the area where the storm had been most violent, the going became more difficult. The swervings of the car, says one of those who were in it, resembled the tactics of a tricky centre threequarter evading the tackling of his opponents. Suddenly those clever tactics came to an end; the car dived into a veritable quagmire. All attempts to get it out succeeded only in sinking it deeper. The three realised that they were "anchored" not only for the remainder of the night but until help became available next day. Edel's attitude was one of absolute unconcern about herself. But she was all solicitude for her rescuers and for the car which was in danger of being ruined. The morning broke; it was bright and sunny, but no more so than Edel. Beaming and alert, she chaffed her friends over their make-up of now nearly dry rich black mud, acquired at midnight in an effort to lever up the wheels and release the car from its miry bed. For a while they hoped that the lorry in which Edel had travelled might come up on them, but the hope was vain. The lorry, too, had apparently met its Waterloo. The morning was well advanced before help arrived from Nairobi. The car was "rescued" and the journey completed at noon.

On arrival Edel's first concern was to get to her room unperceived and so avoid all sensational attention. So well did she succeed in this that the incident hardly became known to anyone. Marvellous to relate, the fatigue of that long journeying without a meal, the burning heat of the day, followed by a cold night, had no evil effects on her

frail health. So engrossed was she in her mission that she seemed to ignore such things.

That is one episode mercifully saved from oblivion! There must have been many others which will remain forever unknown!

During the first months, Edel went from one Mission to another under the care of missionaries. She experienced all the risks associated with the use of very miscellaneous and more than dubious means of transport. Nothing could curb her spirit or prevent her from keeping an engagement. She tried to show by her example the value of punctuality. An African missionary, visiting the Morning Star in Dublin, told one day how deeply Miss Quinn's heroic devotion to a promise had moved him. A meeting had been arranged at eight miles from the Mission station where she was staying, and Edel had promised to attend it. The night before, a terrible downpour flooded the countryside; in the morning when it was time to start, Miss Quinn found herself hemmed in by a sea of mud. The Fathers said to her: "You cannot go; look at the flood."

"I promised to be there," replied Edel, "and I explained to them that on no account does a Legionary miss a meeting."

"Very well, but there is no trace of the road left! It would be easier to swim than to walk in that morass!"

Edel's only answer was to beg for someone who would guide her. Stimulated by this indomitable constancy, the missionary busied himself to hunt up a lorry with chains on its wheels, and an expert driver who would dare the trip. With some degree of trouble, he found both, and the expeditionary force got under way. After seven miles, the lorry was embraced by the mud and firmly gripped.

Edel and her companions got out and the journey was slowly continued on foot. Edel arrived at the appointed hour, covered with mud from head to foot. "No one in the place," concluded the Father, "has ever forgotten that dramatic commentary on the Legion spirit."

CHAPTER XIII

FIRST FRUITS

"A journey of a thousand leagues begins by a single step."

CHINESE PROVERB.

NAIROBI is a centre from which it is easy to visit the surrounding country. As soon as the crushing heat subsided, Edel set out. On 20th January, 1937, we hear this cry of joy from her: "It is raining to-day, a unique event here, and all the world rejoices, for it was not expected until March. When it rains, it rains; it is absolutely torrential, but as it lasts perhaps only half a day, no one complains. It is curious to hear people remark: 'Isn't it lovely to see the rain?' You would not find them saying that at home."

The rainy season was the signal for a more extensive exploration of the country. The work in Nairobi itself offered an ample and varied field of action. From all parts of Kenya, workers converged towards the capital in the search for employment. The other Mission stations of the same Vicariate were situated all around within a radius ranging from a dozen to seventy miles. There were Kikuyu and Wakamba tribes in this district, and also large groups of Jaluos, who belong to Kavirondo, near Kisumu, on Lake Victoria. All these had come to work in the tea, coffee and sisal plantations. It was not easy to contact them. As Sunday was their only free day, all efforts had to be concentrated on that day. During the week the work of the fields or of the forest absorbed them. In addition, the floating population leaves Nairobi periodically and returns to the interior. It was more than difficult to establish a movement firmly on such shifting sands.

Edel's mission did indeed appear to be a gamble. She set to work, beginning with Kiambu and Limuru in Kikuyu territory and pushing on as far as Mangu. From there she ventured into Ukamba country, visiting Kilimambogo, far-off Kabaa and finally Kalimoni in the heart of the coffee and sisal plantations. It was her first close contact with the life of these outlying localities and with the flora and fauna of the country.

Before she left Ireland, her family and her friends had teased her about the lions and tigers she was going to meet in the wilds

of Africa. Edel enjoyed giving an account of her first strange sights: "The only animals so far in view are Eileen O'Connor's lion and monkey, which adorn my dressing table. I am sure the nuns wonder if I am going into second childhood."

A little later:

"Tell Eileen O'Connor that I saw one monkey up a tree on the way, a silver-grey one, with a black face, but was unable to get a snap!"

A few weeks later she wrote to Eileen O'Connor herself:

"I have seen so many monkeys in real life that the model you gave me is now unnecessary as a reminder. The lion is still quite useful, as I have seen nothing of the real article. Some nights ago, however, I was listening to one roaring. We were on the balcony at a Mission after dinner, and one could hear him quite plainly."

She soon became accustomed to the wild life of the country. With a little luck, lions and lion cubs might be met only five miles from Nairobi. In the daytime they remained in the shelter of the forest, but after sunset they came out to look for gazelles, zebras and other game. Travelling by car, one could examine them at close quarters, for the fumes of the petrol disguise the smell of human beings from them, and this lessens the danger. But such an experiment should not be tried often, unless one has strong nerves and a good gun within reach.

On 2nd March, 1937, she writes:

"On Sunday, the Father in charge of this Mission took us on a long drive into the Bush. This particular Mission is near the Wild Game Reserve. First we saw five ostriches, but we were not able to get a close view of them, for they made off at a gallop. Then we encountered herds of zebra; there must have been hundreds of them. And, lastly, we came on nine giraffes. We got within about twenty yards of the latter; as long as one stays in the car they are not frightened. We could see their markings perfectly; one was a light beige colour, and the majority of the others were dark brown. The biggest came quite near the car, so that the base of his neck was over the hood. I got a lovely snap of a corner of the Athy River, which is packed with hippo and crocodiles; and I am told there are lions in the papyrus on its banks."

Edel wished to see the African way of life at close quarters. Her powers of observation were keen and as she went along she enjoyed all that life offered of the agreeable or unexpected.

During one of her trips she was invited to a concert. She accepted with pleasure.

"I was at an African concert," she writes, "of which I enclose

the programme. It was very enjoyable, and in its way unique. It took place out of doors: the background was the garden; in front were two poles along which the curtain was pulled back and forward. It was a starry night, but there was no moon, and a motor car hidden in a corner cast its lights on the actors. The audience were in the wings, some sitting on the ground, others standing. There was a front row of very miscellaneous seats for the 'elite', which consisted of the Rev. Mother of the convent, four priests and myself.

"The dances were particularly interesting, being African ones. The 'jaluo' dance has a peculiar body movement, while the others consist chiefly of a monotonous clapping and movements in time to it. Though I could not understand a word, I believe the play itself was excellent. The actors put vim into it and were free from all self-consciousness, which made it most enjoyable. The school master played the accompaniments on a harmonium. There was an address in the middle, and the whole wound up with three rousing Hip, Hip Hurrahs. Everything was clapped by the audience, in and out of season."

This, however, was only an interlude. Edel had not come to Kenya as a tourist. Not for an instant did she lose sight of her one aim.

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The first place mentioned in her letters is Kiambu, about eight miles from Nairobi. She found there Kikuyus whom she describes as "intelligent, with a good political sense, somewhat dark in colour, not unlike the tint of toast." Father Lynch was with her and a schoolmaster to act as interpreter. She spoke to the people about the Legion, which was spreading all over the world and had come to them this day. We can guess the usual subject matter of her little introductory speech, from model notes that we have. It was made up of a few simple statements.

The Blessed Virgin wishes to continue giving Jesus to the world. We are not Christians if we do not go to our brother and give him Jesus also.

Mary calls upon us: what an honour! She offers us her instrument, the Legion. Are we going to refuse her our indispensable co-operation? She concluded by an appeal for confidence and faith.

As soon as she ceased speaking, there was a stream of questions. At first sight some of these were very odd and somewhat disconcerting to a European mind, but on the whole they were very sensible.

In the beginning there was a certain suspicion of this unknown woman, but Edel won all hearts with surprising rapidity. These simple souls instinctively recognised goodwill and heroism: they received her with ever increasing cordiality and they did not refuse her appeal.

They must not be hurried, however. The African likes to study a problem in all its aspects and at his ease. So it was decided that all should think over the proposal. That arrangement would entail for Edel constant travelling or long delays. This time, when she returned to Kiambu, the result of reflection was happily shown in the triumph of Our Lady. Ten volunteers presented themselves, of whom three were women. They knelt around the Blessed Virgin, Mediatrix of All Graces, as thousands of branches throughout the five continents do to-day. And the work began according to the Legion rules. The Kiambu group took the name of "Our Lady of Perpetual Succour". Its work was to be the teaching of catechism to children of school age. One can guess from some lines of Edel's that this task is not as simple as it seems: the Legionary would need to be cautious in accepting information.

"It seems," she writes, "that every Kikuyu family, when questioned on the number of its children, replies automatically: 'Two; one minding the cattle, the other going to school.' And unless one is definitely sure that the facts are otherwise, one will get no further light on the question. In reality all the remaining children are employed in minding the cattle."

A very special art was required to seek out the straying sheep of the flock, and to make the parents understand the importance of religious and secular education.

Here is how Edel writes from Limuru: "I came out here on Friday evening, arriving at about 9 p.m. Incidentally, we had a puncture en route; it is a pretty rough road. I discussed the Legion with the priest on Saturday, and it was decided to have a junior Præsidium at the Training School for girls attached to the Mission. At Mass the priest spoke to the people about the Legion, in fact, at both Masses. You see, two tribes are represented in the Mission, Kavirondos and Kikuyus, so he had to speak in both languages, Kiswahili for the first and Kikuyu for the second. The meeting was at 11 a.m., after Mass. The congregation of the second Mass was at it, so we had to hold it out of doors. There was an obvious place in a clearing shaded by trees, so a banner of Our Lady was nailed on to one tree to give the proper atmosphere. A small platform was brought from the school, on which we placed a table and a chair; the priest and I shared the platform. All round were gathered

the men and women and children. The men were on the right and the women religiously on the left. In fact, the women had gathered at the far side of the church, and the priest had to use his authority to induce them to unite themselves to the meeting. He also told me to emphasise in my talk the part that women played in the Legion, so as to educate the men to the fact that their wives could play a part in Legion activity.

"As usual the women's group was colourful—in fact, I doubt if a single colour was missing. The men were arrayed in the familiar motley garb, ranging from precise European clothes to very plain dress, consisting of overcoat and soft hat with feather tucked in it. The sacristan, in long white robe, with a small crucifix round his neck, was in the front row. He is also cook in the Mission. But the dignity his appearance lent to the scene was marred by the fact that he was inclined to go asleep. Which was not surprising, for he had been up before 5 a.m., and in the interval had been tolling the bell repeatedly, attending first Mass, seeing to the food for the nuns' Mission, attending second Mass, armed with a stick with which he poked any children who fidgeted or crowded the benches. He had earned a brief repose.

"The talk occupied an hour, as it had to be translated, a few sentences at a time, into Kiswahili and Kikuyu. We are to start next Sunday, D.V."

Soon after, at Mangu, an adult group and a junior one were formed. Their work was to consist in instructing catechumens who lived too far from the Mission.

In the region of the plantations, as for example in the Kalimoni Mission, Legion work would consist in bringing Christians to Mass, in supervising children's attendance at the Mission school, in helping in the school and church, in visiting sick and careless Christians. There was a superabundance of work, for the plantations are of vast extent, stretching far out from the Mission stations.

In the schools the Junior Præsidia undertook the most diverse tasks. Edel mentions: the teaching of catechism and of prayers to backward or new pupils, helping in church, care of old people and invalids. But the principal aim of these groups was always to prepare for the future, that is, to imbue the juniors with a spirit which would lead them, on returning to their homes, to start new Præsidia there.

From Kalimoni Edel went to Kilimambogo. Her report—these usually had the tone of a business letter and omitted entirely any reference to what each item of her work had cost her in fatigue and patience—gives the result of her visit: "Went out last week to

Kilimambogo. It is served by a priest from Kalimoni, once a month. About 350 persons assembled to hear me. Legion explained; got seventeen names, including seven women. Fixed first meeting for Monday next."

Distance was never an obstacle to her; when preparing to start she often invented methods of getting about. Father Lynch relates one among many incidents. "Once I remember Edel wanted to go to Nyeri. She had no means of transport for those long 80 miles. She did not ask any of the Fathers in Nairobi. She did not want to burden them, knowing well how overworked they were. So she waited on the Thika-Nyeri road and after some time was picked up by a lorry. In that way she got to Thika and so left 20 miles behind her. She trusted in Our Lady for the rest. In time she found a lorry going to Nyeri and arrived there in the late afternoon. Now let us look at all that that day's safari entailed," and he enumerates the burning sun, the long waits, the heat of the lorry reinforced by the heat of the engine, and the absence of proper food until the evening.

"Did she ever complain to the driver or plead with him to go slowly? You may be perfectly sure she never did anything of the kind. You may be equally sure she was most profuse in her thanks. For the object was attained, and Edel Quinn cared exactly nothing about how she felt herself."

Such was Edel's life week after week. The work piled up. Once she opened her report to Dublin as follows:

"The fact that my letters are getting shorter should cheer your heart. For if it means anything, it should mean that a spot of work is being done."

That was her style. Not a backward step, not a halt, unless her plans were shattered by the rains or by a breakdown in her health. But with regard to this latter hindrance, she was most reticent in her letters. In all that she wrote, one can feel her in haste to complete her mission and to transmit her message. Edel knew that her time was limited and she would not waste a second. The charity of Christ presseth us, said St. Paul: the words might have been written for her. Her part was to sow and ever to sow; others would gather the harvest. Her task was to go from Mission to Mission, and offer the Legion to priests struggling to carry out the superhuman duty of preaching the Gospel to every creature. Her whole ambition was to make known Our Lady's instrument of grace, to express in a concrete, precise, practical manner the apostolic duty of every baptised Catholic. She sought merely to kindle a fire at a few points, in the hope that the Holy Ghost would come as a great Pentecostal storm and set ablaze the few twigs that she had heaped together.

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In spite of her haste, she neglected no detail. The Legionary system is a cure for sloth, indolence, and vague intermittent goodwill. Reports must be given and figures must be accurate. The members must go in pairs and their activities must be controlled. All this is not done for amusement or for complicating things, but to make people realise that the service of God must receive at least as much energy as a business man would expend on making his undertaking successful. We do not honour God when we depend on His All-powerfulness to make up for our blindness or our apathy. Edel repeated this in and out of season. She spurred on the officers, insisting that they neglect no duty and observe all rules. For herself, she wished to be given definite instructions, "not liking," she says, "to act on my own initiative". Her letters bristled with questions, for new problems arose at every step. Here is one that could not have been familiar in Dublin. Was it permissible, she inquired, to accept a catechumen as a Legionary? She would not at any price admit an innovation or run the risk of deforming the Legion system. Her spirit of scrupulous obedience did not however prevent her from giving reasons for her own preferences or from suggesting solutions for her problems. Dublin nearly always accepted her judicious opinions and relied upon her wisdom. She was a strong-minded woman, fit to govern, as well as a woman of deep feeling and ardent humility. She was capable of directing and advising others, while herself desiring only to follow the Will of God as expressed by her superiors. With a heart alive to the whispers of grace and to the slightest indications of the Will of God, she gave herself wholly to her work, just as if nothing in the world existed except those poor pagans in their remote forests. But her letters showed that she was on the watch for the least item of news of the Church's progress throughout the world. She devoured every detail of the letter to Envoys, sent regularly from Dublin to the four quarters of the earth for the purpose of maintaining contact. Her heart thrilled and rejoiced at the news of any Legionary progress in China or the Philippines. She inquired insistently how matters stood with the Legion in France, in Belgium, in Holland. While her heart was beating in unison with the whole Church, she was able to concentrate all her attention on some defective report from a Kikuyu secretary who found it hard to wield a pen, or she would apologetically enlighten the Concilium correspondent who had become confused by her account of African customs, names of villages and frontiers of vicariates.

Running through all this intense activity is her unconquerable good humour, usually permitted to come to the surface only in the endings of her letters. Her typewriter, bought in London at the very last moment and called the Baby Empire, was a great source of amusement to her.

"The Baby Empire is working fine, isn't it? I shall be very sorry to part with it. We have become quite attached, though that does not prevent me misusing it at times."

Another time she concludes thus:

"This bulletin is to keep you amused for some time. I hope you appreciate being amused?"

And again: "Another weekly bulletin to swell the pile of letters. Aren't you glad?"

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The first fruits of that extension drive were the founding of a Curia at Nairobi on April 4, 1937. The Curia is, as we know, the Council which federates a certain number of Præsidia in the same region. The officers of the Præsidia attend the meetings (ordinarily monthly) of this Council. On account of the immense distances to be travelled, it was agreed that the meetings would take place in turn at the different Mission centres every six weeks.

The representatives of the Nairobi, Kiambu, Mangu and Limuru groups met on this memorable day. It was doubly memorable indeed; for on that same day, in the African Church of St. Peter Claver, the first Acies in British Equatorial Africa was held.

The Acies was carried out with the traditional ceremonial. At the entrance to the sanctuary, the statue of Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces, stood on a little altar decked with flowers. All around were grouped the Præsidia, African and non-African. It was a triumph of Our Lady—this uniting of all her children without distinction of language, race or colour. Edel had succeeded in working the miracle of brotherly union. The sermon was preached in Swahili and in English. The African choir sang with much feeling a hymn to the Blessed Virgin. Then each member of the congregation went forward to renew before Our Lady's throne the consecration: "I am all thine, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is thine."

The formula of consecration was said in Kiswahili, Kikuyu and English. Edel watched the march up to the statue, deeply moved, radiantly happy. It was a new and glorious victory over the impossible!

This first Acies and the foundation of the Curia in Nairobi mark a new era in the history of the Legion in Kenya. Thenceforward, Edel might continue her travelling without anxiety. There was a centre in being which would watch over the growing organisation and keep it united to the Concilium in Dublin. The Legion was armed and ready for the conflict, for it must defend itself not only against opponents from without—who are the less dangerous—but also against the whims of friends who might be tempted to throw over the traces. It was the Curia that must now face up to that responsibility.

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Edel knew how to stimulate the zeal of all and to get work done. On April 28, feast of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, she had lunch with several Holy Ghost Fathers. "All during lunch," she writes, "the wording of the translation was discussed, and then the planning of the next Curia meeting. After the meal we got down to the finalising of the Kiswahili Tesserà. The only other subject, dwelt on for a few minutes, was the glorious victory of the Blackrock Rugby football team.¹ Then we went our different ways."

She also devoted a great deal of her time to training the officers for their delicate task. She attended Præsidium meetings very frequently.

"I remember one Sunday," writes Father Lynch, "she attended three meetings at St. Peter Claver's Mission. The first in the morning was a meeting of all the Presidents of the Præsidia attached to the Nairobi Curia. And didn't she, in her own gentle and efficient way, give them a very true notion of their duties to the Legion and of the example they should be to the other officers and members. And she drove home the conclusion that no sacrifice was too great to make for the Queen of Heaven! Of every particle of that advice her own life was a shining illustration. The second meeting that day was just before lunch, when she attended the weekly meeting of the Præsidium of St. Peter Claver's Mission. The third was the Curia, from two to four. It must not be forgotten that the heat around that time is overwhelming—which gives an idea of her endurance. Edel's powers of endurance were phenomenal," concludes Father Lynch—"beyond ordinary calculation. In fact taken along with her extremely

¹ Blackrock College, Dublin, directed by the Holy Ghost Fathers, is celebrated for its Rugby football team.

clear mind and her iron will, it made her one of the outstanding figures of our time."

Edel was proud to tell Dublin of the grit and constancy of the Legionaries, beginning with the Spiritual Directors.

She writes: "The March Curia held at Limuru was a great success, D.G. All senior Præsidia, and all Junior except two, were represented. The Præsidia at Kabaa and Kombe, which are the farthest out, being about 60 miles from Nairobi, came for the first time with their two Spiritual Directors. To make sure that his officers would be at the Curia, one of the priests drove out 25 miles to collect them, sustaining one puncture and having to be lifted, car and all, out of the mud twice, the roads being still in a very bad way. There is a real Legion spirit among the priests."

Another letter strikes the same note. In it Edel is describing a Curia composed of Africans:

"In spite of desperate weather, the meeting was attended by every Præsidium and by all the Spiritual Directors. Certainly the degree of resolution shown in attending was gratifying. Some of the roads were so bad that there was danger of getting stuck. A car load from the most remote Mission included one Legionary wearing what had once been a white suit, but now enamelled black with mud where he had to push the car. A van from another Mission had to put down its passengers at the edge of a quagmire and, when it was negotiated, to pick them up again. The last half-hour of the meeting was rather a strain. The rain was so torrential that it was nearly impossible to be heard over it. But they all thought these inconveniences were part of the game. One of the cars with its passengers was obliged to stay the night in the Mission where the Curia was held, as they would never have got back without being stuck.

"Also, Sunday morning at some of the Missions does not end till 11 a.m. It begins with confessions at 7 a.m. and includes two Masses, two sermons; then a Præsidium meeting has to be held (Sunday is often the only day it can be held), and after that the carload sets out for the Curia."

It is not for nothing that the Legion bears a military name and summons shock troops to the service of Our Lady!

The work of the Legion soon attracted the attention and interest of the Missionaries. They noted conversions, returns to the sacraments, a new fervour in Christian life, a marked transformation in the Legionaries themselves.

In a letter written at this time to his superiors in England, a missionary expresses his grateful appreciation of the Legion:

"The Legion of Mary is the greatest aid we have. It far surpasses

our highest expectations. Truly the Blessed Virgin has done wonders through the Legion in the short space of six months since we started here. It is bringing great fervour to the Christians we have here, and that is the greatest guarantee of progress. Hence it is no surprise to us to see that many of those who had gone away have come back again, and that the schools are filling up with catechumens."

Verily the wind of the Spirit was blowing!

These first fruits, so rich already, presage the splendid harvest of to-morrow.

CHAPTER XIV

A HISTORIC DOCUMENT

"It is not surprising that the Legion of Mary is called a miracle of the modern world."

HIS EXCELLENCY MGR. RIBERI.

EDEL had the temperament of a pioneer. As soon as a foundation had taken root, she was in haste to pursue her way. She knew that her Envoy empire was vast and that life—her life in particular—was brief. She studied the map of Africa with agonising eagerness, ready to answer the slightest call. In old atlases there is shown a great country, somewhat indefinite in its frontiers, originally called Zanguébar or Country of the Black Men. At the opening of the 20th century the name disappeared; the title Zanzibar was restricted to indicate the island, the town, and the Vicariate Apostolic which includes the northern part of old Zanguébar. The southern portion was cut off to make the Vicariate Apostolic of Bagamoyo. And finally, the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro was formed by a strip of territory going from the coast to the celebrated valley of the Rift, that great gash in the earth which stretches as far as the valley of the Nile.

These three Vicariates, Edel's immediate field of action, are under the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers. The Irish province has charge of the Vicariate of Zanzibar; from 1932 to 1945—during the whole of Edel's time therefore—it was governed by Bishop Heffernan who invited her to East Africa. The United States province administers Kilimanjaro; the Dutch province Bagamoyo. Edel was to travel over these three Vicariates in all directions, visiting the missionaries in each Mission station.

The first call came to her from Mombasa. She had landed there, but had spent only a few hours in the town. To plant the Legion in that important port was to create a centre from which expansion would proceed. She accepted the invitation and arrived there on May 29.

"Mombasa," she writes, "is quite different in every way from Nairobi. Of course, it is at sea level and is, therefore, much hotter." She remarks that the proportion of European Catholics in the town is very small, and the proportion of practising Catholics smaller still.



EDEL QUINN AT THE AGE OF 11.

She was then a schoolgirl in the Loreto College at Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
"To the simplicity of a child she united great poise and attractiveness."
—(*The Life*, p. 5.)

Her hopes turned to the Goans who were fairly numerous. A lecture on the Legion of Mary was announced. "Somehow the title gave me cold feet," she says. "I would prefer the word 'meeting'. But it seems that people think they are going to be asked for something at a meeting, whereas they view a lecture as comparatively harmless." She adds that she must advance prudently, so as to offend no one. What she does not say is that the heat at Mombasa is overpowering and that she is holding meetings in a temperature of some 105 degrees.

Once she was face to face with her audience, she forgot all diplomatic caution. She saw only souls and spoke to them out of the fulness of her heart, which was united to the heart of Mary. She depended not on eloquence, but on faith. The result was not long in showing itself; the first Præsidium in Mombasa came into being on June 5, under the title of "Our Lady of Perpetual Succour". It consisted of seventeen men, of different tribes. The work began at once. Edel, who was a realist and a born educator, considered it important to give beginners a definite work to do immediately and to train them in the proper method of performing it. Referring to this first Mombasa Præsidium, she wrote:

"It was announced in church that catechism classes would be held on Sundays after Mass; so now they have to wait and see. But I doubt if there will be much response without a house-to-house canvass for the kiddies; this was our experience in Nairobi. You know, it means so much to be able to set the prospective Legionaries off on work of a definite nature straight away, especially when they are keen to do it."

A second branch was recruited among the non-African pupils of the White Sisters. At the conclusion of Edel's talk, seven volunteers unhesitatingly offered themselves. Some others were to ask leave at home to join up. This was a real success, for we must remember that sometimes she might only get two volunteers out of an audience of two hundred.

Once more Edel got down to her patient introductory training, and spent herself in explaining, supervising, visiting. New branches were formed and had to be attached to the Curia, the district council. Beginners had to learn, by instruction and by experience, the reasons underlying the multiple requirements of the *Handbook*. Spiritual training and practical organisation went hand in hand and could not be dissociated. The apparent arbitrariness of the regulations became clear as soon as their spiritual motive was grasped, but it was only by practical experience that officers could learn the correct method of handling the branches efficiently and fruitfully.

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While Edel was absorbed in these humble duties, an event took place which was to be an unprecedented support to her. It will be remembered that His Excellency Mgr. Riberi, Apostolic Delegate to Missionary Africa, had strongly encouraged her mission. Since that time, in each of his letters, he had asked her for details of her future programme. He had promised to throw into the scales the weight of his approval. He did it in the form of a circular letter addressed to the thirty-three Bishops who were under his jurisdiction. Edel hastened to announce the news to the Legion authorities in Dublin:

"Dr. Heffernan," she writes, "has just received a letter on the Legion which was sent by Mgr. Riberi to all the Bishops, and he gave it to me to read. He said he would have it published in the *Catholic Laity* next month. He also permitted me to copy it and to have it reproduced in the Kiswahili newspaper. All here agree that it could hardly be more favourable."

The document was of capital importance. It showed the extent to which His Excellency Mgr. Riberi appreciated the Legion and its Envoy. It was to open wide to Edel many a door that had been closed or opened the merest chink.

Mgr. Riberi had, as we have said, followed closely the growth of the Legion, at first in Dublin during his years at the Nunciature, and later in Africa. He had made careful inquiries and had received reports of many experiments. His letter, which could easily have been a trite and conventional introduction, was actually an expression of ardent appreciation and of pressing invitation.

With surprise and emotion, Edel read the letter. Here is that communication of His Excellency Mgr. Riberi to the Ordinaries of Africa under his jurisdiction, dated 25 June, 1937:

"My Lord,

May I beg leave to approach Your Lordship on a matter which might prove of interest to you. I am referring to that organisation for the development of Catholic Action known as the Legion of Mary, which, born in Ireland fifteen years ago, has spread over many countries, nay, over all the continents and not the least in missionary lands. Perhaps you know it already. Briefly explained, the Legion of Mary, which is open to all people, boys and girls, men and women, is organised, holds its meetings, and works in more or less the same way as the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. But while these concern themselves exclusively with charitable work, the Legion has

as its field, the infinite variety of Catholic Action activities. The extension and the nature of the work so undertaken make imperative a strict organisation and an immediate dependence on ecclesiastical authority. These requirements are, as a matter of fact, two of the principal characteristics of the Legion.

But they are not the only ones. Of paramount importance is the spiritual and moral formation the Legionaries themselves are meant to receive in their weekly meetings. The fundamental bearings of this aim will fully be realised when one considers the necessity of a special training in spiritual ideals and methods of operation for anybody who wishes to engage in Catholic activities and, more so, for our young African Christians.

The working of the Legionaries, like an army arrayed in battle under the leadership of Mary, our Queen, is something so inspiring and strengthening that we can hardly think of anything better.

Your Lordship is aware of the difficulties that beset Ordinaries when trying to put on a working basis that ideal of Catholic Action insisted upon, and so loved by our dear Holy Father, the Pope of the Missions.

In order to make the introduction of Catholic Action in our Missions easier, and at the same time, to ensure as far as possible unanimity of methods and purpose, some schemes have been proposed which allow freedom in working out details. I do not know how far the organisation of Catholic Action has advanced in the territory under your jurisdiction. Whatever the case may be, it might be in line with your endeavour to have the Legion of Mary adopted as a scheme for the working out of Catholic Action. So far, I like to think that it is the nearest approach to the ideal of Catholic Action as fostered by the Holy Father.

Several motives compel me to have it recommended to your Lordship's careful and kind consideration. I will not mention any more the wonderful diffusion and consoling results of the Legion in many countries. I may mention, however, the earnest recommendation given to the Legion two years and a half ago by that zealous colleague of mine, the present Apostolic Delegate of South Africa, Archbishop Gijlswijk.

Last summer the Concilium Legionis, which has its headquarters in Dublin, decided, at the special request of Mgr. Heffernan, Vicar Apostolic of Zanzibar, to send a propagandist to his Vicariate, in the person of Miss Edel Quinn. I was requested to give her a letter of recommendation and introduction to the Ordinaries of East Africa. While warmly encouraging the initiative of going to Kenya, I delayed the giving of such recommendation until I myself had acquired a

better knowledge of the working of the Legion in missionary countries. This I have been able to see in West Africa, where I came into direct contact with the Legion's successful work.

I am able to state now that the Ordinaries of the Gold Coast and those of Nigeria have, at their last conference, adopted the Legion of Mary as the means of developing Catholic Action.

Meanwhile I have received from His Lordship Bishop Heffernan, a report of the working of the Legion in his Vicariate. What he tells me is most encouraging.

The time, therefore, has come for me to give Miss Quinn the desired recommendation and introduction. Hence, my recommendation is an earnest one. I understand that Miss Quinn, who is still working in Zanzibar Vicariate, is willing and ready to lend her organising activities wherever they will be requested. If you desire further information about her work, please write to Mgr. Heffernan, Nairobi. I may point out that all her expenses are covered by the headquarters of the Legion.

Meanwhile I shall request Miss Quinn to send you a copy of the *Handbook* of the Legion to supplement the scanty information about the Legion contained in this letter.

Looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you soon again,

I remain,

Your Lordship's sincerely in Christ,

* ANTONIO RIBERI,

Archbishop of Dara,

Delegate Apostolic."

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This letter conferred a sort of investiture on Edel's missionary character and consecrated her as the messenger of Our Lady, in the name of the Church and of the Hierarchy. As she read it with the joy that we can imagine, and as she thought of the thirty-three Bishops who would receive this clarion-call and of all the work that stretched out farther than imagination could follow it, she could not refrain from relaying to Dublin what a missionary had just said to her: "You will be an old lady by the time your job is finished."

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After some hesitation as to the best route to take, Edel left Mombasa on August 16 and went to Bura, a Mission station in the

Vicariate of Zanzibar, about 120 miles from Mombasa and on the road that would take her to the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro.

She established two branches at Bura, and another in the Mission station of Mganga.

This is how she describes the first of these groups: "In the Bura Præsidium we got representatives from seven villages, so each member was given work in his own village. This includes, for a start, the rounding up of children for schools, visiting the sick, and teaching prayers and Catechism. Later, when they are into the work, the priest will ask them to do census work for him, which will include the usual contact with lapsed or careless Christians. There are many, many lapsed Christians here, as the Mission was closed for a period during the war. Then, these villages are easily moved; a hut can be built in a day, practically. I believe the Father will get the best possible value from his Præsidium here; he means business."

Not so often does Edel give her impressions of the Mission stations. But here we find her doing so in respect of Bura and its surroundings (August 26, 1937): "This Mission is set in a horse-shoe of mountains. It is built on a hill and faces down a beautiful valley which stretches out for miles, eventually merging into a plain. The Mission is circled by trees, and one of the 'rigours' of my work in Africa consists in sitting in a deck-chair in a shady grove, a tree stump for a footstool, and the Baby Empire balanced on my knees. There is a tip for you, all the way from Africa, for dealing with correspondence in comfort. Of course the quality of my typing suffers, so for your peace of mind I had better explain that when I write to Bishops or such-like important people, I go indoors! The weather is really perfect. This is the cool season and the sun is just pleasant, like a very warm summer day in Ireland; a breeze blows refreshingly over the country.

"We are in the bush, but much of the land around the Mission has been cleared and planted.

"There are two types of people near the Mission area. First the pure Wataita tribe. Near the station, which is only five miles from the Mission, are a different people; they are descendants of slaves. In the early Mission days, the Holy Ghost Fathers used to buy the slaves, natives of various parts of Tanganyika who were sold at Zanzibar, and they brought them up here to Bura, liberated them, and gave them land. Some of them have intermarried with the Wataita, but on the whole the latter look down on them and so they have remained more or less apart."

This contact with the inhabitants stimulated Edel to learn their language. "I spend several hours a day studying Kiswahili," she

writes (August 26, 1937). While not yet able to converse with them, she observed them with interest and noted many strange and picturesque details. But she was by no means anxious that the Legion journal, *Maria Legionis*, should publish this kind of "spectacular" news. She protested to the editors in Dublin who, as good press-men, were in quest of local colour and snappy items of news.

"Don't you try to frighten me with your talk about 'Life Stories' in the journal," she writes. "No. 3 is the first number I am looking forward to, my ship's log having finished in No. 2. I assure you that I shiver every time any of the Bishops or Fathers mention *Maria Legionis*. So please be careful about what you publish. I may write a few hair-raising illustrated yarns when I get home, but they won't be personal!"

She calls this her "anti-publicity complex". Other letters conclude with the same request: "This is not for publication"—and she adds: "I think these five words might be graven on my tombstone."

Hence the amusing anecdotes were reserved for her friends in Dublin and intended for private reading only. Here is one of these sketches, dated 20 September, 1937:

"I am writing to you in the Kilimanjaro Hotel, Congo-Moshi. I thought I had seen ancient cars on the road up Kenya way, but some of the models down here must have been their ancestors. As for the roads—the majority are closed in the 'rain' season, and I am sure that the dignified 'Teresa'¹ would think it due to her reputation to go on strike. You just bump-bump on your way.

"I must tell you about a trip we took last Thursday. I had to find a car to visit a Mission for the first time. You take what comes—the car ordered for 7 a.m. arrived at 2 p.m.! It was a two-ton Chevrolet lorry with room for two including the driver. Actually we travelled four in front. . . .

"If I go anywhere, I naturally ask whether anyone wants a lift or messages. Everyone does this, as cars are so infrequent between Missions. So, when I asked, I was told that 'Reverend Mother wants to send a cow'! A Sister and a Brother were also to travel with me. It was a pantomime! The lorry came down to the convent, in front of which is a garden full of flowers and vegetables. The nuns were all present and about twenty of the inhabitants when the cow appeared, led on a rope. She got up to the car, and then the fun began. She ran round the car and plunged at the crowd which cleared out of her way like magic. Then she broke the rope and careered into the garden with five men in chase. She was eventually

¹This was the name of Miss Emma Bodkin's car.

led back, but when near the car escaped again, and made off with the crowd in hot pursuit. One of the nuns assisted in the capture this time. Then they put a foot-wide plank against the lorry; naturally that drew blank. The final resort consisted in roping her legs, getting her on the ground on a board, and lifting her bodily on to the lorry, not without many protests on her part. They freed her in the lorry, and she nearly kicked the back out. In spite of everything, we did get to the Mission two hours later, safe with the cow."

Later in the evening when the missionary realised the trouble he had brought on himself in promising Edel to establish the Legion, he exclaimed: "Why had that cow to come to-day! !!" "I explained," concludes Edel, "that I brought the cow; the cow did not bring me! Is not that a capital story?"

Here is her reference to a visit to a Tanganyika village: "The people of the Moshi region live for the greater part in the midst of banana groves. You only see the trees; unless you look closely, you do not see the huts. On the top of most of the houses are crosses, for practically all the people of this district are Catholics, and the general greeting from everyone is in Kiswahili: 'Praise be Jesus Christ!' to which one answers: 'Forever, Amen.'"

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From Bura, Edel went to Kilema, a station belonging to the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro. This Mission, which is quite near Mount Kilimanjaro, is an important one. Edel paid a visit to the Bishop, His Excellency Dr. Byrne, who himself introduced her to his Christian people, and warmly recommended her cause. Edel's visit coincided with the holding of an ecclesiastical conference. Dr. Byrne presented her to the assembled Superiors of Mission stations and asked them to give her a good reception. Then he withdrew in order to leave freedom of discussion to the priests. The conclusion arrived at was that each of them would read the *Handbook*, pray, and think the matter over.

While the seed that had been sown was ripening, Edel did not lose a minute. The letter of Mgr. Riberi to the Ordinaries brought her an ever-increasing mail. She wrote to Mgr. Stam, Bishop of Kisumu (Kenya), and to all the Bishops of Uganda and Tanganyika to announce an early visit and to inquire as to the most convenient dates. The answers received by her were many and cordial, welcoming her to the various dioceses.

Each new day made Edel's correspondence a heavier burden.

Besides her regular bulletins to Dublin, she wrote indefatigably, answering the most varied questions from centres which she had founded. She knew the value of a few lines of comfort and encouragement. Was not that a kind of personal contact? She spent much of her nights writing letters.

In theory, so long as there is no *Senatus* in a country, the *Curiae* are attached directly to the *Concilium*. But how was it possible at such a distance to deal with the numerous cases arising out of African customs, so entirely different from ours?

She herself, in a letter of September 24, 1937, raised a somewhat unusual problem. In four stations, the members of one tribe opposed the adoption of the Legion because they were unwilling on any account to bind themselves by a promise. This was due to their distrust of white men and to political reasons. It seemed necessary to lead them along gradually, without yielding any point of principle.

"I doubt very much," writes Edel to Dublin, "that the objections raised by some people are as serious as is thought; for when they became Christians, they must have made a profession of faith, which is a very long declaration of belief obviously more gravely binding than the Legion Promise. It is objected that they do not understand the words of the Promise and their deep significance. Then why not suggest that they continue their probationary period until the Spiritual Director has been able to educate them gradually to the point of grasping the meaning and aim of the Promise?"

Elsewhere the crucial question of visitation in pairs arose. What was to be done when the members belonged to different districts? The solution suggested was to regroup them according to districts. But it was a perpetual battle to maintain this rule of visitation in pairs.

"I find," writes Edel, "that at the start I can induce them to visit in two's; but at the second or third meeting I find that they have gone into one's—the partner was not there, etc., etc. I get them back into two's, but unless the Spiritual Director is careful on the point, I discover on the occasion of my next visit that they are all working alone again—much to their disadvantage. There was one branch which I believed to be solid as a rock, with its President a *Curia* officer. Yet visiting them after an interval of two years I found them all 'solo' workers.

"Some priests have insisted that what they like in the Legion is that very rule of working in two's, not only because it safeguards the morals of the Legionaries, but also because it guarantees that the work will be done."

Edel realised the value of this rule more than anyone; and it

was not without reason that she wrote proudly to the *Concilium*: "I have been adamant for two's in every instance, even when it was nearly impossible."

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Following on Edel's visit, branches sprang up in all the Missions around Mount Kilimanjaro; adult *Præsidia* in Kilema, Rombo, Mashati, Kibosho, Ura, Kishimundu and Arusha; junior *Præsidia* in Kilema, Rombo and Kibosho.

Sister M. Angelita, of the Congregation of the Precious Blood, furnishes her recollections of Edel:

"I still remember the day I met her for the first time at Kilema in 1937. Her kindness and great simplicity and above all her cheerfulness captured the hearts of all. All of us at Kilema Mission had the conviction that she was a most beloved child of Our Blessed Lady, a real saint. She was not always or everywhere received with enthusiasm, and if she was able to start *Præsidia* in almost all the Missions here and keep them running, it was due to her heroic efforts, her strength of mind and her perseverance. She was the most unselfish person I ever met in my life."

To this account we add one from the Rev. Sister M. Gratiana of the same Congregation:

"Edel had a very great appreciation for all the missionaries and, perhaps, especially for the nuns. She proved this in a manner quite heroic. When she was in this Vicariate, travelling about to get the Legion started, it happened twice that she came back to Kilema late, because of having trouble with cars. When she came to our convent, she found that the door was locked, because we did not know that she was coming back. She slept all night on an open verandah, having for bed a wooden bench, and for covering her light-blue coat which afforded a protection more apparent than real, for the breeze blowing down from the snowy peaks of Kilimanjaro can be very bitter.

"When we asked her the next morning why she did not knock at the door or call us, she simply said—and she meant it: 'You Sisters work all day long very hard, and you absolutely need your night's rest. I would not disturb you for anything.' To our entreaties that she would never do the like again, she said: 'I would have to do the very same thing again.' And indeed she did it a second time, spending all the night upon that bench. When we unlocked the door at five o'clock in the morning, we found her standing in

front of the door, shaking from head to foot. When she saw how upset we were about it, she started her jokes to make us think that she had not suffered in the least. We put her to bed at once, giving her a cup of very strong and almost boiling coffee. Although she could not receive Holy Communion that morning, she was up for Holy Mass. I believe that on principle she would never miss Holy Mass and Holy Communion; and she did everything in her power to that end.

"I never heard an uncharitable word fall from her lips; and whenever the smallest shadow appeared on the face of anyone she knew, she would succeed in effacing it with some nice little word."

These incidents are truly typical. They show once again her attitude of self-forgetfulness, carried to a heroic degree.

From Kilema, Edel proceeded to Arusha (Vicariate of Kilimanjaro), passing through Moshi. Nothing could have been less like pleasure trips.

"The rains have set in," she writes, "which makes the roads dangerous for motoring. I waited at a Mission from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., packed and all, for a car and then with luck I got into a lorry. We arrived at Moshi at 11 p.m. Luckily the hotel had a room vacant. On the way the men in the lorry spotted a lion nearby and shouted to the driver to accelerate—which he did without having to be asked a second time."

Early in December, she arrived at Bishop Stam's headquarters at Kisumu. Her report, dated December 6, lets us guess at the fatigue of such a journey:

"The short rains never came so early as this year (they were a month too soon), nor lasted so long, nor were so heavy. The roads churned up into a desperate condition. It was quite an adventurous run for the 150 miles from Arusha to Nairobi. The day after I arrived, no car could get through. It was impossible to ford one of the rivers, it was so swollen. So I had to travel to Kisumu by train, which now I only do when the roads are too bad for traffic. It is a very pretty run up. Most of the way the country is wooded, and one goes through sweeping valleys when nearing Kisumu. Kisumu itself lies on the lake-edge and the glorious sunsets are reflected in its waters. Its altitude mitigates the heat, so that one does not find it too oppressive."

How gracefully she draws the reader's attention to the landscape, in order to divert it from herself! This same letter, we may observe in passing, reveals how lively a memory Edel had retained of her first Legion campaign in Wales. Far from being absorbed in her own present work, she still thought of that other country's spiritual

distress: "I do not see why it should not be possible to get Legionaries to go and live in some of the Welsh towns. Surely they could get jobs in places like Bangor, Conway, Rhyl, etc., which would not be too far away from Ireland. I should imagine an experienced Legionary could do a lot of good, and living seems fairly cheap there."

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His Excellency Monsignor Stam received Edel with very great kindness. He introduced her himself at the preliminary meeting on December 4. The first experiment was tried with Goans. The Bishop watched it closely and gave the new Legionaries encouragement. Edel waited only to lay foundations, hoping to return later and inspect the progress of the Præsidium. Her own task was always to push on ahead. Her reports to Dublin describe her journeys from one mission station to another: Kibuye, Kakamega, Rangala, Eregi, Kisii, Asumbi, Nyabondo . . . Edel went wherever she was needed, according as calls reached her. She seemed to have only one prayer in her heart: "Lord, lead me whither I shall love and serve thee best." Swift and mobile as the breeze, she was prompt to change her plans at the first sign. Such a sign from God came to her unexpectedly in the form of an invitation from Bishop Heffernan. Learning that he was passing through Bura, she went to meet him: The Bishop told her that he was expecting her impatiently in Zanzibar itself, where he wished the Legion to be started. His wish was an order. Edel immediately gave up her plans and set out for her new destination. At the end of February she landed on the island.

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Zanzibar is a little verdant island, rich with the scent of cloves. The town of Zanzibar has a cosmopolitan population. Crowded in its narrow streets between high houses, are Swahilis, some dark in colour, others like Moors; Indian merchants; Africans from the mainland. But the glory of Zanzibar is a thing of the past.

Edel describes the town briefly in a letter to a friend: "Zanzibar is unlike any other place out here—even Mombasa. It is full of Arab houses; has its own Sultan; and generally is an old-world sort of place.

"It is absolutely tropical in appearance and surroundings; coconut palms everywhere and great clove plantations. Arabs crowd the

streets, and when boats are in, which is every ten days, the town is packed with tourists, French, German and English."

She tells of the comical fashion in which she came face to face with the Sultan:

"The other day we were entering the main street which in part is so narrow that only one car can pass at a time. Suddenly we found ourselves, bonnet to bonnet, against the Sultan's car. Now a Sultan cannot be expected to back his car! So while a gazing crowd assembled, we reversed very slowly and retired into a side street. The Sultan's car passed and we apologised to him. Though the circumstances were lacking in dignity, they gave me the opportunity of a close-up view."

Edel had not much time to tarry over picturesque detail. Her work was into gear again. She was busy giving explanations and setting up Praesidia.

On March 8, she left Zanzibar for the Mission of Kisii, 30 miles from Kisumu, visiting on her way Lyoki and Nakuru, to check up on the Legion there. A series of place-names stretches through her letters. Each place produced a new problem; each one had its own peculiar difficulties. Indefatigably and all day long she lived the parable of the Sower. Nothing varied except the setting, which was called in turn Asumbi, Nyabondo, Kitale, Eldoret, Nandi, Nakuru, Kibabi, Nangina, Amukura, Mbagu.

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While Edel was working through these regions, she received news that His Exc. Mgr. Riberi, the Apostolic Delegate, was passing through Nairobi. It was an excellent opportunity to thank him for his letter to the Bishops and to give him a report. She went to Nairobi and had an interview which was a great comfort to her. Archbishop Riberi reaffirmed his wholehearted approbation and even elaborated with her the plans for the future. The first experiments had been conclusive: the Legion had proved its marvellous efficiency in the most difficult circumstances. Might it not be the instrument created by Our Lady for the dismal days that were coming? Already Archbishop Riberi had come to that conclusion, and Edel supplied him with a proof of it. It would fill his thoughts again one day when the Church of China would be plunged into its grim trial. The Apostolic Delegate for Africa was destined to become the Inter-Nuncio to China. In the disorganisation caused by the rising tide of Communism he would once more show the Bishops that lifebuoy, the Legion of Mary. He would himself send Father McGrath to study the

organisation of the Legion in Dublin and he would give him as his only mission to reproduce in China the work of Edel Quinn. As a preface to the Chinese translation of the *Handbook*, he would write these lines: "That the Legion of Mary is called a miracle of the modern world is not surprising. It has spread to nearly all the nations with extraordinary speed. China is no exception; the development of the Legion of Mary in Peiping, Tientsin, Shanghai, Hankow, and other places is remarkable, and is proof enough. . . . In the history of the world, whenever it becomes necessary that good should overcome evil, the appropriate instrument has always been supplied to cope with the situation."

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Only for Edel, those lines would perhaps not have been written with so much conviction. Her sacrifice has become catholic in time as well as in space.

Hidden in the depths of the African bush, Edel Quinn was helping, without knowing it, to save China.

CHAPTER XV

"THE ROLLS-ROYCE"

"When the Spirit of God finds a soul in which He can work, He uses that soul for any number of purposes; opens out before its eyes a hundred new directions, multiplying its works and its opportunities for the apostolate far beyond the ordinary strength of a human being."

THOMAS MERTON
(Elected Silence).

IN the course of her innumerable journeys, Edel had seen how much she was hindered by transport. She could never be sure of getting it, nor of getting to journey's end in it. She decided to ask leave from Dublin to buy a motor car. In a business-like way she discussed the pros and cons, estimated the cost, and emphasised the tenfold increase which her efforts would yield. If a good bargain offered, might she close with it? The authorities agreed; Edel had a few lessons in driving and took the road without delay. Then an order came, clear and imperative: she might have the car, but there must be a driver too; she was forbidden to drive herself except for short runs. Edel submitted—but it was not easy to find a driver. Finally, one was secured; it was a Mohammedan named Ali. Edel engaged him, without the slightest misgivings as to the possible risk she ran in putting herself at his mercy.

In all weathers, over every kind of path, she would make her way through the most inaccessible territories. Trusting in the protection of God and His Angels, she would go where a European woman never entered. In the back of the car Ali had placed a gun as a safeguard against wild animals which might come uncomfortably close to them. But Ali the Mohammedan, Our Lady's factotum, was, unfortunately, not destined to remain faithful to his unexpected vocation to the very end. He was too fond of timbo, the heady native beer, and Edel found herself obliged to part with him.

But that was in the future. Meanwhile she wrote to some friends on June 14, 1938, to announce the purchase of what she named her "Rolls-Royce".

"I suppose by now you have heard that the Legion out here owns a car, 1932 Ford V8 Coupé, plus a driver who answers to the name of Ali, generally known as Ali Baba in the Missions we have visited so far. He is a Mohammedan, and particular as to food. So now we have come to an arrangement whereby he buys his own. This relieves the Missionaries from the ticklish operation of providing him with food which will not infringe against unknown laws.

"So far we have not had many adventures in the car; we have got stuck in the mud several times, but that is nothing much out here. Last time I had a priest in the car, which brought lots of people to our aid, and so we were extricated easily enough.

"I got my driving licence. After a test which included most things, he merely told me to practise reversing. I think Emma will have to send her car, Teresa, out here and we will have a race. But I am afraid that Teresa would hardly deign to travel on these roads, so that my Rolls-Royce (as I call it) would have the advantage.

"I am glad you people do not write only when I write. You have no idea what a joy your letters are. Every scrap of Legion news, about the hostel or anything, is a regular treat and recreation."

The car enabled her to reach the remotest places and as well to enter more closely into the life of the country. Here is what she writes from a newly-established Mission station:

"They have to build up everything here, including their Christians. The church is a wooden altar, with a roof of plaited grass over it. It is set under a tree and the congregation hear Mass with the sky as their roof. So the Legion meetings, if we get the volunteers, will probably be held in similar style under the shade of a tree."

In another station she remarks:

"At this Mission, Rangala, where I am spending the night, a new church and hospital are being built. The bricks are carried on their heads by the school children and catechumens. When you think of the thousands of bricks required, it seems a slow business, though some carry as many as five bricks at a time. They also carry blocks of stone. One Sister told me yesterday that sometimes the stone is too heavy for them to lift up, but once it is lifted and put upon their head, they will carry it along quite easily. One girl I saw was carrying a huge block of stone, and knitting away at the same time!"

An African Missionary writes concerning Edel's journeys in the car:

"Travelling is not easy in Africa; great distances often separate one Mission from another. The roads are dreadful and often impassable during the rainy season. Miss Quinn had an old

dilapidated two-seater car. The noise of its approach, piercing the African silence, became a welcome sound to many a lonely Mission; she brought happiness wherever she went. Her energy was amazing. Her friends found it impossible to make her rest—even during the cruel heat of midday. There was about her an urgency, a conviction that there was so much for her to do and so little time in which to do it."

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Thanks to her car, Edel could now travel over Africa at her will, without being at the mercy of others. She took occasion to make a tour of that world still unknown to her, Uganda.

Uganda is a vast country, bathed by the waters of Lake Nyanza, whose northern and north-western shores it surrounds. Nature paints it with its own characteristic and vivid colours, and it enjoys all the year round a tropical spring, which sets hills and valleys aflame with brilliant flowers. As Edel drove through the country, she roused flocks of myriad-coloured birds which rose like rockets at the sound of the motor. These birds had no song. The heavy silence of equatorial Africa, with its swarming millions of insects and reptiles, was seldom disturbed. Sometimes one heard the roll of the war-drum or of the distant incantations uttered in the shrill notes of the witch doctors, clad in the skins of wild cats or serpents. The tribes were living there in huts of plaited reeds, protected by the tombs of their ancestors and in the midst of banana groves. Over them floated the sacred totems with their varied assortment of symbols: the leopard, the ant-eater, the civet cat, the elephant, the buffalo, the antelope, the otter. This kingdom, whose earth is the colour of rust, is the heritage of the warlike Baganda people.

Edel's dream was to expand the kingdom of the Lord there.

She reached Uganda on July 22, 1938, having visited several Missions on her way. Her sphere of action was to be the Vicariate of Kampala which had formerly been part of the Upper Nile Vicariate. She had received permission to operate there, but His Excellency Monsignor Reesinc had not yet arrived when she came to the place. She began by enquiring of Father Minderop, who was in charge during the interim, how far her authorisation extended. He replied that they wished to have the Legion "as much as possible", so she had carte blanche for her work.

The Nsambya Mission, headquarters of the Mill Hill Fathers, was her starting point in Uganda.

The introductory talk at the Kampala Mission produced ten volunteers after the usual spate of questions. This was one: "If I become a Legionary, may I pay someone else to do the work for me?" When a negative response was given, another member of the audience, an ex-seminarian, said he did not understand such a refusal, since, after all, *causa causa est causa causati*.¹ A tincture of philosophy is not without leaving its mark!

This cascade of questions did not worry her. She remarks cheerfully that often those who ask the most questions are the last to volunteer. Her patience was invincible. She never tired of repeating her explanations. "One feels just like a gramophone," she writes, "but in this case there is only one record."

Her apostolic course continued. In turn she went to Jinja, Kamuli, Budini, Nyenga, Namilyango, Palissa, Ngora, Soroti, Lwala-Nkokonjeru . . . At Nyenga, in the leper colony, she assisted at meetings of the adult and junior Præsidia.

At the Mission of Lwala she met a tribe, the Kuman, recently converted and still very primitive. In spite of very defeatist prognostications, ten volunteers presented themselves. Among them were two women, one of whom was a Muganda. They had asked for a week to think the matter over.

On September 20, 1938, Edel wrote to a friend:

"I have just been at a meeting. The Legionaries had visited a couple who were living together. The purpose was to induce them to get married properly. But there was a disagreement about the dowry. The prospective husband had paid eight cows, twelve goats and fifty shillings to the bride's father. However, one cow still remained due, and the father, who was a pagan, refused to give permission for the wedding until he would be in possession of the animal. The Missionary fixed it up like this—the contesting parties were to come to the Mission and the young man would sign a letter promising to pay the cow as soon as he could. If the pagan father would agree to this, the banns would be called and the marriage would take place. There was a second case of the same kind, where a tiny balance was due. This paying of dowry is a terrible business; it holds up Catholic marriages for ages, and, of course, the couple live together. If the dowry is not paid fully, according to the custom, the bride can be and is taken back by her father and sold to someone else. So the Church cannot marry people until there is some assurance that the marriage will be permanent. Life out here is not quite so

¹ Meaning that the cause of the cause is the cause of the effect produced.

simple as the Mission booklets would have us believe. Baptism is merely the start of a strenuous Catholic life. Between that beginning and a happy death lies a great deal of hard battling on the part of the individual, and on the part of the priest. The majority have many a lapse. But then, pagan customs and surroundings are all against them, and we are only at the beginning of the foundation of the Church in Africa. Everything here is wonderfully interesting."

In this life-long struggle, the Legion offers priceless aid to the Missionary. Here is how the Spiritual Director of Kiditok Mission in Uganda began a report on his two Præsidia:

"I am enclosing the reports of my two Præsidia. I confess that I thoroughly detest writing reports, so please do not ask me for another until six more months have gone by. I enclose also for your private edification a snapshot of my church and house. In that church, Miss Quinn attended the Requiem Mass for the late Pope. Just ask her whether there was a draught! The walls have since been built with mud. During her visit I vacated my hut and Miss Quinn was the lucky, or unlucky, possessor of it. She slept in it for three nights without any doors or windows. She told me that she slept well, but that may have been due to Legionary undauntedness.

"I need not say that I am grateful to Almighty God and to Our Lady for having permitted me to start the Legion. The report will show what a great help it has been to me in my difficult work."

One of the annexed reports said: "The active membership of our Præsidium is twenty; the weekly attendance averages 93 per cent. The President lives ten miles from the station and the nearest Legionary is six miles distant from him; yet he never misses the weekly meeting. The Præsidium has brought about 112 lax Catholics to the sacraments, and thirteen infants for Baptism; eighteen marriages have been validated; twenty-three pagans are now under instruction."

The second report gives a similar picture.

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On September 20, Edel was received by His Excellency Monsignor Reesinc, the new Bishop, who had just arrived. His welcome was both warm and practical. He took pencil and paper and noted all the Missions already visited by her, all the Præsidia already established—and all the reasons given her in one place or another for not introducing the Legion. Refusals had indeed been rare. One Missionary had declared that the Legion was twenty years

before its time. "Yes," replied the Bishop, "and in fifty years the very same thing would be said, and neither he nor I would be there."

This reply made Edel smile; it was such a joy to meet someone who shared her haste. By dint of repeating that people were not ready to receive the Gospel, one would end up by not being ready to bring it to them! How could God not be in haste to communicate Himself to men! Is not love always impatient? And is not God Love? The thought of this was almost painful to Edel, so that she blessed the Bishop for pressing on the work.

His particularly determined support was a real encouragement to her. One little sentence in a letter of October 14 speaks volumes: "I got here on July 22, and by the end of this month seventeen Missions will have been finished." She knew full well that the word "finished" was far from corresponding to the reality which comprised prolonged encouragement and correction. Long and patient work was needed before each group would attain its full stature! She would maintain contact by letter and would return to visit each Præsidium whenever it was possible for her to do so. Her special gift was that of Precursor: she was to prepare the ways of the Lord, level the mountains, mark out the path and the road to Him, without looking back, for her hand was set to the plough, her eyes fixed on God and on new labours for Him.

Once again her diary is full of strange names of stations to be visited: Nyondo, Budadiri, Budaka, Magale, Nagongera, Tororo, Dabani, Kamuli, Wesunire, Buluba, Iganga. . . .

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The difficulties were generally the common ones. Sometimes a case was not without its picturesque side. Here is how Edel tells the story of an inter-Legionary apostolate: "Matthew Mokobu, an active member, is a married man and has several baptised children. At the meeting another member, Josefu Amuli, gave his report on the recruiting of children for the Catholic school. He had looked up several families with baptised children and among them Brother Matthew Mokobu, who has children old enough for school but not yet sent there. He has since sent them. The Spiritual Director enquired how an active member could trouble so much about the sins of laziness in his neighbours, and yet not start in his own house. Imagine a Legionary at home reporting on his visitation of another Legionary who is present at that meeting!" It would indeed be hard to imagine, but human logic is an unaccountable thing.

At Buluba, Edel visited a leper colony and formed a Præsidium with three lepers and five workmen. In her letter of the 7th November she gives a description:

"I hope we shall get a few more lepers into the Præsidium. There are 120 lepers in the camp. Some cases are pretty bad, while others live in their own huts, grow their cotton, and come to the convent for injections, etc. The other day I watched a football match among the leper boys. They were enjoying themselves vastly despite the fact that quite a few had a leg or an arm bandaged.

"Buluba is an isolated spot, and all round there is plenty of game: buffalo, hippo and elephant. The hippo comes up on the lake shore at night to feed, and the convent faces the lake. The other night I heard a lot of snorting for a couple of hours. The convent is about 200 yards from the lake."

In the same letter she details her plans:

"From here I hope to return to Kampala, via the two other Missions not yet started; that will complete the Vicariate. Practically all the Missions in it have the Legion. The exceptions are four in number, and of these two are probables."

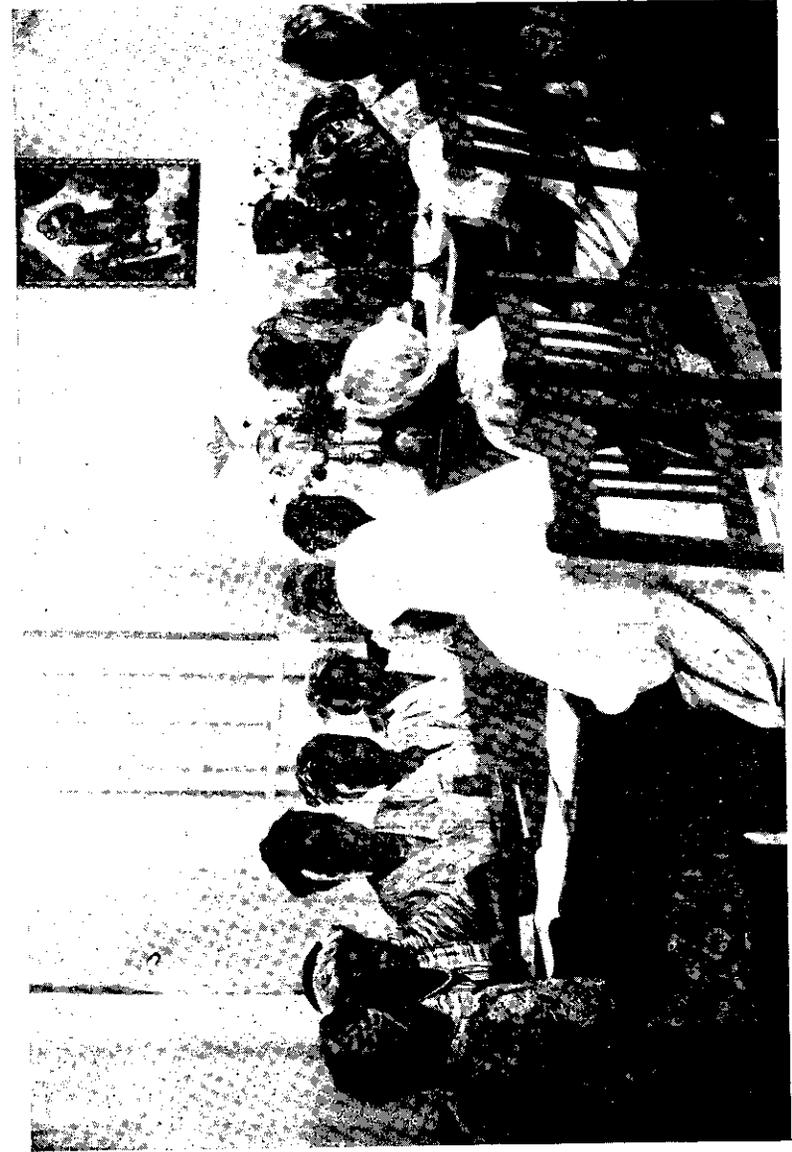
What a steady rhythm of progress—thanks largely to the "Rolls-Royce"! Edel was not to lose many minutes in her life. Even the breakdowns of the car were turned to advantage. She supplies evidence of this in a letter:

"The Indian had put so little petrol in the car that we ran short about twenty miles from the Mission. My driver had to set out on foot in search of some, while I stayed in the car writing letters. After a couple of hours the driver came back, having been lucky enough to get some petrol."

She never bestowed even a thought on the fact that she had been left alone with her correspondence in the very heart of the jungle!

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While the roads of Africa were being turned into mileage on Edel's speedometer, the authorities in Dublin, who followed her movements with a minute attention, were receiving requests for information about the Legion. A letter from His Excellency Mgr. Mazziere, Prefect Apostolic of Ndola in Northern Rhodesia, made enquiries with a view to establishing the Legion in his territory. Dublin replied by notifying Edel Quinn's presence at a relatively short distance from him. About the same time, His Excellency Archbishop Leen of Port Louis, on a holiday in Dublin, asked the Concilium to send Edel to



THE OBJECT OF EDEL'S MISSION: THE PLANTING OF ONE OF THESE APOSTOLIC BANDS IN EVERY SPOT.

This Præsidium is not quite typical, inasmuch as most of the African Præsidia are of men. But no other photograph as clear and suitable for reproduction is available.

found the Legion on the isle of Mauritius as soon as he himself would be back there. Edel was questioned and replied that she was ready to go to the ends of the earth and that they could do as they would with her: "You have nothing to do but send me a cable with the word 'Go' and the name of the place."

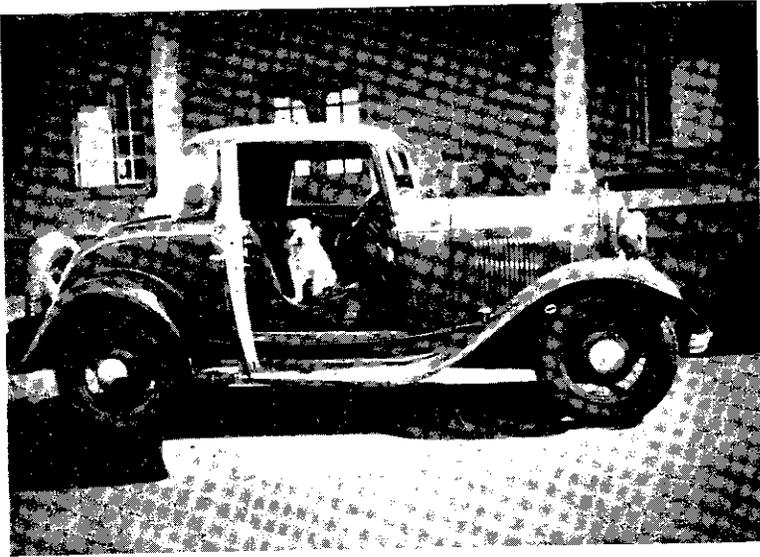
At the end of December, 1938, she was preparing to embark for Mauritius when an attack of malaria obliged her to remain in bed. It was the first serious break in the health of the semi-invalid. The doctor decided that she was not in a fit state to set out for Mauritius and insisted that she wait till April, that is, till the cool season. For the first time in her letters to Dublin she admitted to being ill in bed with fever, but she begged that no one would be anxious on her account and that her attack should not be made generally known.

The authorities who knew on what a paradox of medical diagnosis this heroic missionary vocation rested, asked her to tell them exactly, without keeping anything back, what was her physical condition. In obedience to their injunctions, and against her deliberate custom, she faced up to this subject of health which she would have preferred to disregard.

Here is her letter of Christmas, 1938, dated from Kampala:

"I am glad you realise why I did not want the news of my little breakdown broadcast. It is so common out here. Only now and then does one get a *good* dose of malaria. The spasms last two days as a rule. Now you can take it for granted that I have not the slightest intention of issuing a bulletin every time I get a cold or something like that. I have never done it in my life, even when at home with the family, and I am too old to change my habits!

"If I am laid up for a considerable time, say for two weeks, I shall certainly let you know. I did so in regard to my 'cold' last June and now for this malaria. You can rely on this and therefore you need not worry, thinking that I might be seriously ill without telling you. If I got ill to the extent of being unable to carry on my Legion work in the way it should be done, or at the proper speed of a healthy Legionary, I would say so straight off. Then we could so present things that my return would seem to be in the ordinary course. As this is my third year now, no one could charge you with rashness for having sent me out originally, nor could one find anything strange in my coming back. If I had had to go home in the first, or even in the second year, there would surely have been cries of 'I told you so!' But now the time factor puts that out of question altogether. Not that I want a bit to go home; I am enjoying myself thoroughly and am glad to be able to go on as long as there is work here to be done. I should have hated to be ill during the first or even the second



SHE HAD AN OLD DILAPIDATED TWO-SEATER FORD.
 "The noise of its approach, piercing the African silence, became a welcome sound to many a lonely Mission."—(*The Life*, p. 146.)
 This picture shows the car in its comparative youth. On the back of the original photograph is a note in Edel's writing: "The dog is not usually part of my safari equipment."

year. But even if the fact of this malaria leaked out now, it would not be the sort of sensation which it would have been in the first year. To safeguard you from ever thinking that I am hiding something from you, I declare that this is the one point on which I would be really scrupulous. Let this afford you consolation. If I thought the work was suffering from my state of health, much as I enjoy doing it, I would not hesitate a moment in coming home. Or even, I would get a job out here, work for the Legion locally, and give up the wider extension work. Now do not think I have taken up anything you have said as suggesting such a thing. I know that such is not your intention. But I know too how 'touchy' you are on the score of my health; how apprehensive of a collapse in regard to which I would not have given warning in time. Out here, as elsewhere, the work is too important to be held up by personal considerations. With the present trend of things all over the world, I would regard—as you do, I am sure—the time factor as being decisive. Things are happening so quickly everywhere, and always against the Church. So much for health. What a subject for a Christmas Eve letter!"

And she concludes:

"Christmas time and all, I would not willingly change places with anyone at home this minute. One gets great happiness in the work."

Better than an elaborate analysis, this letter reveals Edel's delicacy and tact. She speaks of her health for the sole purpose of preventing others from being anxious or feeling remorse at having sent her to Africa. The reasons she gives show how entirely she effaces herself in the interests of her mission. She intends to make way for another the moment her health becomes an impediment. But so long as God does not ask this sacrifice of her, she rejoices—more than ever on this Christmas night—at being allowed to hasten the spiritual birth of Jesus in the land of Africa. Christmas Eve is full of intense and dear memories of home and friends; but she would not exchange the joy of voluntary exile for any human happiness.

The letter shows, too, her extreme fear of alarming Dublin in regard to her health. Fr. Reidy, a missionary, tells of the extraordinary precautions she would take to avoid inconvenient publicity. One day, he recalls, she ran a high temperature, but determined not to call attention to her condition by going to bed, she took the evening train for Nairobi, more than 300 miles away. In order to avoid indiscreet curiosity, she telephoned to two friends in Nairobi to meet her at an intermediate station and to drive her to a convent some 40 miles from Nairobi. She was so delighted at having escaped meeting anybody who would spread the news of her illness that she forgot how

very ill she was! The same witness tells also of Edel's mischievous glee when shortly after this bout of fever, her photograph appeared in *Maria Legionis*. It was a snapshot in which she appeared to be in excellent health and she was delighted at the favourable impression it was sure to produce.

Fortunately, this time again, the attack of malaria passed off. At once Edel took up where she had left off. At the end of January, 1939, she visited the Mission of Nyenga. Here the primitive simplicity of the inhabitants provided certain obstacles, though they were not lacking in goodwill and generosity. "They have seven women members," she writes, "none of whom can read or write. These were being taught the prayers, and it took the majority of them nearly four months to learn the Catena."

There were other difficulties besides those arising from defective memories; there were unready pens. It was no simple matter to find a secretary. The easy way out would be to confide this task to the Spiritual Director. But the Legion distrusts easy ways and will not compromise on the functions of officers. The Legion is a lay association and must remain such. Responsibility has an educative value, it must not be measured out in petty doses. If an increased output of energy, imagination and tenacity is needed for the putting of the Legionary principles into practice, then that extra output must be forthcoming.

In one of the Mission stations (Soroti Mission), Edel had another hard problem to solve:

"It is," she wrote, "the language question. The *Præsidium* is Teso. There is one member, a Muganda, who knows English, Luganda and Swahili, and who can take notes perfectly. But if he writes the Minutes in any one of these languages, there will be members who will not understand. Now we have found a Mu-teso who can make a fair shot at note-taking in Teso, and he has a knowledge of Swahili. So we have two secretaries. The better one takes the notes in English, as given to him by his Teso partner, and then helps him to get it down properly in Teso during the week. This will at any rate give them the sense of responsibility for the Minutes (Feb. 15, 1939)."

In the same letter, Edel announced that she was going to visit the Prefecture of Meru, under the care of the Italian Consolata Fathers, and that she would spend another fortnight in the Vicariate of Kisumu. In the Vicariate of Meru, under Bishop Nepote, the Legion had started some months before, without any help from Edel. It was important that she should get in touch with them to ensure that from the first every step would be in conformity with the rules. The

Italian Fathers possessed only an English *Handbook*. This situation drew her to go to Meru in preference to Mauritius. An additional reason led her to delay a little longer the visit to Mauritius promised to Mgr. Leen. Dublin had just announced that the French translation of the *Handbook* was in the press. The *Handbook* would be indispensable for her work in Mauritius; so she decided to defer the visit to Mauritius for a few months so that she would come to the island armed with French *Handbooks*.

The visit to Meru was free from difficulty. Before she came, the Missionaries had worked out for her an itinerary which took in the nine more accessible Missions. Departing, her task finished, Edel left six Præsidia in full operation.

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From the moment that she was put in possession of "Rolls Royce," her capacity to move about was greatly increased. Ever after, she continued full of praises for her car. Now she gives us a glimpse of her new driver.

"My driver," she writes on September 26, 1939, "recently turned out in immaculate white trousers and shirt, with a belt of zebra skin. But on the front of his shirt, he had written his name, Anselmo, in capital letters with a copying-ink pencil. What will happen when it goes to the wash remains to be seen."

Meanwhile the state of the roads was a veritable nightmare to her and to Anselmo; she reports seven punctures in two days:

"I have had to survive a lot of leg-pulling here at the Mission Headquarters on my return from a recent trip. I was doing some Mission contacting with some odd jobs en route. Also I brought a C.S.Sp. Brother back from one Mission. I had not noticed that my front tyre was pretty worn. The tube burst. We put in another which held for a few miles. To cut a long story short, seven punctures were mended by the Brother and the driver during our two days on the road! The Brother took a day off when he got back here—the Bishop said he had well earned it!"

There is a special Providence looking after motorists, as everybody knows. Edel was to have practical experience of the fact a few months later!

"The Legion car," she writes, "has had another adventure that may amuse you. We had only done about 11 miles of the road to Dar-es-Salaam, when three leaves of the front spring snapped. Such had never happened before, and my first thought was that we were

caught in the mud. The driver put forth all his strength, and by using a log as a lever we succeeded in lifting the car. Next we had to bind the broken spring with cord, the branch of a tree serving as a splint. Then we started off, moving very slowly in case of further accident. It was nearly 7.30 p.m. when we arrived, which means that it was pitch dark. However I found out Father McCarthy's flat, and he took me to the Mission house and to the Bishop. I apologised for my late arrival and explained about the car. The Bishop said: 'I will see to that in the morning for you. I know a bit about cars.' Next morning at 8 a.m., the Bishop appeared in overalls in the Mission garage, and from that till lunch he worked at the car. Twice I went in, but he was on the ground underneath it, so I left him in peace. That evening at 6 p.m. the job was finished, and he had also put clamps to keep the battery more firmly in place. He had to get one new main leaf and he moulded two other leaves to fit. It seems he is a real artist with regard to cars, and takes pleasure in putting them in order. It is his way of relaxing. I went over next day to see him and to thank him, but he made nothing of it, just as if it were all in the day's work. If it was up country or out in the bush, I would not mind, but there are lots of garages in Dar-es-Salaam, and he could easily have let me take it to one of them. It seemed so funny to land into a place—and to see the Bishop spend every minute of the next day under your car repairing it!"

This event was more than sufficient to make Edel's "Rolls Royce" famous. It was the subject of jokes in every Mission station, and Edel herself joined heartily in the fun. Once Father McCarthy—the present Bishop of Zanzibar—had expressed to Dublin his admiration for the Envoy, adding incidentally that she was doing her rounds in a dilapidated Ford. The epithet came to Edel's ears. She guessed who was its author, and took up her pen to avenge the insult in her best style:

"If it is the same correspondent that called the Legion car 'a dilapidated Ford,' we will not remain long on a peace footing. However, as you do not give his name, I will not declare war. But I will certainly send you a snap of the car. It looks well; there are a few patches on the mudguards, put on with nails, but that is not unusual here. The paint work is a unique shade of purple (achieved by mixing left-over scraps of paint, I was told) and comes in now and then for comment. The original set of tyres were new when the car was bought, but have worn out since. Two new tyres were bought last May; but two of the original ones were still on in September last, when on safari they let me in for a hurricane series of seven punctures, after which it was obvious that their day was done. The engine is good—every garage the car was in has testified to that fact, un-

solicited; and others also. The car has weathered hills and roads you could have no conception of, has been imbedded in mud—always a possibility out here when the rains are on; it has had petrol troubles and parts requiring renewal, of course. But because of those few things to call it dilapidated—no, Sir! It has also the advantage, being a coupé, that if one ever has a breakdown in the bush, one could spend the night inside it in safety, because unlike other cars it would be lion-proof. I have never slept out in it, in case you might think I had. . . . It is very much a case of 'the country cousin comes to town', when we, i.e., driver, car and myself, arrive back in civilisation."

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So the turning wheels carry Edel ever on. She heeds neither the chaffing of her friends nor the tortured protests of her engine. She is not held back by the worst road nor by the absence of one. Imperturbably the gallant girl proceeds, without a thought of the dangers around her, trusting not too blindly in "Rolls Royce" but ever so firmly in the Providence of God.

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE SKIRTS OF WAR

"If sanctity is real sanctity, it must show itself in the form of courage."

FRANK DUFF.

ALARMIST rumours had reached Dublin concerning Edel's health. The authorities acted upon them immediately, inviting her to come home and enjoy a well-deserved holiday. Edel, compelled to give an account of herself, admitted that the high temperature she had had in December was due, not alone to malaria, but also to the ever-threatening T.B. Having said so much, she maintained vigorously that she was fit to continue her work, subject to some few extra precautions.

"First, as you know, I am only too pleased to carry on for as long as I may be useful to the Legion. I am quite willing to stay on here as long as I can work as well, or at least do as much work, as any other Legionary could. Point two—I always rely on you people to say if you are not satisfied with the way the work is being done. If someone more suitable turns up, I hope that you will use your common sense, and say so; you can be sure I will not mind. I know my limitations too well and would be only glad if you could find a really competent person. Besides, I should always consider I was very privileged to have had the opportunity of working for over two years out here. I know you have no one free at the moment, but you never know when someone might turn up. If one does, say so.

"This being said, we get to the fact that for the present no one is free, and that, as things go, there is work for another two years—so I carry on!

"Now, there is no necessity for a holiday to Europe at the end of four years. The nuns in all parts here are out for life. The majority of the priests stay for ten years at least without a holiday. If some of them go home sooner, it is not before seven or eight years.

"There is no earthly reason why I should go home at this point, before the work is finished, even though the idea be to return to Africa after a rest. Personally, I should prefer to remain here. After

all, it is probably only a question of a few years more. In any event, the question of leave does not even arise at this stage. If I were ten years out . . . we could consider the matter. But, after only two and a half years, to be talking of home leave! Why, they still consider priests and nuns as juveniles up to about five years out! In that period one is not even entitled to state an opinion on the Africans!"

In a further confidential letter, she returned to the subject. "As regards the family, do not let them know I have been made this offer, please! For them I think it is easier if I do not come home till the job is finished; or at least till my work is finished. It only means another heart-break for them if I go home and leave again. As things are, they are used to my being away. I wrote to mother some time ago, when she had mentioned something about the three years being nearly up, and I suggested that it was quite probable I would stay on a while longer; one could not finish the work exactly to measure in three years. So she is reconciled to the idea of my absence being a bit extended, and so is my father. Any time mother mentions that she wishes I was home, she always adds that, so long as I am well and happy, she does not mind my being away. She writes every week. My father writes and sends papers often. Provided that I write as often as I can, they are quite content. I was tickled about the last letter mother wrote. She said she wondered how I really was; she had never heard if I had even caught a cold and she suspected that I did not get through these years without a knock-out of some kind. She added that she knew she probably would not hear! I mention this to explain why it is wiser the family should be kept unaware of such items. Also, they are happier as they are, not being quite sure when I shall be home."

These lines show Edel's sensitive considerateness for her own people. Her constant fear was that she would cause suffering to her mother; she would attempt impossibilities to save her from alarm. All her letters tend to make little of any indisposition.

"Even the Legionaries in Nairobi," she writes, "did not know I was sick. The first dose of malaria is always the worst, but you never die of it! I was up in ten days—a bit wonky on the pins—but able for a Curia meeting. So you see, it is nothing very much. Out here it is like what the flu is at home; after the first attack it comes back repeatedly. You hear someone has a 'spot of fever'—perhaps they have a day in bed and quinine if it is a case of a temperature, but quinine and no bed, if the temperature is low—that is the priests' and sisters' methods, not my own. A day or so usually finishes these small attacks. I have had a few, perhaps five since, but only once had I to go to bed for two days. Even then, I was able to get

up for Mass. It is impossible to escape an occasional dose; a change of altitude, fatigue, or being a bit in the sun can bring it on. Everyone knows what to do and no one is upset.

"If my mother heard that I had malaria, it would just break her heart—on account of the distance."

Edel protested again in another letter against the anxiety that prevailed concerning her:

"Re the alarmist bulletin that nun wrote home, I know it is asking a lot to expect you to believe this, but I did not know I was so ill. *Entre nous*, I do not believe I was so bad. But they just get the wind up, and not knowing whether one is tough or not, they jump to conclusions. I went out to say good-bye to Mother Kevin. As I was on the point of going, she said: 'When you finish your Legion work join up here.' I laughed and said: 'It would require a miracle to restore my health for that.' She replied: 'It is a miracle that you are standing where you are, after being so ill. I did not think you would recover so quickly, or that you would look so well after a month's safari work.' I questioned her and she said I had been gravely ill, as they thought. When I went back to my friend, Mother Annunciata, of Nsambya Convent, Kampala, who had been so kind to me all along and who looked after me when I was ill, I asked her if it was true that they had thought me to be seriously ill. She said it was. I then enquired why, if they thought I was so bad, they had not suggested the last Sacraments. That was a poser for her! She said that there was no immediate danger, but that the risk of hæmorrhage was present for a time. So that is what the alarmist statement is based on."

Edel reiterated her reassuring accounts of her health to pacify her friends, and defended herself humorously:

"I see you cannot let my health alone, even for one letter. It is O.K., thank God; not a ripple disturbs it. Do not think that I am not well looked after. The contrary is the case. I never get a chance of a bit of peace; there is always someone on my track. It is usually the convents who examine my conscience on the subject of meals. When it is not they, it is some of the Nairobi crowd in their letters. The result is that if I wanted to diet, I could not! Actually, over here the system of meals is far more plentiful than we have in Ireland generally. One would want to have the appetite of a rhino—and the digestion of one as well—to get through all the food; and one would have to be as slippery as an eel to escape the meals."

In spite of all this plausible reasoning, Edel realised that she must take some precautions. She declared that she would follow the suggestion made to her and have a little rest where she was. "What the

priests have recommended to me several times as advisable and really sensible, is that at the end of every three months or so I should take a full week's rest. They contend that the nature of my work, i.e., the constant travelling day in, day out, meetings, contacts without any break, the road conditions and the climate, would knock even a strong person out. But if one deliberately planned a week at the end of every three months, it would leave one rested and refreshed for the next few months. I think there is something in it. Actually, it is impossible for the Envoys, when at work, to get any rest. Sundays and weekdays are all the same, and there is always correspondence in any spare hour. There is never a question of being longer than a night or two at a time in a Mission post. So I suppose it is good to plan to take a week between Vicariates. It all depends on how long a Vicariate takes to organise, of course; but I could fit in a week three or four times a year. Christmas is one sure period, as there is no work to be done then; the priests are too busy. Last year I had ten or fourteen days' rest that time I had my famous cold in June. Then, when I was sick at Christmas, I had more than my quota! I have been at work steadily now since January. So I will take a week when I see how Nyeri works out, perhaps at the end of the month. There are several convents I have invitations to. Everywhere the nuns and the missionaries are kindness itself. There is a general spirit of hospitality out here, typically colonial, free and easy."

What worried her much more than her health was the expense that her maintenance imposed on the Concilium. Her wretched health made her less useful, that was the only serious thing about it in her eyes. She wrote frankly on the matter:

"It has often struck me that the expense of keeping me here each year must be a terrible burden on the Concilium. I have often wondered how you could possibly manage it, and I always concluded that you could not continue it long enough to complete the work out here. I keep expenses as low as possible. Really the greater part of the money goes on transport. The amount given for board is never much; one gives it when it seems necessary, or where one is really a burden on the convent or Mission. Some of these are desperately poor. Here one usually brings provisions, but, as I say, it is not a big item. On the whole, there is not a large amount spent on board, and I have not to take so many meals outside a Mission. Only on a few occasions have I had to stay at a boarding house, when there was no convent available or no house at the Mission. It does not seem possible to work on less. Yet it is like a nightmare for days ahead, having to write home to say that money is required. Knowing all the demands the Concilium has, I realise what a problem

it must be to have to meet requests for money and more money every few months. The car, of course, bulks big in my budget. But transport would always rank as a formidable liability. As things are, both here and in Uganda, it would be impossible to do the work without a car; and the same applies to Tanganyika. . . . I expect the Concilium could do with a few Mr. Oliver.¹ We here should be grateful to have one like him, especially at this growing stage of our organisation."

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Edel showed such determination about "holding on" that the Concilium could only give in to her.

So off she started again over hills and through dales, "ransacking" the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro in every direction. She revisited the already-formed groups to ascertain their progress and give any necessary advice, and at Kilema had the happiness of seeing old friends again. Dublin received reports of visits to Rombo, Mengwe, Uru, Mashati, Kibosho, Moshi, Arusha and, after a halt at Bura, from Gare, Tanga, Karogwe, Mlingano, Kifungilu. . . .

On July 5 she was present at Mombasa at a meeting of the African Præsidium. On August 10 she announced that she had arrived safe and sound in the Vicariate of Bagamoyo, also in the territory of Tanganyika. Such was the tempo of her progress! His Excellency Monsignor Hilhorst welcomed her to his Vicariate with cordiality. The missionaries there were Dutch but spoke English well. This made discussion and arrangements easy, with the result that on August 6 the first adult Præsidium was formed at the Mission of Bagamoyo.

Meeting Edel, no one there could possibly have guessed what a dead weight of fatigue bore down upon her shoulders. Her ever equable spirits hid from all eyes the fever that was burning her. Cheerful and unconcerned, she announced that as a concession she was going to take five days in bed.

"Do not think I am ill or anything of the kind—that is not so—honest. In fact, there is not the slightest need for me to mention it at all, if I didn't want to—and you'd be none the wiser! Now, please say nothing about *this holiday of mine to anyone*—they'd be writing to enquire for the next few months!"

Edel did not confine her interest to her own field of action. Every-

¹ Mr. Oliver was the American benefactor who met the expenses of the three envoys in America for many years.

thing Catholic mattered intensely to her. Her letters are full of remarks and questions on the extension of the Legion. Her authorities regularly sent her the world news—and one day a bulletin reached her, relating the visit of Mr. Duff and Mr. Nagle to the Holy Father in Rome. What an encouragement for her were these lines:

“We saw five Cardinals during our stay, including the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. He is deeply interested in the Legion. He assured us that he was entirely favourable and that he would continue, in concert with the Apostolic Delegates, to help the organisation. He urged us to see that the Legion remained true to its purely spiritual mission and to take care that it did not launch out into material works, such as the collecting of money and the giving of relief. He emphasised that these works should be left to the organisations set up for that purpose. He gave us permission to address the students of Propaganda College, where we had as an audience seventy English-speaking students from all over the world. We also addressed students in almost all the other English-speaking Colleges in Rome. All this was most helpful and of great importance.”

Edel realised the value of this patronage. She was happy to be working in communion with the Church. It was her one dream.

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The world, alas, was more than ever in need of salvation. The air was heavy with menace.

It was September, 1939. The political sky of Europe was growing distinctly darker. Poland had been invaded; Germany and France, weapons levelled, were eyeing each other along the Maginot Line. Would the conflict become world-wide? Would Africa be drawn into the war? That misgiving was on the lips of all. All hearts were wrung with anguish, for a spark would be enough to bring about a conflagration. The fever of apprehension in men broke out in a rash of questions. Wild rumours flew about, each more improbable than the last; plans for the future were thrown up on hypothetical foundations. If war was declared between the Axis and Britain, Abyssinia would immediately become a cockpit. Would the Missionaries belonging to the belligerent nations be interned, or would some formula be discovered that would enable the main portion of the missionary work to be saved? Each of these questions meant a new problem for her who was seeking to establish the Legion in Africa at such a disturbed time. Was it really the moment for her activities, she was asked with a touch of irony. Was it not a mere

gamble to try and found groups whose members might tomorrow find themselves scattered to the four corners of the earth? What was the good of extracting the consent of a superior, sometimes after a hard tussle, when soon he might be sent to a concentration camp or forced to yield his place to another belonging to a neutral or friendly nation? One does not start to build during an earthquake! Such was the reasoning of the wiser ones, and appearances were certainly on their side.

Edel put her faith in other reasonings. She had read in the Gospel that whosoever has put his hand to the plough must not look back. Whatever happened, she would not return to Ireland. Her choice was made. If she was cut off from all contact with her own country and her means of support, she would seek to earn a living where she was, that was all. On that matter, her letters were incomparably clear and definite: let no one trouble about her; the Providence of God would look after her. “What boundless trust we should have in God’s love!” she writes in her rare intimate notes. “We can never love too much; let us give utterly, and not count the cost. He will respond to our faith in Him. We must do what we can for Him, and rely on Him to give us each day the strength for the work He expects from us. The weakness which He leaves in us must not hold us back from our desires. It is our share in His sufferings. What a grace to be let bear a little for Him! Each morning at Holy Mass, the Bread of Life will help the body as well as the soul, if we have faith. If we but touch the hem of His garment . . . and how much more have we than that!”

Her faith was as strong as that of the Centurion in the Gospel, of whom it is said that Jesus marvelled at him; and as tenacious as that of the Canaanite woman to whom the Master said: “O woman, great is thy faith.” Her confidence in God overbore all hesitation. Like a child, she left herself in His Hands.

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She stayed where she was, therefore, to finish her work. Was it not more necessary than ever in these troubled times to organise the lay apostolate?

“As regards my work,” she writes, “it is now it will really be useful. If, as time goes on, the war makes it difficult to get more priests from Europe for the Missions, the fact that the people themselves are able to work and help should mean much.”

The personal problem that Edel was most concerned about was the rationing of petrol.

"Everything is really back to normal here," she writes some days after Britain's entry into the war. "The only awkward sign of war is that petrol has become scarce, and the post almost non-existent. Everything has been wonderfully well organised by the Government, with the least possible upset to the common run of things."

Petrol had become, in a few hours, a precious commodity, to be husbanded jealously. One could not obtain it without substantial reasons. Fortunately, Edel's passport recognised her as a "Missionary." As such she was able to get the necessary permission for her journeys in "Rolls Royce."

Leaving the Vicariate of Bagamoyo, she went to Dar-es-Salaam. His Excellency Bishop Maranta, the eminent motor mechanic was as kind to the Legion as he had been to the Envoy's broken down car. He drew up himself a list of visits to be paid. The Vicariate was worked by the Swiss Capuchins; they gave her a warm welcome. The first Præsidium in the Vicariate of Dar-es-Salaam started on October 24, 1939, at the Ifikara Mission, under the title of "Our Lady Help of Christians." Edel's letters again became a litany of names: Kwiromahenge, Ruaha, Sali, Igota, Itete, Tununguo, Mgololi, Vidunda not omitting the most important station, Morogoro, her base of operations. Her stay in Dar-es-Salaam brought her in contact with a Missionary who was to be an invaluable support to her: Father J. McCarthy, C.S.Sp. The twelve Bishops of Tanganyika had confided to him all dealings between the Church and the Government. This gave him a position of prime importance and his introduction would facilitate Edel's freedom of movement. Father McCarthy is to-day, as already stated, the Bishop of Zanzibar. In a letter written to Kimmage he sums up his impressions of Edel in these words:

"Miss Quinn is an extraordinary individual, courageous, zealous and optimistic. She wanders round in a dilapidated Ford, having for sole companion an African driver. When she returns home, she will be qualified to speak about the Missions and the Missionaries, having really more experience than any single Missionary I know. She is a credit to the country she comes from. You may tell that to any Legionary friends whom you may happen to know in Dublin."

During this stay in Dar-es-Salaam, Edel enjoyed a minor pleasure of which she had been for long deprived and which she mentions as a rare event:

"For the first time since May, I was able to read a newspaper on the very day it was issued in Dar-es-Salaam. It was a real event! Mostly, one cannot get a paper, not even a week-old one; and news

spreads as in olden days by word of mouth, usually emanating from some radio owner. Only the central Mission in this Vicariate has a radio. So, unless one is at Morogoro, one does not hear the latest. Every item of war news is eagerly looked for, naturally, so many unexpected things keep happening. The Russian invasion of Poland must have been an all-round surprise."

Attention is centred on Italy, she says again, because of its position in Africa.

The political atmosphere was particularly lowering in that great port, the capital of Tanganyika. Dar-es-Salaam means port of peace, such is the irony of words! So many races mingle there that the happenings in Dantzig and on the Maginot Line were necessarily reflected on men's faces. British, Arabs, Indians, Africans, their interests were too much opposed for latent antagonisms not to be awakened at the least alarm.

Edel's kingdom was not of this world, and when the children are fighting, it is more than ever necessary, she thought, to speak to them of their mother and to gather them around her. So she went on peacefully with her work and lived for it alone. Those who came near her divined the inward flame that inspired her, but she hid it so carefully that only some occasional gesture would reveal it. A brief glimpse into that intimate world of the spirit comes to us from a Mission near Morogoro. It is the personal reminiscence of a Missionary. Rev. Father A. Jong, C.S.Sp., of the Mission of Ngeta, Morogoro, Tanganyika, writes on August 1, 1944: "At a small mission I met Miss Quinn. She was speaking about the Legion of Mary, which was, of course, her topic. At 11 a.m. she departed for a certain place about sixty miles away, returning the next day at 10 a.m. with a message for me from our Bishop. Immediately after this she went off on a trip of about 110 miles. As I had to go in the same direction, she took me with her in the car. After forty miles she dropped me at my place, then continuing for the further seventy miles. Two days later she came to our Mission at 11 a.m. and asked me to give her Holy Communion. Her thanksgiving done, she joined me and told me of her adventures. On her way to our Mission she got stuck in the mud and had to abandon the car. After walking ten miles, she reached a hotel, where she had a little rest but took no food. Early in the morning off she went with the mechanic for the car. When it was repaired she set out for our Mission. During all that time she did not take food, in order to be able to receive her Spiritual Food, Holy Communion.

"Even supposing she had some food in the car at the time it got stuck, at least she had been without any for at least seventeen hours.

I think this is sufficient to show you how she used her time and how anxious she was to be supported by Our Lord Himself."

We recognise the Edel of Dublin, hungering for the Eucharist.

"I have meat to eat which you know not." Our Lord said to His Apostles at Jacob's Well. Edel desired no other food but that.

No task seemed to her more blessed than to awaken the baptised to their responsibilities. The Legion of Mary, instrument of that purpose, was truly the dream of her life. She confided to one of her friends that the Legion realised all her hopes:

"For me," she wrote on 30th November, 1939, "the Legion comes before everything."

If she spoke on one occasion of seeking work in Africa, it would be only as a matter of extreme necessity, that is, if all Missionary activity were prohibited. If she chose to remain in Africa, it was that she wished to be on the spot, whatever might happen, and to begin her work again as soon as the tempest had passed. Her authorities in Dublin, for their part, had taken the necessary steps to meet every eventuality. Edel, like the other Envoys, was given instructions which would enable her to maintain contact in spite of any crises. The time had come for her to answer the call of His Excellency Dr. Leen, Archbishop of Port Louis, who was awaiting her advent with impatience. The French *Handbook* had just come from the press; there was no reason for further delay.

The submarine war made the sea unsafe and travelling hazardous. Edel did not for a moment dwell on the perils of the journey. She had recognised the hand of God in the circumstances; she decided to embark for Mauritius.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE ISLAND OF MAURITIUS

"If one can do but little and yet does it with all one's heart, Mary will come in with power, and will give that feeble movement the effect of a giant's strength."

HANDBOOK OF THE LEGION.

In the early days of January, 1940, Edel took ship and sailed for Port Louis. On board she met a Missionary, Father Nealon, C.S.Sp., who had come direct from Dublin. It was a lucky circumstance, enabling her to get news from there quite fresh. The war added value to every detail, however small. Edel's letters show her gratitude for every line she received from home. Though she willingly accepted her voluntary exile, she felt the sacrifice none the less.

The voyage proceeded happily and without accident. Edel profited by the ship's calling at various ports of Madagascar to carry out extension work. The *Handbook* had taught her that "the Legionary is always on duty" and should seize every opportunity as it comes. At Mayumba, she was able to see the Vicar Apostolic. At Diego Suarez the Bishop was absent. At Tamatave she contacted the Montfort Fathers and the Bishop's delegate, the Bishop being absent in France for his consecration. She was successful in awakening interest and she promised to call again on her return voyage.

On the 22nd January, 1940, after a passage of two weeks, the steamer entered the harbour of Port Louis, the gateway to the island.

Mauritius, long known to the Arabs, had been discovered by Europeans at the opening of the 16th century, thanks to the Portuguese pilot, Don Diego Fernandez Pereira, who named it Swan Island. At the end of that century, the Dutch discovered it in their turn and annexed it under the name of "Mauritius", in honour of Prince Maurice of Nassau. They abandoned the island later as a result of reverses they had suffered. Louis XV assumed ownership of it and called it Isle de France. A cross was planted at the mouth of the harbour, bearing in relief three French lilies, and at the base this inscription:

*Lilia fixa crucis capiti mirare sacrata
Ne stupeas: jubet hic Gallia stare crucem.*¹

Under Napoleon, England took possession of the island and restored to it its former name of Mauritius. Such is briefly the history of this land known to fame as "the star and key of the Indian Ocean".

The inhabitants of the island of European stock are almost exclusively French in origin. Hence the bilingual system of the country: French is the ordinary language of intercourse, English the official language.

At the time of Edel's visit, the island was divided into thirty-six parishes. The parish priests were mainly French, with a few Mauritians, but there were also some English, some Canadians, some Irish. From the religious point of view, the situation was a complex one. There were about 200,000 Hindoos, 140,000 Catholics, 55,000 Mohammedans, 7,000 Buddhists, 5,000 Protestants and 1,000 Jews. Mauritius is a little world in itself, as Edel was to find out before long.

She was royally received by several Holy Ghost Fathers and by the heads of the Catholic societies, who came aboard to welcome her. A car was waiting to drive her to the house of the Archbishop, Mgr. Leen, who told her how happy he was to see her at last in his territory.

"Everything was attended to by the welcoming party," she writes. "Monsieur Jean Hein, President of 'l'Union Catholique', showed me to my living quarters shortly after my arrival and produced a beautiful bouquet of carnations for my room. I cannot describe the great kindness, hospitality and splendid co-operation which I have experienced from everybody since my arrival. The members of the various Catholic associations are only too anxious to give me every possible assistance in my work. Several folk have placed their cars at my disposal. I found that Monsieur Hein has been a reader of *Maria Legionis* for quite a time. It was from him that I borrowed the Christmas number, as my own copy had not reached East Africa before I left."

As a means of launching the Legion, it was decided to publish a special number of the *Vie Catholique*—the Catholic weekly paper in Mauritius—which would be entirely devoted to the Legion. Edel worked at it without interruption, had appropriate English articles

¹ The fleurs de lys are cut at the head of this sacred cross. Wonder not, it is France that wishes the cross to be raised.

translated, and submitted the text to the Archbishop. As the French *Handbook* had not yet arrived, this publication would enable her to meet the first requirements.

This number of the *Vie Catholique* was indeed full of valuable information: the history of the Legion, its principal characteristics, Monsignor Riberi's letter to the Ordinaries of East Africa, an address given by Edel entitled "In the service of the Legion," and a charming "letter to the children" also from her pen and couched in most appropriate terms; she seemed to have a natural turn for journalism, as we may judge from this letter:

"Dear Children,

"You must have heard of the Legion of Mary from your parents or at school. Perhaps you thought it was only for grown up people.

"No, dear children, the Legion of Mary concerns you too, and I am sure you will be glad to have it explained to you. We can describe the Legion of Mary as an army of Catholics, enrolled under the banner of the Blessed Virgin, to fight Satan and his followers.

"We all have to fight Satan, you as well as I. On the day of our Baptism, we became children of God; on the day of our Confirmation, we became soldiers of Christ and you know that the soldier's duty is to fight his country's enemies. Now this fight imposes some little duties on us."

Here she explains the rules and gives examples of works that can be done.

She concludes by these words:

"I do not know if some of you are scouts or cubs. A scout or a cub promises to perform one good deed every day. Why would not you who are Catholics try to do every day five or ten minutes of Catholic Action? Do not wait until you are older to be pious or to have a share in apostolic work. Begin at once. Get into the habit now of working for Jesus and His Holy Mother. They will bless you. You will be proud. Think about it, dear children. Do not say 'no' too quickly. Jesus loves you, Mary loves you, show that you love Them too. Work for Them.

Your friend,

E. QUINN."

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Edel found herself dealing with a population very different from that she had met on the mainland. But she adapted herself to the new situation as easily as she had to the old. The racial question was of great importance here, too. White Mauritians are mostly the descendants of French colonists. "Then you have the Indian and Chinese population," she writes. "Practically all the shops are Chinese owned; many of the latter are Catholics. The Indians are, for the most part, workers in the sugar plantations, and are scattered all over the island.

"Then there are the Creoles, whose ancestors were the slaves brought from Madagascar and Africa, and who have had the faith only for a hundred years. They are the poorest part of the population. They still cling a little to old superstitions, and many of them have a horror of the holy state of matrimony. They may live with the same person for ten or fifteen years, but if there is question of marriage, they would sooner separate. If they do marry, it is a hundred to one, I am told, that in three months they will have broken apart. The big work amongst the Creoles is getting this question of marriage or concubinage settled. I think this will be the real work of the Legion, once members get properly into their stride."

These lines reveal Edel's realistic outlook: she wishes to seek out misery, wherever it is hidden. Does not Mary show a marked preference for all that belongs to the realm of Mercy? And did Our Lord not mention as a mark of the authenticity of His mission the sign that "the poor will have the Gospel preached to them"? Edel had a keen sense of the dignity of the depressed classes.

She had landed on January 22, and on the 28th of that month, she had the joy of seeing the first Præsidium, "Our Lady of Victories" come into being at the Cathedral parish. Again she set about the work of initiation, a delicate task, in which principles and rules had to be maintained, without offending anyone or discouraging persons of goodwill. Edel had not been long in sizing up the special circumstances of the island.

"The people," she wrote, "are really generous, and I think the majority, after they get over the shock of having to submit to the discipline of a weekly meeting, a definite work and a partner, will find themselves quite at home. They also have a real devotion to Our Lady, which means a lot when it comes to proposing the Legion. There were certainly many difficulties, particularly the fact that the Legion was not of French origin."

Mauritius indeed lives spiritually in a French atmosphere. This was why Edel was particularly interested in the introduction of the Legion into France. Miss V. O'Brien had just made a first attempt

in Paris, but this very first Legionary group on French soil was composed of Polish flying officers! Edel wrote in great delight:

"It is splendid that, in spite of everything, the Legion is starting in France."

That was true, but that first Præsidium, christened "Our Lady of Victories" by those Polish airmen who refused to despair of their country, would have to leave France for England. It was a sort of cradle of the Legion for Poland, but it was not the authentic French start that Edel longed for and which would come a few months later. So she had against her that prejudice and the fact that she spoke in English. In her favour there was her smile, the Archbishop, and Our Lady. St. Teresa of Avila liked to say: "Teresa and three ducats amount to nothing. But God and Teresa and three ducats amount to everything." Edel's confidence was nourished at the same source.

His Excellency Mgr. Leen treated her in the most fatherly way. His soul, full of the aroma of Mary, valued intensely the grace that the Legion brought to his people. Had he not written in his book *By Jacob's Well*: "Mary has given to the whole economy of men's redemption a character of tenderness, of graciousness, of humaneness and of adaptation to the instinctive needs of our human nature."

The Archbishop had warmly recommended the Legion to his priests and to the heads of the Catholic organisations. He did not insist on their adopting it, but invited them to try the experiment. Later, Edel would say of him that he was one of the most remarkable Bishops she had met. Under his auspices, she set about her work of explanation. In particular she went to call on the priests. Groups came into being at l'Immaculée, Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes, Phoenix, Vacoas, Curepipe Road, Curepipe, Saint-Pierre, Montagne Blanche, Pamplémousses, la Pointe-aux-Piments. They were followed soon by Sainte Croix, Chemin-Grenier, New Grove, le Centre de Flacq, la Rivière du Rempart.

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The foundation of the Curia was not long delayed. Under its care Edel would assemble nineteen Præsidia. For its opening meeting they chose a richly significant date, April 28, the feast of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort. The Archbishop presided, accompanied by Mgr. Lee, the Vicar General, and numerous other priests. He appointed then as Spiritual Director the youngest of his priests, Rev. Fr. Margéot;

and as President, Mr. Roger Giraud. This double choice was particularly happy, as the future was to show. A telegram, sent to Dublin in the name of the Legionaries, promised their loyal adherence to the Concilium. It was to acknowledge that the Legion is an army, and that union with its chiefs is for it an essential condition of victory. Legionaries are soldiers and not free lances; the Legionaries of Mauritius wished to enter the ranks and serve their Queen, according to her preferences and promptings. All this was summed for them in their promise of loyalty, which was a pledge of union.

Edel's haste in starting the Curia may seem surprising. The fact is that she was in a hurry to get the organisation working, in order to be able to leave it. Archbishop Leen would have liked to keep her on the island until Christmas, but Africa was calling her. She thought it best to equip the Legionaries, so that they themselves would be able to attend to the work of extension. When the Curia was founded, Edel assisted it with her advice, and kept watch lest fundamental principles be neglected in daily practice. She knew only too well, as she said, that "little breaches of the rules sap their spirit" and open the door to private interpretation and its risks.

It must not be thought that she won these battles by learned argument. A word spoken in season, and inspired by her profound and evident detachment, was generally sufficient to bring about the required amendment.

A Legionary, Marie Hall, who was very friendly with her, tells how Edel observed and trained her Legionaries:

"Alix Harel and I were going to visit the patients in the hospital of Candos. On our way, my companion said to me: 'You know, Miss Quinn is to come with us to the hospital to-day.' When we arrived, we saw coming towards us the girl in a blue dress whom I had already seen at Rose Hill. She looked very pleasant, had a bright and gentle smile, lovely pink cheeks, shining blue eyes; but also an incessant cough. I was completely captured by her naturalness and her charm of manner. We paid our visit to the ward in gay spirits. Miss Quinn very discreetly let us talk to the patients, but we told her all that went on. We saw quite plainly that nothing escaped her."

She adds: "Miss Quinn used to come to our meetings and sit with us very quietly, seeming in no way different from the rest. When something was not quite satisfactory, she used to remark on it gently to the President. One would have thought she was asking advice, rather than giving it." May not the secret of that gentle correction be found in the line from her retreat notes where she resolves: "Never to find fault without referring the matter to the

Blessed Virgin?" The allusion to her terrible and incessant cough will have been remarked. One day a friend said to her: "You must take care of yourself, and not continue to cough like that." Edel gave a laugh and replied: "Oh, the cough!—that will go on till I die." This retort expresses her philosophy of life: to do one's duty and to leave the rest to God. Edel took things light-heartedly. Like a cork in water, her sense of humour came to the top in all circumstances. "When I was giving her news of one branch," recalls a Legionary, "I told her that we had one Legionary who amused us greatly. She was always making mistakes, calling the Brothers 'Sister' and the Sisters 'Father' or 'Brother'. These slips delighted everyone. I remembered suddenly that I ought to keep secret everything that happened at our meetings. I stopped, saying: 'Oh, it is not right for me to tell that.' Edel burst out laughing and said: 'Oh! you may tell that, you may tell that.'"

The incident had a sequel; when going away Edel gave her friend a picture with the teasing inscription: "A small token of appreciation, wishing you lots of scruples about breaches of the Legion rules."

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We must admire the art with which Edel recalls "first principles". Not to speak of the families one visits is a basic rule, and is indeed dictated by elementary discretion. Edel had a respect for authority. Without being overbearing she was able to gain adherence to established rules. The first duty of a Government is surely to govern and to serve the public weal without compromising or being influenced by the self-interest of individuals. No one is obliged to enter the Legion, but whoever does so must play the game and accept the regulations. Edel had the delicate mission of obtaining this acceptance, and she was marvellously successful in the task. A prominent Mauritius Legionary writes:

"Miss Quinn was always very respectful of ecclesiastical authority; she would never have done or suggested anything which ran counter to it. Moreover, she was always the soul of conciliation, preferring to give in to the opinion of others than insist on her own. With the Legionaries, however, she was inflexible, when there was a question of the rules or directions which it was her duty to see observed."

All this complicated the hard and laborious work of founding the Legion, and compelled her to visit the new groups again and again.

She writes to Dublin: "I do not know how many Presidencies I hold at the moment." And again: "There is a good deal of matter to fit into this letter. I have not had breathing space this month; 8 Præsidia started; so between that, visiting possibles, and revisiting existing ones, there was hardly time for meals."

Edel attended to the secretarial side of her work in the evening, generally until half-past eleven. She put down everything on paper: the needs of the branches, their difficulties, improvements to be suggested, directions to be sought from the Concilium. Before her invincible courage, difficulties vanished. She had a solution for everything, even for the problem of transport. With the greatest skill she planned trips by bus, train and taxi, so that the longest journeys cost the minimum of time and money. Strangers staying at her hotel said wonderingly that she had a genius for organising transport.

Edel loved Mauritius and was loved there.

Her relations with friends, Legionary or otherwise, were simple and cordial. She put people at their ease by her natural and charming manner. The smallest thing gave her pleasure, we are told, and she did not like a person to be at any expense on her account.

One could discuss anything with her. She was well-informed on many topics and on the sad facts of life. No false propriety: one might, without fear of startling her, speak of the delicate situations that one so often meets with in the course of Legionary activities.

She had a really sisterly feeling for her friends. Though not given to many words, she showed an exquisite gratitude for the smallest attention. She always thought that too much was done for her, and that she did not deserve such great consideration. It was a joy to meet her or receive her in one's house. When her infrequent times of leisure allowed it, she sometimes spent the week-end with friends, who were very fond of her: she said that the affection which was shown her made her feel as if she were back in her own family circle. On these occasions she used to speak freely of her own people, and one could feel how dear and ever-present every detail concerning them was to her.

A Legionary, Alix Harel, gives us her impressions of Edel in the following words: "Miss Quinn was ever in good humour, even bubbling with gaiety, in spite of being so tired and always so delicate. In disposition she was at all times unruffled. She enjoyed playing tennis, but never had an opportunity of doing so, because her apostolic work absorbed her entirely."

She tells us, too, how much Edel appreciated the charm of a home and everything that reminded her of her own home. She became

afraid to send any more snapshots of herself to her family lest they should be shocked to see the gradual deterioration in her health.

Nevertheless, she attended meetings, sometimes several in the same day, at distant centres, to which she went alone by taxi. After which, working far into the night, she brought her Dublin correspondence up to date or kept in touch by letter with the African Curia.

This correspondence was one of the heavy burdens of her life, and, of course, each new stage of her Envoyship piled more on to it. She sacrificed her personal letters to friends in order to keep abreast of her Legionary writing. A letter to one of her friends, Eileen O'Connor, explains her apparent neglect: "My letters are down to a minimum, especially to my special friends who, I know, will understand. You may judge what category you are in, since I think you get about one or two a year! Each year such letters become more difficult, for the local ones go on increasing."

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In spite of her prodigious activity, or rather, because of it, her soul felt a growing need of recollection. She managed to get away for a three-day retreat. A diary of hers gives us an echo of her thoughts at that time, in the form of resolutions. She jots down several points without sequence:

"Always as many Masses as possible." Again her unfaltering devotion discloses itself.

Further on she enumerates the venial sins to be avoided, and concludes by the warning: "Finally, avoid everything half-done." This gives us a glimpse of her inmost nature. She sought to offer perfect work to God; she loved thoroughness in prayer, in self-sacrifice, in service.

The retreat was a brief halt, giving us a rapid glance at her interior life. Immediately she resumed her ordinary life and labours. On the 19th of May of that year she had the joy of assisting at the first Acies in the cathedral of Port Louis.

Archbishop Leen, twenty Spiritual Directors, and nearly three hundred active members consecrated themselves to Our Lady. His Excellency the Archbishop encouraged the Legionaries in fiery words: "Your visits are specially efficacious," was his theme, "when you perform them in the spirit of faith and in union with the Blessed Virgin. Then you must succeed; your visits will have something like a sacramental value; they are rendered almost irresistible."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, he announced to Edel that the Bishop of Réunion was wishful that she would go and found the Legion in that neighbouring island. This sanction meant more to her than a thousand thanks. Immediately she made plans to avail of the invitation. Alas! the war was at its height. Her plans had to be laid aside. There was no means of crossing to the other island. At a future day the Legionaries of Mauritius would have the glory of bringing the Legion to Réunion, where to-day there are more than sixty flourishing Præsidia.

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War. We must never forget that background to Edel's movements. She was going about her work in a world torn and distracted by a succession of crises. In Mauritius they followed with agonised attention the entry of the Wehrmacht into Belgium, the break through at Sedan, the race to the sea, the evacuation at Dunkirk, the march on Paris. The picture on the screen had all the atmosphere of hallucination! What was going to happen to Edel in that whirlwind which was rapidly nearing the African coast?

In Dublin, the authorities were anxious about her fate and considered every eventuality.

On August 22, 1940, they wrote to her: "In regard to your own movements, you are to consider yourself a free lance—in the event of your being unable to carry on with your own district and programme. Pick the area which is accessible to you and which you think the most fruitful; and wherever it be, go there. India might offer a good field, but perhaps one's movements there might also be restricted. Possibly the Philippines might be the best possible territory for you. They are more or less awaiting an Envoy there."

The letter concludes with these words: "Certainly you are launched on a course of adventure which we did not contemplate when you originally volunteered for North Wales."

Indeed India and the Philippines were not exactly Chester! But for Edel, her parish was the Church. She thought only in terms of Catholicism. One can see this in her letters; she asks for news of the hostel for street girls being opened in Australia, and she wants to hear all about the wonderful work of Father Machado in Burma.

A true love of God does not stop at frontiers. Edel's love stretched to the ends of the earth. The Concilium had made that discovery when they proposed her going to Kenya instead of to Wales. They knew they could without misgiving leave her free to make her own

plans. For her part, she was ready for anything; she left it to circumstances—the secret voice of God—to decide for her.

"Whatever happens," she writes, "and whatever be the consequences, do not worry about me." War was making it more and more difficult to move about. Madagascar and Réunion were practically out of reach, for lack of transport. The Philippines and India, even if she could get there, were an unknown world. But the way to Africa was still open. So why not follow up what she had left unfinished there; consolidate the ground already won; and bring her earlier successes to full fruition. The voyage was perilous: ships were going down in fatal series, the victims of floating mines or submarines. That did not deter her. She found a boat which would take her to Durban, from whence she could get to Beira. This decided her. She opted for Nyasaland, which she had not yet visited, and which would give her access to many African Vicariates already staked out for the Legion. She must not stay another moment in Mauritius.

She wrote on one occasion: "In my opinion, the part of an Envoy is to clear the way." As soon as she had made an entry, she was in haste to disappear, and to take up elsewhere the thankless task of the pioneer. Nyasaland was unbroken ground from the Legionary point of view. By going there, she would continue in the fulness of her vocation as precursor.

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The hour of departure had struck. Edel had laid solid foundations for the Legion in Mauritius. The results would soon appear; they would set God's signature to her work. Barely nine months after her arrival, there were thirty Præsidia in nineteen parishes.

Less than ten years later, the island could count sixty parish Præsidia, 750 active members and 5,000 Auxiliaries. At the request of His Excellency Mgr. Leen, Chinese Præsidia were created. If statistics are eloquent, the table¹ published by the Legion in Mauritius is sufficient by itself to put the seal on Edel's reputation. It sets forth the results of a couple of years of apostolic work. One can by thinking turn those dry-as-dust figures into what they stand

¹ Baptisms on the point of death, 1,091; Baptisms, 887; First Communion, 4,195; Confirmations, 2,940; Extreme Unction, 1,011; Marriages regularised, 1,932; Reconciliations, 68; Easter Communion, 777; House Visitations, 67,669; Visits to the Sick, 30,421; Visits to Hospital, 5,152; Returns to the Sacraments, 804; Conversions: Protestants, 44; Adventists, 19; Hindoos, 399; Mussulmans, 18; Chinese, 135.

for: a startling assemblage of hidden sacrifices, of generous, courageous deeds. They are the fruits of the tree that Edel planted.

The last ten days in Mauritius were spent in farewell visits to the many friends whom she was leaving for ever. "I got more flowers here than in all my life before," she writes. She admits that the separation did not take place without tears. To His Excellency Archbishop Leen she said laughingly: "The Mauritians have petted me so much that I am literally spoiled." The Archbishop himself tells this story:

"It was the eve of her departure. She had said good-bye to the Harel family, and Miss Harel was escorting her to the homes of other friends, when she utterly broke down in a crisis of tears: 'My life is always thus,' she said. 'As soon as my work becomes really interesting and that I have made real friends, I must break away and face again the unknown.' She stopped at a nearby church, spent a little while before the Tabernacle and came out with her usual happy smile. I have no doubt that her 'fiat' was generous and complete. The following day she faced the long and hazardous journey. At that time the Indian Ocean was (as Byron puts it) as full of danger as of depth. Yet she did not manifest the slightest concern."

She departed in glory.

On Wednesday, August 28, the Legionaries assembled at the cathedral to assist at a Mass offered for her intention. It was said by Father Margéot, the Spiritual Director, and attended by nearly 300 Legionaries. After the Mass a reception was given at the "Union Catholique", presided over by the Archbishop. M. Jean Hein, president of the Union, followed by M. Roger Giraud, president of the Legion, thanked the Envoy for the work she had accomplished. Edel rose; in a few very simple words, in English and in French, she expressed her thanks for the Mass offered that morning. Finally, Archbishop Leen told her of the gratitude of the whole diocese for the grace conferred on the island by her presence and her devoted work.

The *Vie Catholique* which gives an account of this ceremony, concludes with these words: "Everyone present at the meeting was deeply touched; and someone said going out: 'Our Lady made her presence among us felt.'"

Edel embarked a few days later. She was very calm, and wishing to give no opportunity for a display of feelings, she would not let anyone go on board with her. She went off alone, as she had come, her eyes already fixed on the future.

Her stay in Mauritius has left luminous and lasting marks. Here

is the picture of her painted to-day by Father Margéot, who knew her very well:

"Miss Quinn was a soul of astonishing simplicity. She had achieved a very great interior union with God and seemed entirely abandoned to His Will. I never detected in her a look or a word which suggested an anxiety about her health. Towards the end of her stay, I pointed out to her that her cough had got worse. Her only reply was a quiet smile.

"It would seem, too, judging by some of the things she said, that her life was centred on the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which she loved intensely; and that the Blessed Virgin held in her life an altogether special place. She received Holy Communion every day, made a meditation, went regularly to Confession. I am not able to say whether Miss Quinn had arrived at any extraordinary degree of prayer, but I would say that she led a life in which heroism had become natural to her."

A Legionary officer, Roger Giraud, echoes the words of the priest:

"Many persons," he writes, "would like to know the secrets of her spiritual life. I questioned her one day on that subject, and she replied very simply that Mass, Holy Communion, the Gospels and St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's *Secret of Mary* were the vital elements of her religious life. She said that she drew from Holy Communion the strength to accomplish the most difficult tasks. What she regarded as the greatest hardship was to be prevented from receiving that Divine Food by illness, or by some actual impossibility, such as when she was travelling in places where Mass was unobtainable. One day I saw her being interrupted in her thanksgiving after Holy Communion by a friend who had to speak to her. Her face was transfigured; it seemed to be lit up by a brightness from within. If I had then been told that she was looking God in the face, I would not have been surprised. Her whole appearance was changed by that suggestion of supernatural brightness."

Those are the secrets of the King, and it is better for us to pause on the threshold rather than seek to probe them further. We shall only say, in conclusion, that the Archbishop spoke of her as of a very holy soul, and said that he would have wished (as he also wrote later) to give evidence at an eventual process of canonisation. When Edel left the island, the Concilium sent an expression of thanks to Archbishop Leen for the consideration he had always shown to the Legion Envoy. The Archbishop replied:

"You thank me for having welcomed the Legion Delegate. That seems to me like offering somebody £1,000, and then thanking him

for accepting it. Miss Quinn has succeeded in placing the Legion on a solid foundation. She has the gift of quiet and effective organisation, while her courage is unbounded."

We may add that this courage was a marvellous effect of grace, and we conclude in M. Roger Giraud's words: "So great a soul accomplishing such great things through a body so fragile—surely that is a triumphant victory of spirit over matter, true to God's traditional way of showing forth His Power through the weakness of little things."

CHAPTER XVIII

RETURN TO AFRICA

"Oh, Lord! I make of myself the road and the vehicle, I come and I go. I do my ass's and my horse's work with obstinate patience. I know nothing but the earth which I dig and the rustling of the seed for sowing through my fingers in my knotted apron. It is Thy part to invent the spring and to unroll the succession of harvests, according as Thy glory requires them."

A. DE SAINT-EXUPERY.
(Citadelle.)

By reason of war conditions, the voyage from Mauritius to Nyasaland was made via Durban and Beira.

Once more Edel faced the sea. The crossing was too much for her, for her powers of resistance were growing ever less. Although she had to stay in bed, she began her report to Dublin on September 15th, and finished it with difficulty, being, as she says apologetically, "the world's worst sailor". But there came an end to the torment of pitching and tossing, and Durban was at last sighted. Before even setting foot on dry land, she was caught up once more in the toils of the Legion. As soon as the ship arrived, the energetic President of the Durban Curia, Miss Keane, came aboard to greet her. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Edel landed, overpowered with fatigue. Yet see what follows!

"Thirty minutes later—3.30 p.m.—I was sitting at a meeting of the 'Stella Maris' Junior Præsidium. There I was introduced to the zealous Curia Spiritual Director, Rev. Fr. Kerautret, O.M.I. It was all so sudden, and yet so natural, that I found myself trying to figure out whether the heavy weather during the sea passage could be responsible for an hallucination!

"But no, here I was unquestionably, right in the heart of the Legion life of Durban—and that in record time after my arrival and in spite of the fact that never before had I the slightest contact with the Durban Legionaries. What a delightful happening! After the meeting, I found myself with two other Legionaries, visiting prospective members for a new Præsidium in the district, and looking

up a 'case' or two. An Irish lady on whom we called insisted on our having tea, and I began again trying to figure out where I really was—Mauritius, Durban, or Dublin. Our visiting finished, I was escorted to my abode, where we had supper. I went to bed a little early. Another welcome surprise: a visit from the Curia secretary, with news of the next day's programme. In my next letter I will give you further news of my time in Durban."

Thirty minutes later, she had said. Certainly the change of scene is abrupt and takes one's breath away. But Edel did not give a moment's thought to herself. Her union with Mary expressed itself by a constant readiness to be at other people's disposal. Does not a mother give herself without calculating, and has not each of her children a claim on all her love? The words which follow she put down for her own eyes only, but how wholeheartedly she put them into practice: "We should realise that those things which run counter to our own plans and likings are graces one and all. The will of God permits them for us; they represent His persistent following of us. We should embrace them, make the most of them, pay the little price that they entail. His will must always over-ride ours. Little sacrifices are all we are able to bear; let us be faithful in accepting them gladly with our Mother's help. We have only this life, and perhaps only a short one, in which to prove our love. If we make the effort, Jesus and Mary will help us to carry it through. If one saw things truly, how one should be grateful and rejoice at every physical weakness, tiredness. . . . These are our slight share in Christ's sufferings and graces."

No one guessed at her self-renunciation, so well did she disguise her exhaustion. In Durban, she was wanted everywhere, and she found herself one of a great family, unknown to her but yet very close. That is one of the charms of the Legion: the children of the same Mother soon recognise one another. Homes were thrown open to her, and so were hearts. "After all," writes Edel, surprised and delighted at her reception, "one cannot really use the word 'stranger' among Legionaries."

Family feeling is not a meaningless word. Whoever seeks the Kingdom of God and His justice finds that he has added unto himself that brotherly union which is a foretaste of the Communion of Saints.

Nevertheless, Edel had the misgiving that she had not shown on this occasion her full measure of generosity. On January 24, 1941, she wrote to Miss Keane these words, which force us to pause and think:

"I am sorry that I was not able to be more useful to you during my brief stay. But, to tell the truth, I was just dog-tired. My sickness during the entire voyage had left me completely finished."

Meanwhile the authorities in Dublin had heard of her arrival in South Africa and wrote expressing their satisfaction at learning that she was safe. They told her that news of her death had swept over East Africa, and had even come to Ireland. It was reported that she had died in Mauritius, and many Masses were offered for her soul. Fortunately, Dublin had heard from her, and had at once contradicted the rumour. But it persisted for a considerable time. "However," concluded the Dublin correspondent who told her of it, "I presume you will receive the benefit of the Masses that have been offered for you."

Edel herself had to correct this false rumour in several quarters. She wrote to the Concilium:

"Miss Gannon cabled Mgr. Leen to confirm if I were well. He showed me the cable and we sent off the reply: 'Perfectly well.' At the time I thought it was only because she was worrying about a letter or something like that. Some letters to or from Kenya took eight or ten weeks, if not more. When I got to Shiré Vicariate, I had a letter from her, mentioning that Father MacNamara of North Kenya had asked for particulars of my death. She told me that she had heard the rumour two months before, which was the reason for her cable. I also received a letter from Father McCarthy of Dar-es-Salaam, in which he explained that it was good to get a letter from me in view of the fact that he had said so many Requiem Masses for me. But that remark I took as mild sarcasm, never dreaming that he, too, must have heard of my death. Just before your letter came, I had one from Kilimanjaro Vicariate. On the strength of news they got from Bagamoyo, the Missionaries were arranging for more Solemn Requiems and inviting the Legionaries to them! That showed the rumour must have been current in various Vicariates, but I am utterly at a loss to know where it originated. I shall let you know when I hear. It was lucky that you had my letters; the rumour must have been widespread when even you at headquarters got condolences. It would have been the limit if my family had heard it, but fortunately I had written to them frequently.

"I suppose when I really do die, no one will believe it and I shall have no Requiems! In any event, if anything ever does happen suddenly (this is a curious country), you will be informed at once. I always keep a typed letter in the file I generally use, directing what is to be done with money, clothes, etc., in case of sudden death."

From Kilomeni, a Missionary wrote to her: "Dear Miss Quinn: Many thanks for your letter. I am utterly delighted to know that you really did not die and that once again we can count you among the living. Of course, you are well aware of the fact that all sorts of really nice things are said about one after he or she dies. Well, from now on the nice things concerning you must cease, and we will start to torment you as of old."

Edel replied to him: "Many thanks for arranging for the prayers and the Mass to help me out of Purgatory quickly, even though I was not there. What I am now lamenting is that when I do die, no one will believe it. So I hope the Lord is putting aside for me the Masses and prayers that have been offered. The Concilium has been touched and pleased that the Missionaries who had heard the rumour had gone to the trouble of bringing together the Legionaries and having Masses offered."

Edel, as we see, made merry about the mistake. What she did not say was that her extreme weakness made the news of her death seem quite likely.

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From Durban Edel went by sea to Beira and thence to Limbe, which was her destination. Speaking of one of her trips by train, she sums it up in three lines:

"This train is, without exception and acclaimed by everyone, the world's worst, most expensive and dirtiest, and I found it to be all three."

By the end of September she was at Limbe, ready to take up her work again. When she had left for Mauritius, her famous "dilapidated Ford" had remained at Dar-es-Salaam under the care of the Bishop. Edel asked leave of the Concilium to have it sold where it was and to buy another in its stead. Dublin agreed, and once again a car of Edel's was eating up the miles of Africa.

Her strength of soul impelled her body to face situations that would daunt strong men. Edel recognised that people were sometimes astonished at a woman's doing Missionary extension work. "Some priests," she remarks, "have rather curious ideas on the subject. When one gets to know them, they often explain their views. An old Swiss priest said to me one day: 'You know it is contrary to all our ideas in Switzerland for a woman to do these things.' But once he had got that off his chest, everything went swimmingly."

She was full of joy at being back in Africa. She accepted philosophically the reverses incidental to her work: "I am keeping very fit,

thank God. It seems only the other day that I came out, and yet it is nearly four years since I left home; and apart from being away from home and G.H.Q., I am very happy here. Of course there are always the ups and downs of the work. Never yet have I been in a place, no matter how favourable the Bishop, which did not produce its share—and usually a big share—of the 'downs.'—But these things balance themselves out in the long run."

With shockproof cheerfulness she accepted rebuffs, opposition, dangers, episodes like roofs crashing down over her head, and . . . locusts.

"You'd laugh if you saw how this letter is being written. I am sitting in the room of a Mission at 4 p.m. with my sun hat on! I have had it on all the time in the house. They have the Mission roofed with corrugated iron, under which for protection against the sun they put reed mats. But these mats have recently collapsed, eaten by white ants; so there is no protection at present from the sun. The place is like an oven but the funds are too low at the moment to put in wood sheeting—so we all keep our hats on! Moreover a swarm of locusts has just descended on the Mission. They are sweeping up from the horizon like a huge sand cloud. The boys are all out, running and shouting to disperse them."

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Her new field of action, Nyasaland, includes two Vicariates: Shiré, directed by the De Montfort Fathers, and Nyasa, under the care of the White Fathers. Edel began with the Vicariate of Shiré, whose Bishop was His Excellency Monsignor Auneau, S.M.M. As this Southern Vicariate works in close collaboration with the Northern one—they have their ecclesiastical seminary in common—Edel hoped that work done in the South would have immediate repercussions in the North.

She wrote that there were many Christians, but far too few Missionaries, although the Vicariate had already six African Priests. The Mission stations were very far apart and she thought it best to start the Legion at the Central Mission. During her short stay, several Præsidia were founded. On December 7, 1940, she left the Vicariate of Shiré, after having visited two other missions, manned by De Montfort Fathers, in the North. On her departure, Bishop Auneau gave her, as a token of his gratitude, an ivory paper knife and an ebony box "which could be used as a snuff box," as she jokingly remarked when telling Dublin of this fatherly gift.

Then she entered the Vicariate of Nyasa and came in contact with the first Mission administered by the White Fathers in Bembeke. "Here," she writes on December 22, 1940, "I was fortunate enough to find the Vicar Apostolic, who was finishing his retreat. This saved me a further journey of eighty miles to his Headquarters. He is really interested in the Legion. Two years ago, when he received a letter and two handbooks from me, he was going to begin on his own. But he waited in the belief that I would be along soon. He took from his files a conference he had given the same year on the Legion at the annual Clergy retreat. In his talk with me he stressed that he knew the difficulty of working here and of securing perseverance. But he said it was Our Lady's work and so she would have to look after it. He told one of the Fathers that I had come to the Vicariate on the 8th December (*the feast of the White Fathers*), which was an added reason why Our Lady should help."

Edel rejoiced to see with what perfect obedience to their Bishop the Missionaries welcomed the Legion. They discussed ways and means, but no one hesitated for a moment to make the trial. "Never could I forget the kindness of Bishop Julien and the White Fathers," she says. And writing of the Bishop, she says what is high praise from her pen, that he has been for her a second Monsignor Leen.

This time she had not to move aside a mountain of objections or to push through a barrage of "impossibilities." Her only cross, but how heavy a one it was, was having to drag from Mission to Mission a body that was growing weaker and weaker.

She was "working" three Missions at a time: Bembeke, Mua, Ntakataka. The first was situated on a plateau, the other two in the plain some three thousand feet lower; and she had to go from one to the other. She tried to travel by bicycle, truly a crazy experiment. Then she gave that up in favour of another means of transport, the gheretta, which is not the acme of comfort either. It is a kind of primitive carriage, which goes up hill pretty well, but in the descent travellers have to be guarded by means of ropes. Edel writes a description of it:

"The gheretta is a large rickshaw carried by four men. One carries the front shafts, another the back shafts, while two hang on to the ropes which act as a brake when you are descending, and as extra haulage when you are climbing. The gheretta is also useful on the flat. The first time I travelled to the next Mission, I cycled along with one of the Fathers, but the midday heat made the journey rather uncomfortable. On the flat, it takes only two men to manage the gheretta and the fare is very reasonable."

All the same "Rolls Royce" was a better proposition!

In the same Vicariate of Nyasa, Edel ran up against a new difficulty. It was the season of the harvest. Under pain of losing their crop, the farmers had to protect it against the monkeys by day and against the wild pigs by night. They kept constant guard, sleeping in the fields in little temporary huts. How could the Legion meetings be held regularly under these conditions? It was certainly a problem. Monsignor Julien had pointed it out to Edel at the time of her arrival in his Vicariate; but it was decided that they would make the effort to maintain the Legionary principle against all obstacles. By calling into play an extra amount of courage and ingenuity, this difficulty, like so many others, was overcome. The Bishop made no secret of his admiration. He wrote to Edel on February 19th 1941:

"I take this opportunity to renew my sincerest thanks to you for the good work you are doing in my Vicariate for the advancement of Catholic Action through the Legion of Mary. I am convinced that the Blessed Virgin will reward all the Superiors who put their trust in her Legion and that she will work wonders for the conversion of our people."

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Edel continued her hard apostolate, her thoughts ever dwelling on the work as yet untouched by her, an overwhelming contemplation. It did not, however, prevent her from being sensitively alive to messages from her family and to news of her native land. She was touched at receiving a letter, written on the anniversary of the day on which the Legion had been founded in Dublin. After an interval she replied:—"It was nice of you to write on the eve of the 8th September. Both are real Legion dates. I arrived in this Vicariate of the White Fathers on December 8, shortly before evening Benediction. It suddenly struck me that it was Re-union Sunday at home and that probably all of you were at Benediction too. I got a touch of homesickness, a longing for a gossip with the crowd, the jokes, the remarks, etc. One remembers it all so well on those special days. However, when the war is over, we can gossip!

"Frequently when things that were looking bad or working out all wrong suddenly take a favourable turn, I say to myself: 'Who is praying to-day?' For the change is sometimes so striking that one must ask oneself: 'Why?'"

Those last lines are an allusion to the spiritual support she was receiving so faithfully from the Legionaries. It was a comfort to her

to realise this communion with them, to feel this firm backing of prayer.

Edel did not often betray her homesickness. One catches sight of it sometimes, appearing like a flash in the end of a letter.

"It is a great life out here," she wrote to a friend, "only I have so few to share jokes with."

During all those months Edel mentioned her health just once. It was to say that she had resolved to take occasional week-ends of rest but that in fact she had not yet succeeded in doing so.

Nothing in her correspondence could cause one to suspect the weight of fatigue that pressed on her, nor how much her wretched health was affected by her superhuman task. That last letter of hers from which we have been quoting and which was addressed to the President of the Concilium, was full of gaiety.

After having given freely—and charitably—her impressions of men and conditions, she concluded in these words, which come again and again, like a refrain, in her correspondence: "This last paragraph is not for publication;" and this time she added: "Did you ever hear that phrase before?"

Looking at that play of spirits and vitality, those accounts of excursions in the torrid heat, how could anyone guess that the body was no longer following the flight of the soul, and that it was giving way beneath the burden? Edel was a permanent miracle. Normally she should have been lying on a couch in a sanatorium. Everyone was so used to seeing her going about, without a murmur of complaint, that they forgot the pitiless disease that was ravaging her. Her reserves of energy, after first disconcerting those who associated with her, had come to seem quite natural and inexhaustible.

Like a thunderclap on a serene summer night, a telegram arrived in Dublin, causing unspeakable consternation there. On March 15, 1941, Edel cabled: "Attack pleurisy—see letter—fairly weak—weight seventy-five pounds. Impossible continue work at present. Considerable rest needed. Await instructions. Quinn, Likuni, Lilongwe—Nyasaland."

Without losing a minute, Dublin sent two telegrams. The first was to Edel:

"Shocked by wire. Act as you think we would wish you to in circumstances. Should you come home?" The second telegram announced the news to Miss Roberts, Legion Envoy in South Africa, and asked her to go at once and see how things were on the spot.

A few days later, a second telegram from Edel, dated March 27, gave additional particulars: "Taking six weeks' rest here as suggested

by all, then probably not necessary go home. Don't worry—every possible care. Send me 2,000 three-folders.¹ Quinn."

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What had happened?

A letter from Edel, in a shaky hand, admits that she had got an attack of dysentery and had been unable to pay attention to it for a fortnight or so. Without going to bed, she had continued her work in the plain country. Then she got, in addition, an attack of malaria, followed by pleurisy. "I had no time to stay in bed to get rid of it, for I had appointments for three weeks ahead." Then she had been struck down by the ailment and she had to rest. She admits, too, that the local food was not always what suited her, and that this was one of the reasons for her loss of weight. She had strength left to announce that ten Præsidia had already sprung up in the Vicariate of Nyasa, and that a Curia had been formed for the Vicariate of Shiré.

A letter dated 25th March gives more details; they let us know much about her exhaustion and her endurance. "Very sorry to have had to wire you, but two days before, a priest, a very grave man, the Spiritual Director of the Chiradzula Curia, came to discuss Curia matters before I left Limbe. I was just up for the occasion, and must have looked none too grand. In the middle of the talk he said: 'Do you realise that you are dying? Have you made your preparation?' When I did take him seriously, I decided you had better know straight away that I was ill. The letter I had written would have taken another three or four weeks to arrive."

Such was the quality of this young girl's soul. "For me," she had written one day, "the Legion comes before everything."

This was no mere rhetorical statement. Here was Edel in a dying condition, continuing to speak of the Legion until her interlocutor recalled her to actuality. Forgetfulness of self carried to such a pitch surpasses even heroism.

As soon as Bishop Julien heard of her illness, he offered her hospitality in a convent at Lilongwe, arranged for her to get every care and visited her frequently: "The only other thing I can do for you," he told her, "is to give you a funeral worthy of so great an apostle."

Her reply was a hearty laugh. The attitude of her soul is revealed

¹ The reference is to the prayer card, the Tessera.

in that laugh: serene welcome to death, abandonment to God, invincible sense of humour. She was of the breed of Thomas More, who jested even on the scaffold.

The President of the Concilium wrote to Bishop Julien: "Her indomitable spirit and her wonderful cheerfulness, as well as her great faith in Our Blessed Lady, have really defied the laws of nature and have kept her alive. I expect that nobody understands better than she her true position and her peril, but it has always been her way to laugh at such things, and laugh she will to the end."

There was, however, every reason for anxiety. What most troubled those who were taking care of her was the alarming loss of weight and the surges of fever. Bishop Julien wished her to take a radical rest, staying where she was for several months. Finally, the decision was left to the doctor. When he had made a detailed examination, he declared that after her years in the tropics, Edel absolutely must have a change of climate, and spend some months in a sub-tropical region. Edel announced this result of the consultation in a telegram to Dublin, dated April 20: "Doctor's verdict: six months' rest essential. Suggested Johannesburg climate, so going on."

Edel was afraid that all this would interfere with Legion extension and she wrote again to Dublin, begging that they would not think of her if they wished to appoint another Envoy. She supposed, however, that the war would hold up a new appointment and she restated her hope of being able to continue after a six months' "holiday". The serious question was that of her weight but, as she told them: "My appetite is good and you will be pleased to hear that I am in a chronic state of hunger." (Letter of April 18.) She affirmed once more that she sought, before all else, the good of the Legion; that all else came after, but that she would be eager to continue her work.

Her letter ended with a cry of joy, because the latest news of the Legion in France and in Malta had just reached her: "The news about Miss O'Brien is great, and also regarding the twelve branches in Malta."

In spite of the war, indeed at the very hour of the collapse, the Legion had just been born in France, at Nevers, in the shadow of Bernadette's shrine. On August 15, 1940, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, the Patron of France, permission to establish it had been given by Bishop Flynn to Edel's compatriot, Miss Veronica O'Brien. She also had trodden a path beset with obstacles, had been subjected to a grim trial of patience. This was the first step in the great procession of French dioceses that were to welcome the Legion.

In Malta, then at the most trying hour in its history, the war had given vigorous life to the Legion. Branches were being born, were standing up to the incessant bombardments, and were multiplying themselves. Soon 800 active members, their Archbishop, Monsignor Gonzi, in their midst, would perform the ceremony of consecration to Our Lady.

Edel was watching avidly for these items of news, which were for her the best of tonics. They delighted her; she had not even a thought for her own physical miseries. What a marvellous revelation of the Catholic soul is afforded by this girl! Lying in bed, spent with sickness, yet all athrill with joy because the harvest was rising in faraway fields where others had sowed!

CHAPTER XIX

FROM SANATORIUM TO SANATORIUM

"Grant us . . . a faith, firm and immovable as a rock, through which we shall rest tranquil and steadfast amid the crosses, toils and disappointments of life."

PRAYER OF THE LEGION.

ON April 29, 1941, a letter from Edel, dated from Johannesburg, announced her entry to the sanatorium of Melrose House (Belgravia). Edel took care not to write on the back of the envelope the word "Sanatorium", lest the news of her failure of health should get about. Miss Roberts was at hand and did everything to facilitate her installation. Having received word from Dublin, the Legion Envoy in South Africa constituted herself Edel's Angel Guardian, and looked after her with a boundless devotion. "She is like one of my own family," writes Edel, "such is the care she takes of me; nothing is too much trouble for her." It was Miss Roberts who introduced Edel to Melrose; it was she who brought her to the sanatorium of Springkell, also in Johannesburg. This nursing home, unfortunately, was not a Catholic one; they had not much choice in the matter. But a consequence was that Edel was deprived of her great consolation, the Mass. Once a week only was she able to receive Holy Communion; it was one of the sharpest sufferings in her life. Later she confided to friends that this deprivation had given her an idea of what hell must be like, so painful was her hunger for God.

Some private notes show her increasing passion for the Blessed Eucharist:

"Mary," she writes, "loves Jesus in me, caresses and compassionates Him for all His wounds. But, above all, she speaks her gratitude for the Eucharist, and gives thanks to the Eternal Father for that Gift. Without the Eucharist, what a desolation life would be!"

At Springkell she learned by bitter experience what the pangs of that deprivation were like. She also notes down the following resolutions:

"Thank the Trinity over and over again for this Gift.

Keep Our Lord company in the Blessed Sacrament.

The disciples asked: 'Where dwellest Thou?' They abided with Him all day long.

In dryness be satisfied just to be with Him; Mary will love and adore.

'It is good for us to be here,' even if attention wanders.

Like a child with his Mother: our very presence tells Jesus that we love Him, even if we are too stupid and too earthly-minded to appreciate and behave properly in His Presence.

Offer Him through Mary to the Trinity in thanksgiving, love and adoration.

We want to be united with Him, to give ourselves to Him utterly. Our faith tells us He is in the Eucharist; let us seek Him there. If we knew we could find Him anywhere on earth we would do our utmost to go there.

We can find him, at every free moment, on the Altar.

Be with Him there.

Better than all books!"

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These lines enable us to assess the sacrifice that conditions in Springkell imposed upon her. She was infinitely more concerned by this separation from the centre of her existence than by the state of her health. The latter was still very precarious, and she admits in a letter that when she arrived at the sanatorium, she was thought to be sixty years old. Miss Roberts reports the impression that Edel made on all visitors: "She is wonderfully bright and cheerful and speaks longingly of the time when she will be able to start work again."

From her bed in the sanatorium, her thoughts roamed ceaselessly around the world. She followed the movements of the three Envoys in America who had parcelled out that area between them and who were founding hundreds of Præsidia. The success of John Murray, Mary Duffy and Una O'Byrne entranced her. All that sort of news was a cordial to her. Likewise it was a spur, for she was craving to take to the road again.

She had heard incidentally of the launching of the Legion in China and Japan, and her reaction was characteristic! "Your talk of pioneering plans nearly made me jump out of bed—they formed such a tantalising prospect! I may not exactly be a Rosita Forbes,¹ but

¹ A well-known woman explorer.

I would be quite willing to try new territory anywhere. The section you suggest, i.e., China and Japan, is practically unbroken ground and it should form a wonderful future field for the Legion. Recently I read accounts of the early Missionary work in Japan. Only now, after all those martyrdoms and trials, do they seem to be able to forge ahead. Of course, there again, war may make things difficult. The climate should be all right. Of course, one must be careful, but I think if one is cured at all, one can count on its being a fair cure; so that, with normal care, one may carry on anywhere. One will not get very far, if one starts picking and choosing between climates!"

She continued to weave plans, even throwing them into stages of possibility.

"In any event," she writes, "South Africa is a good jumping-off ground for Envoyship in the Orient! There are various parts untouched here yet, so there is work to hand as soon as I am fit, which I hope will be soon. I cannot get a definite date yet from the doctor. However, all the prayers will hasten a cure."

She thought too of the Belgian Congo, and was full of desire that extension be undertaken there: unlimited possibilities offered themselves. But the impetus would have to come from Belgium, where the Legion was as yet little known:

"I am not speaking for myself now," she writes, "but have you ever thought of the prospects in Belgian Congo? It seems that converts are pouring into the Church there—and the future difficulty will be keeping and instructing all these new Christians. Their numbers appear to be altogether out of proportion to the clergy available. The Legion could be of great help in such circumstances. However, it would probably be difficult to get going—unless the mother country had started—and then there is the language difficulty as well."

Her wishes for the Congo were realised in 1943. In Belgium, as the result of an application made by Miss V. O'Brien to His Excellency Monsignor Kerkhofs, Bishop of Liège, the Legion started in February, 1946. That same year a converted Communist was permitted by the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines to begin work in the Diocese of Malines, from which date the Legion had expanded rapidly and solidly in Belgium. The Concilium sent Mlle. Henriette Talabot, Secretary of the Senatus of France, as an Envoy to Belgium, and the creation of the Senatus of Belgium in 1951 was the crown of her persevering and courageous efforts.

From her hospital bed, Edel could only offer encouragement: the future would take charge of her dreams. And God knows how

immense her ambitions were! She was all impatience to be actively engaged once more.

Unfortunately, the doctor did not share her optimism. At the request of His Excellency Bishop Julien, a doctor in Lilongwe drew up a formal diagnosis. It was uncompromising: advanced pulmonary tuberculosis. The treatment recommended: complete rest in bed for at least six months, under medical care, and preferably in a cool, dry, bracing climate. There was no deluding oneself: the body was no longer able to keep up with the indomitable soul. Edel, the active and lively, was no more; she was thirty-four but had been thought to be nearly twice that age. At Limbe some snapshots had been taken of her. Innocently, thinking that they gave a reassuring idea of her appearance, she had slipped them into her weekly letter home. The answer was a cry of alarm: "You are dying on your feet!" Edel, telling of this reaction to her imprudence, adds: "I thought the snaps were O.K. myself, though I was barely able to stand when they were taken."

There was nothing for it but to obey the doctors and to stay in bed.

After five months of this treatment, an improvement began to appear; her weight went up slowly but steadily. She was allowed up for half an hour in the day. What chiefly worried her throughout was the thought of her mother and her family. She had besought her correspondents at Headquarters not to let them know of her condition, and she repeated the request many times. But her authorities did not think it right to keep the facts from her parents, and she was told that the exact situation had been explained in Monkstown. She accepted this decision with a good grace, understanding indeed the correctness of the act.

Her letters to Dublin now became more explicit concerning her health, and she mentioned all improvements. But already particulars of her work were regaining the upper hand in her correspondence. From her bed she had remained in contact with the centres she had founded. The news coming in from them was excellent; wherever she had sown, the seed was sprouting, the harvest was ripening. A letter from Nairobi—her first foundation—sent by Father A. Lynch, gives these characteristic details: "The result of the Legion's wide and zealous apostolate is very much in evidence amongst us. Three hundred Baptisms have taken place since Easter and over a thousand Catechumens are now under instruction. You will be glad to learn that Mangu Mission has just established three Senior Præsidia, which are doing fine. In the nearby Nyeri Vicariate the Legion is also making

splendid progress. Fathers Fullen and O'Leary have given a helping hand in getting it firmly established. My own Præsidium is joining in the extension campaign. I was proud to see my President, an African, journeying to Father Grogan's Mission several times to explain the Legion and to get it working there."

About the same period a report came from the lepers of Utale, in Nyasaland. Father J. Castermans, S.M.M., their Spiritual Director, wrote:

"We have thirteen lepers in the Præsidium, and I am delighted with their practical work. Recently I was able to baptise sixteen lepers, as well as several others in danger of death, all of whom were instructed by the Legionaries. Thanks to the Legion, we have now no cases of bad or careless Christians in the colony, and the majority of the pagans are preparing to receive holy Baptism. Also the members till and care the farms of the very sick, cut their firewood, and draw water for them: services which are of vital importance. The cleaning of the Church and repairing of the huts are other jobs undertaken by the Præsidium. We count on your prayers for our poor lepers and our apostolate amongst them."

Father Lynch, for his part, wrote to the Concilium these significant lines—subsequently passed on to Edel: "Were you to listen to the reports read by the different Præsidia at our Curia meetings, you would realise that the Legion here is one of the main instruments in the evangelisation of this country. As far as my own Mission is concerned, there is no comparison between my own personal output in the teaching of catechism and that of the Legionaries. The Junior Præsidium especially excels in that department. It is most heartening to see the very evident influence of the Legion on the spiritual formation of the Legionaries themselves. This is supremely important, for from among the Junior Legionaries we will get our future priests and teachers."

Such letters were worth all the medicine and all the treatment in the world. They proved to Edel that she had not travelled in vain the high roads of Africa. In comparison with those reports and those successes, her sufferings seemed not worthy of a thought. Her soul poured itself out in thanksgiving. "Momentaneum et leve," said St. Paul in speaking of crosses. It passes and it is not heavy. Her exhaustion itself was another form of apostolate, the apostolate of suffering, the most valuable of all for redeeming sinners. "Surely," wrote Edel, "we may expect great things."

Edel's soul was habitually too full of joy for discouragement to have any power over her. In her broken body her soul sang all the

time. Never for a moment was her contagious good humour dimmed. Who could not recognise her authentic style in this conclusion to a letter of September 4, 1941: "No other news: Am doing well. In fact I am beginning to knit a jumper. Did you know that Envoys knit jumpers? It is only my second venture in a life-time. The first attempt was perpetrated years ago, under similar circumstances. Desperate ills need desperate remedies!"

We recognise her again, detached as ever, in this final addition to a health bulletin:

"Sorry for this very egoistic letter."

Humour and detachment, they are the two complementary notes in the same hymn of serenity and peace.

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After six-months' stay in the Johannesburg sanatorium, another rest home offered. Edel had the secret hope that she would recover her health if she could move to a place where she would receive Holy Communion frequently. After some enquiries, a religious house was found. At Umlamli, near Aliwal North, in the Cape Province, the Dominican nuns had a Mission hospital. Edel could be looked after there, and once again enjoy daily Mass and Communion. In addition, the hospital was situated at an altitude of 6,000 feet, which would be very good for affected lungs. She gratefully accepted the hospitality offered to her and went to her new abode in mid-November. The Concilium having been apprised of this change of residence, wrote that they were happy to learn that the Hospital where she was going was under the care of the Dominican Sisters for, they added, "both in Ireland and elsewhere those nuns have always been a firm support to the Legion."

The convent at Umlamli did not belie this reputation. Edel was received with attentive kindness. We can sense the affection that surrounded her in the memories of a Dominican Sister, Sister M. Ann:

"I had the good fortune to be working at the Umlamli hospital while Edel was there. Her quiet charm endeared her to us all. She cheered us in our sometimes difficult work with pleasantries from home and gathered in her travels. Her laugh, as she read passages to us from books she enjoyed, is still a treasured recollection to us. When she went away, the verdict on her was: 'She is a great lady.' For months afterwards the African nurse and the little children would

go to her old room and ask: 'Where is Miskum? When is she coming back?'

"As a South African, I cannot tell you how much she has meant to my country and my people. For myself, she will always remain a precious remembrance."

At the same period, two Irish nuns, passing through Umlamli, paid a visit to Edel. One of them, Sister Brigid, gives her impressions in these words:

"She was extraordinarily bright and cheerful . . . She was painfully thin and extremely weak, but bubbling over with life and hope. She reminded us a little of Mary Martin. She has a marvellous power of winning people."

Edel Quinn, Mary Martin: it was not the first time that these two names were spoken together. Mother Mary Martin, foundress of the "Medical Missionaries of Mary," has created a flourishing congregation of medical nuns to work on the Missions. She herself and her first recruits were all Legionaries. The Legion prayers form an integral part of their religious constitution, which has been approved by Rome. Perhaps this explains other affinities between these two women.

Edel's new home was a blessed one for her. Thenceforward she was able to receive Holy Communion every day and to live beside the Master. But not yet would she be able to assist at Mass, for the distance between the chapel and her room was greater than her strength. Imagine then her joy when His Excellency Monsignor Demont, Bishop of the Vicariate, came to celebrate Mass for her in a room nearby. No attention could have meant more to her. To her grateful thanks the Bishop replied:

"I was only too happy to furnish you with a Holy Mass, of which you are so much deprived. I thought of your health during it and asked for improvement and speedy re-establishment, if this be God's Will. You Irish people are certainly the children of Providence." Edel did, indeed, like all those of her race, abandon herself trustfully to Him Who knows what we need better than we know ourselves.

Everyone tried to make her stay in hospital easier. The neighbouring Legionaries vied with one another in acts of kindness, and above all, Miss Roberts, who called herself "the Envoy's escort," gave her every care. The Johannesburg Legionaries gave her a portable radio set. Edel wrote to a friend in Mauritius (Jan. 15, 1942), that some Junior Legionaries collected books and papers to send her and that one of them wrote to her every week. "So you see," she concludes, "that now I am a case to be visited."



EDEL AT THE DOMINICAN NUNS' HOSPITAL, UMLAMLI, ALIWAL NORTH.

"I will not do anything rash or reckless—not because I would not, but because I cannot."—(*The Life*, p. 202.)

All this kindness touched her: "It's just what one would expect," she writes. "When one works for the Blessed Virgin, one need never worry about anything."

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While she was being thus fussed over in Africa, Dublin was launching a spiritual offensive to obtain her cure. An article in *Maria Legionis*, March, 1942, made a pressing appeal to the Legionaries of the whole world to secure their prayers for her. To strengthen the appeal, the Journal published a photograph of Edel.

For this they apologised to her, knowing her horror of anything that would attract attention. That photograph on the front page, it was explained, was an indispensable accompaniment to the great crusade of prayer. So even if it outraged her feelings, she must take it in good part.

Edel replied: "You know my anti-publicity complex." She was grateful for the prayers and for this once would put up with the "advertisement".

"Thank you," she writes on April 23, 1942, "for kindly announcing to me what would be on the cover of the Spring number of the Journal. The jam in which you hid the pill tasted very good." She was touched by the crusade of prayer and saw in it a manifestation of the Legion's family spirit. To anxious enquiries she replied by giving a few additional particulars about her health:

"This is what the doctor says: Provided there are no unforeseen complications, there is no reason why in time I should not get built up sufficiently to return home, and *even* do some light Legion work. But all Envoy work, involving travelling, probably irregular meals, train or long car journeys, is out of the question. A quiet life! But that prescription seems to me to point to my returning to my old base at Nairobi. Firstly, the climate there is A.I. Secondly, it is a good centre, with both African and non-African Curiā nearby. Thirdly, there is plenty of scope for extension among the non-African and the Goan populations. Fourthly, Miss Gannon, a zealous, devoted Legionary, will co-operate in every way. Though the foregoing might not justify a regular Envoy, a resident Legionary could, in spare time, do a fair amount and yet lead a quiet life. So a possibility would be for me to get a job there, and do free-time Legion work, in preference to a 'quiet life at home'. Naturally, I still hope and pray that my restoration to health will be complete,

so that I can, if you people want me to, carry on Envoy work in any climate, and irrespective of 'quiet life' precautions.

"I could not say enough of the care, kindness and thoughtfulness lavished on me by Ruby Roberts since I came to South Africa. No relative or home Legionary could have done more for me than she has done."

The appeal in the Journal asked prayers from Legionaries the world over, and recommended Edel's cure to Blessed Louis-Marie de Montfort.

Here is an extract from it:

"This moment, when the canonisation of Blessed Grignon de Montfort has reached its final stages, is opportune for asking that every Legionary will make a Novena to him for the vital intention that Edel Quinn, our Envoy to Central Africa, be given sufficient health to enable her to resume her mission.

"That mission began in November, 1936, with the landing of Miss Quinn at Mombasa, and continued with but little sickness (though she was far from robust) until last year. Her journeying brought her through the towns and villages, the jungle paths and swamps of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and out to Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. Everywhere she found the devoted Bishops, Missionary Priests and Nuns anxious to try this new machinery which seemed likely to be of help to them in their work. Præsidia to the number of many hundreds, and Curia, sprang up and prospered. In the main these were composed of Africans. They took to the Legion with facility. Then was a new and delightful thing seen, the African people themselves co-operating ardently, successfully, perseveringly in the work of evangelisation. Consider this: Miss Quinn's first Præsidium started at Nairobi; last year the Legionaries there brought in 1,000 Catechumens. Now the Curia has to divide into two, so numerous have the Nairobi Præsidia become!

"That growth and success are typical of what has been taking place in Africa, and nothing could afford greater hope for the future of the Faith there than that fact.

"It is essential that what has already been accomplished should be extended—hence the Novena."

At the same time, Dublin was informing Edel of the relation between the expected Canonisation and the Legion.

"At the final process," they wrote, "which was presided over by the Holy Father, the Postulator of the Cause made reference to the great joy which the good news of the coming Canonisation would bring to the Legion of Mary. He then went on to pay a tribute to

the Legion for what it had done in making the life and teaching of Blessed de Montfort so widely known."

To this Edel replied:

"I met the Sister whose miraculous cure was accepted for his Beatification. She is a de Montfort Sister, and she is an Auxiliary member of the Legion. She was a very bad case of T.B. She is youngish and has been working out in Africa for several years and is perfectly strong."

While Dublin was asking for these prayers, His Excellency Monsignor Julien, Vicar Apostolic of Nyasa, was also sending out an S.O.S. to the missionaries of that Vicariate, where Edel had fallen so seriously ill.

He wrote himself to Edel on February 18, 1942:

"It is with pleasure that I received your letter of January 13 last, although the pleasure would have been much greater if you had been in a position to give me better news about your health. But as you can love and praise God and give Him honour as much in sickness as in health, merely by conforming yourself to His Will, we must suppose that it is to your own advantage to be sick and in bed for the moment. I suppose also that it is to the advantage of the Legion which is making good progress and doing good work in Nyasa Vicariate. We like to attribute that good result to you, in part. For we think that your constant vigil near Our Lord on His Cross, and your numerous prayers and sacrifices for the Legion, must incline His Sacred Heart to listen to your requests and hear them favourably."

He copied out for her an extract from a letter which he had written to his Missionaries on the Legion: "This," he said, "is to show you that my feelings for the Legion are always more than a passive sympathy."

Edel, being unable for active work, intensified her prayer for souls in peril, and for the Legionaries of the whole world. She repeated, with a fervour increased by her own personal powerlessness: Father, Thy Kingdom come! Or rather she united herself with the Blessed Virgin, whose "Our Father" was, after that of Christ Himself, the most perfect that the world ever heard.

"No one," she wrote in her notes, "knows better than Our Mother to whom we belong what is best for others. Pray to her that God's Will be done in them. Souls in sin, souls dear to us but not in grace, Legionary souls who have served Mary and gone astray—for all these we can importune Mary to intercede with her Son. It is surely His Will that they come back. Therefore, there is no lack of submission to God's Will in pleading—it is a duty.

"Ask and you shall receive.

"Mary our Mother cannot be refused.

"For graces for others, how confidently we may pray, especially for the grace of conversion. I asked Mary to-day to pour down graces on the Legion, to obtain graces of repentance for those who have gone away, to sanctify and enlighten all officers.

"One's duty is not only to work, but to pray and sanctify oneself for those worked for. May Mary this day give fresh fervour to those who are growing slack. May she sanctify those who have been good to me for her sake. May she turn to good all my errors and failures."

Praying thus through Mary's lips, Edel felt herself irresistible with God. In the same spirit of union with Mary she continued her apostolate to those around her. In the sanatoria she set about the same conquest of souls as she had pursued on the roads of Africa. Only the methods were different.

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Little by little, her strength came back. From 75 lbs. her weight had gone up to 88 lbs. a shockingly low figure still; but the improvement augured well. Already she was making plans for the future and talked of returning to Kenya. This was more than premature, and Miss Roberts immediately cabled headquarters to veto such a suicidal act. Dublin replied by a telegram requesting Edel not to move without leave from the doctors. She obeyed, but busied herself with preparations for resuming her mission. She took up the study of Kiswahili, so as to be able to make direct contact with the Africans on her return to Nairobi. Pivoting on that centre, she intended to circulate to the extent permitted by her strength. Her hopes were high, but her muscles were still uncertain. A few steps in the hospital corridors were too much for her, and yet her soul reached out in giant strides over mountains and valleys! The Concilium insisted on her restricting her exchange of letters, and warned her correspondents not to ask her for answers. From all sides, prayers were promised to her. She assured them in Dublin that she was being very good and staying in bed:

"I won't do anything rash or reckless, not because I would not, but because I cannot."

In good weather she lay outside on a deck-chair, from breakfast to the midday meal. Every day she received Holy Communion in bed, but could not go to Mass, because the church was five minutes' walk away, and up a hilly path.

To a friend, who had evidently complained that overwork had interfered with her spiritual life, she wrote the following lines on May 4, 1942:

"Do all you can when things are easier, but do not feel tied down when work presses or when you do not feel well. From what one reads, it would seem that meditation is the important thing. So meditate if possible, even if you cannot manage anything else. Do it even for a quarter of an hour. Do not think I always practise what I preach—there are days when I let everything go by the board. I am not what you think, you know! One must only start again. I think the great thing is not to get discouraged, no matter how much we fail, but always to be ready to begin again. In that way only, will we be sure to persevere. Sometimes it is really hard to struggle on; everything seems against us. Even if we have the time for it, meditation is very difficult. Therefore, we must only pray for grace to persevere in spite of ourselves."

Edel knew by experience that suffering is not a subject for rhetoric. When we are crushed by our trials, it is enough to keep ourselves united to God, holding fast with the submissive will. Her words echo the advice of Father Faber on the attitude to be taken up before the Cross: "We are not to adore our Cross, or say fine words about it, or put ourselves into sentimental attitude before it. We are to do the commonplace thing of standing by it, which is the posture of men."

Suffering thus accepted changes of itself into adoration.

In any case Edel had not time to brood over her own trials. Even at the sanatorium, she was wholly given over to others and continued to work for them. She found strength to write a note to the Junior Legionaries in Mauritius, who proudly printed it in their magazine. Here is her advice to them: "Always remember you are Legionaries of Our Lady. You should be proud to be known as Legionaries, members of Our Lady's army. It is a privilege to be allowed to work for our Queen and her Son, and we must try to give of our best, for nothing less is good enough in her service.

"Above all, be very faithful to your daily prayer, the Catena. Every Legionary, whether priest, religious, active or auxiliary member, says this prayer every day. The word Catena means chain, and every Legionary is a link in that chain, which can now be said to encircle the world. Do not be the one to break this union of prayer by neglecting that daily duty."

After having encouraged them to aim at constant improvement, she concludes by these words: "So let me see what you can do."

Edel longed for more definite Legionary work. Nairobi attracted her as a centre of activity. The doctors had at last declared that she might take up, not her mission of Envoy, but some very light task entailing a minimum expenditure of physical energy: a little correspondence, receiving a few visits.

On September 17, 1942, an airgraph from Edel explains to Dublin a new state of affairs:

"Well, with Dr. Ditton's full approval, I am going up to Nairobi, Kenya. She agrees that the winter in Umlamli is too harsh, especially as I shall no longer be in bed. This year, they all say, it was comparatively mild, and yet for months it was bitterly cold, and it still is; and I spent it in bed. The doctor thinks that a change is necessary. Nairobi is all right, particularly as it also suits in regard to Legion work. So it is as well to go there now as later. The main point is to get there soon, before the summer heat makes the journey Durban-Mombasa too burdensome; therefore it is to be hoped I can get a boat towards the end of October. November-March is the hot season; if it is possible to get away before then, it would be ideal."

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Without delaying, Edel left Umlamli for Durban. Her berth was engaged, the ship arrived. . . . But alas, it was wartime: the ship received orders to make for another destination. What was she to do? She decided to wait for the next ship. But where was she to wait? A combination of circumstances brought her to the Nongoma Hospital in Zululand.

It was on October 18, 1942, that she arrived at that haven, quite worn out. The house was under the care of Benedictine nuns. The few weeks she spent there left a hallowed memory. In a letter from Durban, written on November 13, 1946, several years after Edel's stay there, Mrs. D. M. Wynne records that everyone in the convent was still speaking of her. "I said to one of the Sisters in charge of a Præsidium at Nongoma: 'I believe Edel Quinn was here for a time?' 'Yes,' she replied, 'we had that blessing.'"

The Sister who was in charge of Edel tells us her memory of her: "When Sister Superior called on her during the first days, and expressed her regret to find her not well, the patient said with her shining little smile: 'They say that suffering is as good as work. Why then, if I cannot work, should I not suffer?'" The X-ray film, taken at the doctor's request, showed the typical spread of tuberculosis over both lungs, and an onset of calcification. After a week or

two's rest Miss Quinn was allowed out of bed for an hour every day. To this, as well as to all other doctor's orders, she held with the utmost conscientiousness. That hour she gave every morning to Mass, Holy Communion, and a visit to the hospital chapel in the afternoon to say the Rosary. On the way back to her room she paid a short visit to another T.B. patient. He was a French naval officer who could not speak English, and who had not received the sacraments since his First Holy Communion. He was no easy patient, often irritable and hot-tempered by reason of his advanced disease and loneliness. She polished up her knowledge of French in order to make him forget his worries and complaints, and to help his soul with kind words in his own tongue. Miss Quinn always tried to find some way to help others and to make things easier for them. Utterly unmindful of herself, she was grateful for all and everything she was given, or that anyone did for her.

"Most of her time she spent in writing letters, five to eight and even more a day, and rather bulky ones. Thus she practised her mission work and spread knowledge and love of her heavenly Queen and the Legion. She was a truly Marian soul. Her dresses and attire showed some shade of blue, Mary's colour. She seemed not aware how beautifully it matched her own deep blue eyes. Though she was then only thirty-five years old, her fair hair already showed white patches. Her lips looked blue; her shortness of breath made it almost impossible for her to walk further than from her room, along the open verandah, to the chapel. Once, when she felt especially fine and strong, one of the Sisters offered to show her round the house. She gladly went with her, but after a little while was so exhausted that she had to be taken back to her ward. Even then her greatest concern was to avoid attention.

"Notwithstanding that, she kept stating that Blessed Grignion had improved her condition. And finally after two months she overcame nature and set out for Kenya. On December 18, the Feast of the Expectation, she left with a nurse to meet her faithful convoy, Miss Roberts, at Vrijheid. From there, after some days of rest at the Benedictine Mission, they went by train to Johannesburg. There Miss Quinn took the plane for Kenya."

CHAPTER XX

TIME PRESSES

"We have only this life, and perhaps only a short one, in which to prove our love."

EDEL QUINN.

A LETTER of January 8, 1943, brought to Dublin the great and surprising news: Edel had returned to her base in the heart of Kenya, Nairobi.

One cannot easily imagine the torture of that long journey. During the three days Edel suffered from air sickness unceasingly. She was overwhelmed with fatigue. Yet the sick girl had but one thought: to take up her work again; that hope sustained her and enabled her to go through with everything. At the military aerodrome of Eastleigh, Nairobi, Major Byrne and Miss Gannon, President of the Curia, met her and drove her, exhausted but radiantly happy, to the convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

The next day, His Excellency Mgr. Heffernan and several priests went to see her. They were happy to have her back, but her changed appearance shocked them. Was this the same Edel returning to them, broken, emaciated, the shadow of her former self? However, her smile and her inextinguishable humour soon made them forget the grievous alteration. There are beings whose spirit so entirely dominates their body that the soul alone holds our attention. Edel was of that very high lineage. She so skilfully avoided questions about her health, and turned the conversation by bringing up so many plans and projects that her visitors followed her lead, forgetting the price she was paying for her superhuman devotion.

Here is a picture of her, painted by a visitor who, like everyone else, was captivated by her bright spirit:

"You might like to get my impressions of Miss Quinn. I called on her the evening she arrived. I had in mind the photo of her which appeared in *Maria Legionis* nearly a year ago, and I expected to see her sickly and weak. I got a huge surprise. She was full of life, bright, cheerful and most active. She was extremely thin, but her colour was good. She was none the worse for her three-day air trip. Except that she is thinner than before, she was her old self, only more so! I think she looks much better now than she appears in the photo in

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Maria Legionis of September, 1942. She soon got on to Legionary business and would not come off it. During the rest of my stay and the following evening, she showed wonderful mental vigour. She soon knew all I could tell her about the Nairobi Præsidia, understood the circumstances and knew the members; and she was ready with practical suggestions. She was not content with this, but announced her intention of attending two Curia meetings in eight days. She was with difficulty persuaded not to."

Edel herself asked that her health be not mentioned again in *Maria Legionis*. She gave a brief account of her condition:

"I can move about a little, can correspond, can attend local meetings by car. But I still have to go very easy. It may be possible for me to visit nearby Curia centres later on in the year; but as to this, we must wait and see."

Dublin distrusted her valiant hopefulness, not without reason, and sent her peremptory admonitions to be moderate. A letter of March 11 said to her:

"For Heaven's sake, will you use the little health you have moderately. I refrain from using that horrible word 'prudently'. I have constantly spoken to you about that 'plus force' which is at your disposal. If you do not forfeit that by really reckless behaviour, it will carry you through indefinitely."

But the work was there, urgent and expanding. Edel had not the habit of dealing in half-measures; her reports soon took on their old "business" tone.

Mother M. Arsenia, Superior of the convent where she stayed, seeing her one day very weak, said to her: "If you continue to go about like that, you will be found dead in a lorry or a train one day."

"No, no," she replied, "Our Lady will not allow that," which meant, not that she was apprehensive of that sort of death, but that Our Lady would spare her friends that additional sorrow. She was in no wise afraid of death. It seemed to her very natural to fall on the battlefield of the apostolate. She went to God as simply as she went to men. Above all, she would not bargain over her service. A de Montfort Father, Fr. J. Jansen, who had seen her at work in Nyasaland, once wrote her the following lines:

"When, in Heaven, you are allowed to assist at the Acies of Regina Aeternæ Gloriae Præsidium, you will see there many black faces shining with happiness and joy and in possession of everlasting glory. That will be, I am sure, the reward you are hoping for and which we ask in our prayers for you. But also we pray for your good health, so that you may go on for a long time yet with your life-work, which is the invincible Legion of Mary."

Death was just that: the Queen of Eternal Glory coming to meet her and introduce her into the joy of God in the eternal Acies. The rest mattered little. Everyone recognised her attitude, but likewise everyone admitted inability to restrain her zeal. She herself thought she was doing very little. She had been lent the *Life of Mother Stuart* and saw in it a complete contrast with her own life. "Her vitality, her vigour in pursuit of sanctity," she notes, "are almost overwhelming. Let weaker souls like us rejoice that the hidden, quiet life—without notable doings but in union with Mary and Jesus—also leads on to sanctity. Love alone really matters." Edel puts herself in the category of inactive souls. But she is alone in that opinion.

A Nairobi missionary, Fr. Culligan, C.S.Sp., expresses the unanimous view of her friends in this letter to Mrs. Quinn:

"From what I had heard and read about her condition, I expected to find her almost helpless, weak, lifeless, languid. When I saw her, I got a tremendous surprise: I shall never forget it as long as I live. Lying on her bed in her dressing-gown, she was chatting with the Superior, Mother Arsenia, when I came in. It was impossible to make her rest. She wanted to know all about the Legion. Before going away I asked her if I could do anything for her. She had a wireless set, a present from Legionaries in South Africa, which needed a few small repairs; I tried to set it right for her. She showed me how it worked and helped me to fix it. Now and again I begged her to rest, and she did as I asked; but two minutes later she was back helping me. I scolded her gently for not heeding me, at which she began to laugh; she declared herself to be 'ill-mannered' and lay down quickly. I could see clearly that she was doing it to reassure me, but that she did not really think it necessary.

"I came back a few days after that first unforgettable visit. I can see her clearly as she was then, with her thin face and body; it was length without breadth.

"After a while she again took up her Legionary business and worked at it harder than ever. I tried to moderate her; she stopped for a moment against her will and soon began again. Her correspondence and her other activities multiplied. When the Legion was in question, she literally forgot everything. It was the joy of her heart. She lived for it."

Yes, the Legion was her whole life. Because she saw it as Mary at work, Mary exercising her spiritual maternity. Because the Legion appeared as the providential instrument of the birth of Jesus in that land of Africa.

Her private notes contain the following:

"My vocation is a Legionary one, Envoy and Prætorian²—consecrated to work for the Father by the Holy Spirit of Jesus and by Mary.

"Daily review, to see how far I have lived the day for Jesus and the Father with Mary. I must be a channel of grace to every soul—or rather, Mary through me.

"When inclined to criticise others for lack of interest in the Legion or understanding of it, consider what efforts I have made or could make to help or change them. I must not take their attitude for granted.

"Ask Mary to do all the good she can to them through me, to rectify my mistakes.

"I must silence my thoughts when inclined to criticise others.

"Our duty to work when we would sometimes rather be with Him.

"His will alone counts.

"If at times work is our duty, then rejoice in His will while doing it.

"Obedience to God's will for me.

"Things to be eventually given up: the privacy of one's soul, one's power over one's actions, freedom to decide. Rejoice that God demands this through His representatives. Nothing of our own."

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With such a flame in her soul, how could she not work till she was utterly burnt out?

Dublin knew what spirit animated her and was afraid of her intrepidity. She received orders never to write a letter home without saying at least a word about her health. She did as she was told:

"I rest," she writes, "for a certain length of time." But she admits candidly that she has visited five Præsidia in a week.

During her absence from Kenya, the Legion had grown, and at the last Acies in Nairobi, Mgr. Heffernan had seen fifteen Spiritual Directors and 350 Legionaries join in the consecration to Our Lady. It was the same everywhere: news and reports poured in from Mauritius, Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Kilimanjaro, the Upper Nile, Kisumu.

² The Prætorians are those members of the Legion who assume the additional daily obligation of Mass and Communion, the recitation of an office recognised by the Church, the Rosary and the Legion prayers.

Edel's files were swelling. The harvest of grace was rich. We quote at random some half-yearly reports, dry as bank balance-sheets, perhaps, but lovely as pages from the Golden Legend. We give them without emendation, in the unpolished original. One can discern between the lines an active, victorious faith and more than common courage. These figures must be estimated at their value in eternity.

ZANZIBAR VICARIATE.

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Præsidium (Senior).—20 active members. 59 children got back to school; 16 Christians brought back to Church; 19 persons in hospital instructed and baptised in danger of death; 18 of them died; 5 sick children baptised; 4 of them died; 21 pagans, old men and women, being taught in homes.

Queen of Angels Præsidium (Juniors).—37 small children who cannot attend school are being taught. 6 children baptised in danger of death; 46 children missing school got back; 1 boy who could not come to school while attending hospital was instructed. Cemetery was looked after. 153 catechumens recruited for instruction. 18 children brought from the Protestant school to the Mission school.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Præsidium (Senior).—11 active members. 9 sick persons in danger of death visited and baptised—8 died. Search to bring children to school—34 brought to school. The Legionaries made a special effort to find adult catechumens, and obtained a sufficient number to form 3 classes which they instruct themselves; these classes contain respectively 27, 15, and 21 members. 8 apostates reconciled to the Church, and 5 careless Christians brought back to Sacraments.

KISUMU VICARIATE.

Gate of Heaven Præsidium (Senior).—13 active members. 4 returns to the Sacraments; 2 returns to Sunday Mass. 3 adults and 4 children baptised in danger of death at hospital; 15 pagan children instructed in their homes.

Queen of Confessors (Senior).—23 active members. 23 returns to Sacraments. 17 women have been separated from the men with whom they were living, and brought to the Mission for instruction prior to regularisation of their marriages.

KILIMANJARO VICARIATE.

Our Lady Help of Christians Præsidium, African (Senior).—Works: Instruction of old and sick. Visiting sick and careless

Christians. Helping old people. Looking for catechumens and children for school. Results: 12 returns to Sacraments; 25 women helped in child birth; 43 dead persons buried; 53 old people instructed for Baptism. Legionaries have also visited families who have had disputes and quarrels, and in several cases have been able to make peace.

UPPER NILE VICARIATE.

Refuge of Sinners Præsidium (Senior).—14 active members. 48 returns to Mass and Sacraments; 13 persons persuaded to assist at Mass; 3 Baptisms in danger of death; 22 marriages regularised; 8 baptised persons prepared for the other Sacraments. Number of catechumens increased from 20 to 60; 14 boys brought to regular attendance at school.

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If the results were pouring in, questions and difficulties also piled up on Edel's table.

She replied like a mother directing her children. She followed their steps, shared their sorrows, their hopes, their joys. Through the figures of the records she visualised the immortal souls, saved or to be reclaimed. Between the lines of the unskilfully written reports, she divined the spirit that animated the Præsidia and measured the influence of Mary and the extension of her Son's realm. All the administrative side of the work—on the adequate and orderly discharge of which she insisted—was in her eyes transparently alive with grace and supernatural life. She believed that a true love of God could be recognised in well-finished work and in faithfulness to the smallest details. She was not a worshipper of written records, but she wished the children of light to take as much trouble over the things of God as the children of this world take in organising their own affairs. Her glance was sure and rapid, her judgment was penetrating. She knew that slackness was not a mark of homage to God and that our negligence has no mystic virtue. This was the foundation of her love of order and precision.

Advice flowed freely from her. To one Legionary she wrote:

"Remind your members that it is not Legionary work if they do not go in pairs. Also, the work done should be the work given to them by the meeting. Then they have the merit of obedience as they go out on Our Lady's work."

She recommends another to "hold on: Tell your Legionaries

to persevere in the work they have taken on. I am sure our Blessed Mother is pleased with the work they are doing for her. Tell them to be very faithful to saying the Catena³ every day. I shall be looking out for the next report."

To a Missionary in Nairobi she writes: "Remind the Legionaries all the time to be very faithful to the rules, especially with regard to working in twos, as they often become careless about this. But it is one of the rules we are most particular about. Especially keep before them the idea of working for Our Lady and her Son. They should not rely on their own efforts, but must pray for the people they visit and teach."

Her poor health was standing the strain fairly well. An airgraph sent to Dublin by a Missionary on March 15, 1943, described her in these terms:

"You may like to get some news from a closely placed observer. She is still with us and absorbed by the Legion. About a week ago she had a relapse. The temperature went up, the pulse increased; she was extremely weak, and remained in bed of her own accord, which means a lot. She had to remain there for several days. At the end of that time, she was feeling better. She is now out of bed, but is for the moment resting. I do not wish to speak any language except the language of faith and hope, but I can only say that she is not cured.

"She seems to me to be a perfect soul, the embodiment of the *Handbook*, the incarnation of the spirit of the Legion. She is very dear to everybody here and has won exceptional marks of esteem. She is a Legionary angel."

In fact her mission gave her real resemblance to those envoys of God; like them she brought the message and effaced herself, prepared the way and disappeared.

She realised that her condition was causing alarm, and felt the need for reassuring her friends. On April 11, 1943, she wrote to Mr. Nagle:

"Personally, I do not think there is any difference in my health between South Africa and here, over the last twelve months. But I do think that if it were not for all the prayers since I got ill, I could not possibly be even as I am. I rest a certain amount."

On April 15, she returns to the same subject, without hiding the fact that she is moving about, but emphasising the "safeguards".

³ The Catena is the prayer binding on all, which unites all the members of the Legion, and consists mainly of the Magnificat and the Collect of the Mass of Mary Mediatrix of all Graces.

"I cannot walk a lot but I go to meetings. Bus services good when cars are not available, and rickshaws complete the transport system. I was driven to the military Præsidium and back, 60 miles. I rest a good deal, write, and see people. If I overdo things, I get knocked up. But I have made decided advance from the time of 'bed all day'. My temperature is behaving itself, D.G. The Spiritual Director of the Curia, Father Culligan, has without appointment taken the place of you and Mr. Duff. His attitude was that, if he did not, no one else would. He comes down on me like a ton of bricks if he thinks that I am overdoing it, or that people are too exacting. Sometimes he refuses to let me move around. So I am very well looked after. Actually, from the Bishop down, every one of the priests is on the look out to give me lifts and help in every other way."

Some days later she refers again to her departure from South Africa and justifies her decision, which might have seemed perplexing. She had not acted rashly; she gives the reasons which made her choose Nairobi.

"As travelling home seemed out of the question, I had to find a place to go, some place where I could make the most of whatever span of life was left to me. At Umlamli, I had Holy Communion every day but no chance of getting to church—no Mass. So I looked for three things: a place near a church with daily Mass, a centre where I could do as much Legion work as possible, a place that suited health and where I could get care, if necessary." Nairobi supplied those three requirements. However, she hoped to extend her ramifications as far as possible—a fact which she betrays in these lines:

"I hope later in the year to go by train to Kisumu. I have a few Curia² to start, and I think I could manage that much." But she has to admit: "I am not pretending I can do a whole lot and, as I say, I cannot walk much, but will go slowly." She strikes the same note on May 12, 1943:

"I am thoroughly enjoying the change to Nairobi. The climate is quite A.I. I can do a certain amount of Præsidia and Curia visiting, plus correspondence. I cannot do a great deal of walking and so must go easy, but I contrive to get around. The Bishop looks after me well."

Dublin liked to get Edel's bulletins confirmed from another source, and was glad to have news regularly from the Missionaries. This is how an objective and attentive observer sees Edel:

"Another bulletin about your angel. She told me to write to you and assure you that she was avoiding any imprudences of which you

would disapprove. It is my opinion that she is doing so. I think that, even though you were alarmed in the past, you would approve all, if you knew all. She has agreed not to do anything of which I do not approve. That is all that can be expected. She is not cured and, humanly speaking, never will be. I sometimes think that she will be enabled by supernatural help to carry on as she is for a long time, and thus be a standing miracle. Her whole bearing gives the lie to her real state. Her bright, cheerful spirits, her quick, energetic movements, her keenness, make people forget that she is so feeble. People wonder at her. She has done a lot of good since her return to Nairobi. She has been revitalising the old Præsidia and has started three new ones. Her presence can do nothing but good; this is a hard soil to cultivate. I regard her as perfect. Everything she does seems to be right. I don't make these statements lightly."

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Meanwhile, Edel had set out for the Nyeri Curia, eighty miles from Nairobi. She remained there from 18th May to 2nd June, and visited fifteen Præsidia. Her report has the ring of victory:

"I have made my first 'trial' extension trip to Nyeri Vicariate, and enjoyed it immensely. The Holy Ghost Fathers took so much care of me that I was wondering whether someone had listed me as 'fragile goods' for the journey. I was present at two Curia meetings, attended at the formation of a third, and visited fifteen African Præsidia. The spirit and work of the Legionaries was most impressive, due in no small measure to the meticulous attention of painstaking Spiritual Directors. On returning to Nairobi, I started off to visit all Præsidia attached to the Nairobi Central Curia and shall report later on this trip. We have just had our first one-day Retreat for men Legionaries. For many of them it was their first Retreat. Some travelled thirty miles to Nairobi. Sixteen members of the Forces' Præsidia were present. The catering was in the capable hands of the women Legionaries, who gauged the Brothers' appetite to a nicety. The day concluded with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at the Carmelite Convent."

On 8th June she wrote:

"I had a meeting of Junior Presidents. I am hoping to inject the sense of responsibility into them, also to get the *Handbook* more thoroughly studied by each Præsidium." So that the Juniors should better understand the spirit of the Legion, she organised for the Præsidia officers a cycle of instructions on St. Louis-Marie's "True



EDEL, RUBY ROBERTS AND ENTOURAGE AT THE BENEDICTINE HOSPITAL, NONGOMA, ZULULAND.

"I could not say enough of the care, kindness and thoughtfulness lavished on me by Ruby Roberts since I came to South Africa. No relative could do more for me than she has done."—(*The Life*, p. 200.)

Devotion". She herself circulated all around Nairobi and visited the branches.

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When Edel came back from her tour of inspection, a great joy awaited her—a letter from His Excellency Monsignor Julien brought her news of Nyasaland. And great news it was! He wrote:

"I am just back from visiting our Mission stations at Mtendere, Bembeke, Mua, Ntakataka and Kasina, and I am sure to give you pleasure when I tell you that everywhere I found the Legionaries doing magnificent Catholic Action."

With touching thoughtfulness, the Bishop entered into detail. He mentioned that, at the risk of a motor break-down in the night, he had made a point of assisting at the Curia meeting in Ntakataka. He noted that the fifty-two officers were all present and punctual. He was much struck by the report of "Mother Most Amiable" Præsidium. The poor President, overcome with confusion at having to read her report before the Bishop, had indeed turned over two pages of it at once, but all the same had managed very creditably.

"This Præsidium," continued Monsignor Julien, "was begun just over a year ago. There are eighteen active members and nine Auxiliaries; five others tried but did not persevere."

"Here is a brief summary of their work: They hunted up twenty-four women who never came to Mass; seventeen now come regularly; four cannot come because they have no clothes, and three won't listen to reason yet. They also, at Easter, went after ten women who have not received the Sacraments for very many years; eight of these did their Easter duty."

He continues with a long list of results.

"Then," he goes on, "there were twelve other Præsidia to report, each one as interesting as 'Mother Most Amiable'. Can you imagine how I congratulated them?"

The letter then tells of the Acies at Linthipe, with the Bishop and more than 160 Legionaries present; of the Acies of the Guillemé Curia, at which more than 400 Legionaries made their Consecration to Mary. After adding that all this was due to Edel's good work, Monsignor Julien concluded in these terms:

"Over 1,000 active Legionaries! What a sum of active co-operation in the work of redemption of souls—a co-operating with Jesus and Mary. When you arrived here, close on three years ago, and began explaining what you wanted, many of the Fathers shook their heads and said that our people, who only yesterday were pagans, could never take on such a complicated system. Not a few

were very sceptical and prophesied that in six months not a Legionary would be found carrying on. Nevertheless, as their Vicar Apostolic had told them to try, and as you came to us in the name of the Apostolic Delegate and of the Holy Father Himself, they tried . . . and were amazed at the apparent miracle. The weekly meeting seemed far too much to ask of our Africans. Yet all Legionaries now aver that were it not for the weekly meeting, they would long since have dropped out; monthly meetings are not sufficient to maintain zeal.

"The grain of mustard seed has become a mighty tree, and, please God, will become bigger still."

Did not such a letter provide handsome compensation for past and future sufferings? Edel was seeing a rich harvest proceed from her sowing. God was blessing her work. The Bishop gave her an assurance of this, with proofs to support it. Edel read in that letter of the successes, the hesitations, and the tenacious goodwill of the Legionaries. How often had she not been told that to try to organise Catholic Action among the Africans was noble-hearted but utopian! But experience had proved the sceptics to be wrong; the evidence of facts was conclusive and promised still greater fruitfulness.

Edel wrote her thanks to Monsignor Julien in a letter dated 11th July, 1943.

"I must say, my Lord, you did tease me in your letter. You give me far more credit than I merit. It is true that I was there on the spot to help in the start. But if your priests had not been so zealous in co-operating faithfully with your wishes in the matter, the Legion could not exist as it does to-day in Nyasa Vicariate."

Edel thanked God for this encouragement. She saw in it, above all else, an incentive to hurry. And so she accelerated her pace. The maximum must be done while daylight lasted. Her hours were numbered. Soon would fall the night of her life. Now, more than ever, should she be faithful to those Retreat resolutions which she had brought together in a notebook:

"Work for the day.

The saints never lost time.

Live for the day.

Life is made up of days.

Why lose a moment on the way during a brief journey?

Our Eternity is built on time.

Never waste time.

If one has given all to Jesus and Mary, one has no right to waste time."

Rarely have resolutions been so splendidly kept.

CHAPTER XXI

FINAL STAGES

"Jesus is the Master of the impossible."

CHARLES DE FOUCAULD.

THE very moment Edel returned to Nairobi, she began to visit the surrounding branches. She found eleven senior Præsidia and four junior ones. In her passion to secure perfection, she spent a long time with the officers, training them in their duties and going deeply into every detail. A new Curia was founded at Fort Hall (Nyeri Vicariate). Edel went to it, and assisted besides at the meetings of five Præsidia—all this between 26th June and 1st July. One marvels at her power of mobilising such vitality from her poor shattered body.

She noticed everything and sent her account of it to Dublin. Here is the sketch of a Legion "Refresher Course" which has plenty of local colour:

"On a recent visit to Fort Hall Curia, I attended a weekly course which they were running for Legionaries from the five mission Præsidia. They sat around the room—about fifty of them—all the women busy weaving baskets, at which they are adepts. Then five different 'scenes' were enacted by small groups of Legionaries.

"The first showed two Legionaries visiting a dying man; one tidied the room and spoke to him as best he could; the other ran for the priest. The preparation for Father's visit was shown—his arrival (demonstrated by the Priest himself), then the administration of Baptism, of Extreme Unction, etc.

"The second showed two Legionaries visiting a 'marriage' case, where they were trying to get the wife to come for instruction, and the husband to agree to let her.

"The rest were on the same lines. The setting was that of the inside of an African hut, with mats, fire, etc.

"When the first two 'scenes' were finished, the Spiritual Director stood up and explained what was right and what was wrong in each; and he did the same at the end. It was a very good practical demonstration of what Legionaries should and should not do on visitation.

"These meetings are being held once a week, and they appear to be popular and well attended; they can be adapted to various purposes. Some of the Præsidia attached to this Curia from other missions are taking up the idea. It originated at this Mogoire mission, where Father P. Curtin, C.S.Sp., is the very zealous Spiritual Director."

Some weeks later, Edel found herself in the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro, where His Excellency Monsignor Byrne received her with joy and authorised her to organise Curia. In practice that meant finding responsible officers, explaining their duties to them, knocking them into shape as a team. Three Curia were formed, one after another. Plainly, Edel was speeding up operations. Did she feel the end approaching, or was it only that charity pressed her? She spoke her feelings to no one. The future was in God's Hands, that sufficed to give her confidence. It was not her part to study the horizon for premonitory signs, or to measure how much was left to her of the breath of life. Her rôle was to give herself without stint at every moment that passed.

Those who saw her at work in spite of her weakness, marvelled at the permanent miracle.

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Her health did not improve, yet neither did she seem to bend beneath the burden.

"I am still unable to walk," she writes on June 9, "but travelling and meetings are O.K. I spent the last few days letter-writing and got off nearly forty. This month I am spending the week-ends at missions attached to the African Curia so as to visit the Præsidia before the next Curia meeting."

Forty letters in a few days is not exactly the treatment for an invalid! Fortunately, the months of July and August, usually trying and damp on account of the fogs, were that year mild and sunny. To the unusual clemency of the weather Edel owed the spell of comparative comfort which she enjoyed at that time.

On August 24, she sent another health bulletin: "I can do a solid day's writing without overstrain, but the walking gets me! After a short distance, I am finished, and time brings no improvement. A day of meetings or a meeting immediately after a fairly long car trip, I am able for. But walking! In a way it is like being fettered. Of course, even at best, one is always up against a certain lack of energy, or rather a lack of reserves of energy. However, if over-

tired by some weeks of travelling, I can always rest on my return. I am also learning gradually how to balance out things better." She admits to having had a burst of fever, and tries to ward off a possible charge of rashness by assurances that she is being carefully watched. But she concludes philosophically: "However, no matter what risk I take or do not take, it looks as if my present state of health is going to be my normal one." She gives some further detail: "I can do a certain amount of travelling in the locality and Præsidia visiting. I am very fortunate to be able to do that much. The visiting of some Præsidia and Curia a few weeks ago meant 300 miles by road in one week. It went off all right."

Yes, hers was truly the service of God, and on a plane beyond the merely human. She was staking her all and had no illusions about it. This note of August 31, 1943, gives clear evidence of her awareness: "To do anything effective, one needs to be able to move around easily, without getting done up, and without having one's legs giving in after 100 yards, and without puffing—a state I shall scarcely see in this world and won't need in the next." Fatigue breaks through lines like this: "Sorry I cannot type—I find it too much of a strain." With the intention of preparing her family for any eventuality she mentioned her physical condition to them, contrary to her usual habit.

"When I get a cold," she writes to Mr. Duff, "I tell my family. Though they know lots of T.B. cases, they always take it for granted that mine is somehow different, and that it is possible for me to get back absolutely to normal. Accordingly, if anything ever happened unexpectedly, it would be a shock."

The terror of causing grief to her own people inspired those wiles, which were but forms of considerateness and affection. She was right to seek to lessen the shock, for the disease was making inexorable strides.

A letter dated 9th September from a missionary to a fellow-priest at home, describes her condition in these words: "She is not cured—now weighs 84lbs.—finds the rainy season here very trying—difficult to breathe—lassitude. After slight physical exertion, e.g. walking 50 yards, she is puffing, has to rest. She is an extraordinary person, a magnificent example of vocation faithfully followed."

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At the very time when that letter describes her as worn out, that is in September, 1943, she undertook a six weeks' Legion tour,

visiting the Curia of Kiambu, Thika, Kilema, and founding the Curia of Kibosho.

When she returned from Kibosho, she seemed completely spent; one would have thought her about to die. Lest such might happen, she did not lock her door at night. Yet by dint of joking and gaiety of manner she managed once more to allay the anxiety of her friends. She was unequalled in the art of hiding her sufferings. Sister Angelita, who gives us these particulars adds: "I liked to stay with her, sitting silently by her bedside while she rested. She seemed to be so near to Heaven and was yet so thoughtful about everyone here. And how grateful she was for every little service rendered to her." Always the same self-forgetfulness. We recognise the Edel who had written in her retreat notes: "Not to let myself be overcome by fatigue." "Be careful not to show want of interest or fatigue before others." "Patience in all things, detachment in small things."

But behold her on 12th October, going again to the Vicariate of Kilimanjaro! She passed through Bura and Moshi to found three new Curia there. How painful this journey must have been for the dying girl may be measured by these lines addressed by her to Dublin on October 13: "I stopped on my return at Bura, which is sixteen hours from Nairobi by train." Sixteen hours' train journey! And after visits to the other mission centres which were by no means a mere formality! "I am very glad to have attempted the trip, for I might have been writing for a year more without getting anything done. When several missions are concerned, no one wants to be the first to move and things just remain stationary." Then follow remarks, questions, suggestions, and as a post-script the playful words: "You had better take a day off, after reading these lengthy epistles."

From Kilimanjaro again she wrote to Mr. Duff a note that was like an echo of the famous letter, written at the time of her departure from London on the *Llangibby Castle*: "The seventh anniversary of my arrival here will have passed by the time you get this. I am so glad to have had these seven years, though I could wish to have done more in them." It was a touching expression of gratitude to him who had dared to say in the name of the Master: "Launch out into the deep and cast thy net." She went on:

"You know, this last tour has made me realise how little I can do. It was on the lines of the old days—quick travelling: one night here, another at the next mission—a meeting or two, and then off again. I am just half-way through; have rested at every chance; but I do not feel so fresh when starting off each day. I find myself very tired after a day full of meetings and talking. One good thing is that

I am never tired whilst a meeting is on, no matter how long it is, nor when I have to talk to people. It is usually afterwards. That is not so bad, for I have done everything that had to be done. I only mention this, as I know you are so interested. It is another 'test' to see what I can or cannot do. I would not have missed it, as otherwise the Curia would not have been started. . . .

"It is always cheering to get your advice on what I may do—you do not cramp one. As you say, one must try what one can do—and if it is too much, be more careful next time. If I was in the South they would still have me doing nothing. I am as well at any rate as I was there. I will be careful, as you say, and not be reckless. Somehow, one feels what one can do and what it is better to leave undone. Even in Nairobi one can help: there everybody helps one, which makes a difference. They tell me here that I have vastly changed. Some who knew me well declare that never would they recognise me—except the voice; the rest was different. Also my hair is greying; old age creeps on!"

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November marked a great date for Edel; the Nairobi Curia was raised to the rank of a Comitium. This meant that it would take charge of the surrounding regions and control the attached Curia. It meant also that they were drawing near the final stage: the erection of the Senatus (or regional Council) for British Equatorial Africa. Here below Edel would not see her grain of mustard seed grow into the tree, which would shelter the birds of the air. But she was thinking of it as far back as Christmas 1937, when she wrote: "I have sometimes considered how a Senatus would work out here in Africa, at least in these parts. Of course this would be in the years to come; there could be no question of it at this early stage."

After her death, the creation of the Senatus at Nairobi in October, 1949 was to crown her work. That body to-day looks after thirty-three Curia and nearly four hundred Præsidia. It is Our Lady's reply to those who received her messenger with the defeatist words: "Ah! you don't know Nairobi!" She did not indeed know Nairobi, but she knew the Blessed Virgin.

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Edel continued to watch jealously over her foundations, old and

new, and to keep them faithful to the rules. She had to be always on the alert: human laziness, difficulties, disappointments, contradictions,—these easily bring desertions and compromises.

Thank God, the news from the two Vicariates of Nyasaland continued encouraging:

“They are certainly taking the Legion seriously in those two Vicariates in Nyasaland,” she writes, “If they only did it elsewhere! Out here the Priest or Sister plays a vital part. When they do their part, it is really amazing what results are achieved, a regular Christianising of people only nominally Catholic before.”

The allusion to Nuns will be at once understood, when one knows that they can, as well as the Priest, undertake the duty of Spiritual Director to a Præsidium. Very often a Nun was the mainspring of the branch.

A missionary in Nyasaland sent Edel the report of a Curia which controlled twenty-seven Præsidia and comprised five hundred and twenty-three active members. He concluded his letter by a few general remarks:

“Visiting sick heathens is often without result: they refuse Baptism because the Church would prohibit the ceremonial burial dances at their grave.

“The Legionaries built a school in a nearby village; they were often laughed at for working for nothing.

“The Legion has been expanding and will expand still more, since you gave it the initial push in Nyasaland. Most Fathers are delighted to have one or more Præsidia. To be sure, it gives us more work, but likewise ten times more work is done. Really, we cannot thank you enough for the fine apostolate you have started here.”

Another missionary told Edel his impressions of the Legion, and she passed them on to Dublin:

“An old missionary, who had been ministering to the Africans for twelve years, told me that, from the educative point of view alone the organisation of the Legion—meetings, minutes, order, etc.—was invaluable, not to speak of the work done. These words are worth their weight in gold, considering that I hear the objection from time to time that these details are completely beyond the grasp of the people and should be abolished. It often happens that only one or two members of a Præsidium are able to write and take notes. But even the least advanced can be trained, and there are always a few willing teachers in the group. The same may be said of juniors. If I mention this, it is to emphasise what the missionary said, and what

you too maintain, that it is better to try and bring the members up to the Legion standard than to descend to theirs.”

Is it not the highest form of charity to fit a person for his work, while raising him morally? The Legion's uncompromising attitude is a call to do better, and a grace. The educative value of the Legion resides in this, that it humanises while it Christianises at the same time. The Legion seeks first the Kingdom of God and His Justice, then the other things are added unto it. And that addition is, according to the individual and the circumstances: discipline, self-control, a consciousness of one's neighbour's needs, a care for order, respect for authority, ingenious charity.

Edel was profoundly conscious that the Legion can bring to those simple peoples a practical and durable human education. She saw reality behind appearances: she knew instinctively whether the Christianity that she met was built on sand or on a rock. The experience of each new day taught her more surely that the Legion was an instrument of Christian vitality, not only for the community, but for the Legionaries themselves who were the first to benefit by it. It is natural that Mary should bestow the Christian spirit on those of her children who do her work. One must yield to evidence; and the evidence shows that in every place which the Legion truly penetrates, a breath of the apostolic spirit passes. When Mary is present, a Pentecostal wind rises. Sometimes it creates the spirit of conquest, where none existed. Sometimes it rekindles the fire that was smouldering under the ashes. Everywhere it revivifies spiritually numbed or mercenary souls.

On December 2, 1943, Edel recorded in a letter to Dublin this remark, the truth of which has been confirmed by the Bishop of the Vicariate in question:

“A curious fact is that some Catholic teachers, educated for eight or ten years by the Vicariate and then given work in Mission schools, will not do an iota beyond the work paid for, and are often the last to join mission Præsidia . . . if they join at all.”

In spite of the deliberately impersonal tone of her correspondence, we can guess sometimes how much her heart is with her family in Dublin . . . the small family and the large one . . . and how appreciative she is of friendship. In these words she thanks a friend for having sent her a sheaf of news: “I owe Celia Shaw a letter. Her long, newsy ones are always more than welcome. Sometimes one would give much for a long evening at Regina Coeli just to let off a little steam. Here one cannot.”

She rejoices at the sight of handwriting that is dear to her. “I see

your personal notes are always typed these days. Still, one likes to see the few lines of writing at the end of them."

This very human reaction gives us a hint as to her wealth of natural feeling and affection, which for the sake of her work she had suppressed. Edel no longer showed that side of her nature, but it was there all the same and very much alive. We must never forget this, or we shall have an incomplete and unreal mental picture of her.

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A six weeks' tour of Tanganyika was carried out without incident. But at the end of December, Edel caught cold, her weight began to drop, this time never to go up again. She admits this in a letter of February 29, 1944, and acknowledges that she had not been as careful as she should. "You need not get worried by the knock-out. Just before Christmas, I got a bit of a chill while attending a Retreat. Then, before I shook it off, there unexpectedly came a week or two of intense travelling. This did not give me time enough to rest after the chill, so I had to go very easy for another ten or fourteen days. Rest was all that was required just to get back energy, of which I always stand in need for purposes of walking and travelling. I note what you say about the need being less for travelling about than for supervising and energising. But it is surprising how often it is useful to move about a bit! Take for instance this Kisumu trip: there is only one person in the Comitium who could do it, the President; but then her holidays are limited. Three weeks for visiting a Curia out here is useless, no matter what arrangements go on before. These places can be so rarely visited that one must also visit the Præsidia, to see if they are off the track. One Curia meeting is no use, unless one can follow up with a second. In view of the distances, the practical thing is to stay on the spot for that second meeting. To get to Kisumu takes nearly twenty hours, so there is no question of popping up and down for return visits. Even the expense would prevent that."

This time Edel was obliged to rest, whether she liked it or not. So she went to spend a short holiday in a convent of Irish nuns, who were very fond of her.

Alas! this time the halt did not restore any of her vigour. From time to time, symptoms appeared which, at the moment, seemed to be mere minor indispositions, but which in fact announced the coming of the end. What never changed was her radiant and contagious joyousness and the cheerfulness with which she endured

her illness. Tranquilly, she made plans for the future, proposing to go and see Monsignor Shanahan, the great Irish missionary Bishop of Southern Nigeria. He had retired, but feeling still the call of the land of Africa, he had accepted an invitation from Monsignor Heffernan, who offered him hospitality in his Vicariate. Edel was looking forward with joy to meeting that giant of the apostolate,¹ when the news of his death was brought to her. Yet they were to meet even on earth in a mysterious and richly significant manner, of which we shall tell later.

More than ever, Edel interested herself in all that concerned the extension of God's Kingdom on earth. Her last letters ask or supply particulars of the possibilities of extension in the Belgian Congo, in the Sudan, in Rhodesia.

She was interested, too, in Egypt and Palestine:

"On Monday I had an interview with Father A. Hughes, Acting Apostolic Delegate for Egypt and Palestine. He was returning to Cairo. He is ready to give every help to any Legion Envoy who will come to Egypt and Palestine, and he insists that there is a magnificent opening there."

This meeting had its sequel: A little later Monsignor A. Hughes, appointed Inter-Nuncio to Egypt, received Miss Roberts very kindly, and she spent more than a year in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. A Comitium, five Curia, and fifty Præsidia sprang up there, particularly in the army. When the war was over, civilians took over the work.

When Miss Ruby Roberts was about to go on that trip to Cairo, Edel referred to her in a letter to Dublin: "I must say I enjoyed writing to Ruby and giving her good advice—my turn this time! It makes me feel quite superior just for once. She is exceptionally energetic and good at walking and working and roughing it when necessary, cardinal points in Legion Mission work, in parts anyway."

In her turn, Miss Roberts sent her a few weeks later some echoes from Dublin, apropos of Edel's return to Nairobi from South Africa. In a mischievous retort to her good advice, Miss Roberts wrote: "A very nice young priest has visited Mariannahill, Father Holland, just from Ireland and fresh with Legion news. It appears that they were dumbfounded by your cable, 'Arrived safely in Nairobi.' 'Either it is miraculous,' they said, 'or she is mad, or she is getting better.' I can understand their thinking you were better, or even that it is a

¹ Cf. Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, by John P. Jordon, C.S.Sp. Clonmore & Reynolds, Dublin, 1948.

miracle, but why the madness? I can vouch that you are not mad, but simply suffer from extreme forms of determination."

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Edel gave thought also to the continuity of her work. She seemed to think that Miss Dickson, an English convert, would inherit her vocation and finish her task. She prepared her, giving much advice and encouraging her to undertake her first extension journeys.

"You know," she wrote, "that you are blazing the East African trail and so you can count yourself as one highly privileged by Our Lady. You are the first Legionary from an East African Praesidium to be officially appointed to do extension. This may be a harbinger of things to come. I have often found, especially in difficult extension trips, that Our Lady comes on the scene in her own wonderful way, and that special graces seem to come to one."

It was instinctive with Edel to efface herself as soon as possible, once she had handed on the torch. *Cursores hominum lampada tradunt*. Such an attitude of withdrawal can be supreme service. Is it not right to awaken to the fullest a sense of responsibility and to compel every one to deal with problems, leaving errors to be corrected later, if necessary. Edel was convinced of this. She wrote to Dublin: "I think it will be no harm if I leave Nairobi for a while. If I am there, Legionaries are rather inclined not to decide anything without first asking me. Also, if something crops up, instead of going direct to the Comitium President, they sometimes come to me. Even if I refuse to deal with the point and refer them to her, still the attitude is there. The Comitium President, on the other hand, instead of consulting to the utmost extent with the Comitium officers, tends to come to me, which is not good. It would be all right in matters where she herself has to get trained in, in the running of the Comitium, etc., but in dealing with local Praesidia affairs, it is not. The fact that I know the ins-and-outs of the Nairobi Praesidia and the majority of the Legionaries better than the Comitium President, who is rather new, makes it easier for her to come to me. But now that she is in close contact with these Praesidia and members, the need is no longer there." Edel admitted in the same letter that she "had got a little set-back and had to take it easy for a while." What that means we can understand from a Missionary's comment:

"When the interests of the Legion were calling, or when she thought they were, she simply forgot everything. About eight or nine weeks before she died I called to see her one evening. On my arrival,

she was typing a letter. I left at about seven o'clock, the time she used to have supper, so that she might eat, and go to bed. Instead, she continued her typing and ended at about eleven."

It is not astonishing that, at that time, her correspondence showed by slight indications the fatigue that was crushing her. Her friends were struck by the fact that sometimes she sent letters insufficiently stamped or made mistakes in spelling. These were signs of weariness, for it was not like her to fail in such ways. But they could not guess that each letter was paid for by desperate calling up of energy.

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We have come now to the last stage before the great rest. On March 6, 1944, Edel wrote:

"I leave for Kisumu Vicariate in two days." Kisumu is eighteen hours' train journey from Nairobi! "What more could I do for my vineyard than I have done?" God asked his Chosen People.

Edel, too, could say on her arrival in Heaven: "*Quid ultra debui facere?*" . . .

Humanly speaking, her place was in bed. Nevertheless, she set off on her journey as if death were an eventuality that had no concern for her. It was plain that the journey was a serious risk. A Missionary writes about it:

"Before she started, it seemed to me that she might never come back, and that if she did, she would not see the end of August. She realised it herself, too."

She set out, however. On March 9 she reached Kisumu. His Excellency Monsignor Stam had written to her: "May God give you the strength to come back to us!" And she came back. The Bishop received her with joy, and she ascertained delightedly that he was strongly supporting the Legionary organisation in his territory.² At Kisumu, Edel hoped to meet Miss Roberts, the Legion Envoy in South Africa, who would stop there on her way to Egypt. It would have been a great joy to see once more the faithful companion of her bad days in Johannesburg, and to exchange experiences. Alas! Miss Roberts did indeed arrive, but the aerodrome was closed to the public for health reasons. The two Envoys saw each other from a distance and could only wave a greeting. The pleasure of that meeting was denied to her; Edel was to know up to the last the

² At the death of Mgr. Stam, Vicar Apostolic of Kisumu, in 1949, the Vicariate had three Curiae and sixty-five Praesidia.

austere joy of giving herself to God in silence and solitude. The spaciousness of Africa was the only monastery that Providence granted to her. But it was appropriate to a love which was as wide as the world, and it gave her as ample opportunity for renunciation as any cloister could afford.

Miss Roberts also felt that deprivation, she who was to write later: "I am grateful to have had the privilege of knowing Edel, and of having been admitted to her friendship. Several times I was in danger of discouragement. But her example, her indomitable spirit and her deep faith spurred me on to fresh efforts."

Edel continued her work of extension and of inspection. She hoped to finish it in a few weeks and return to Nairobi on May 15. This was her plan. But God had another. The temperature was heavy and oppressive; the fogs caused by the rains made a cruel attack on her diseased lungs. Edel was burnt to the socket. This time there was no way of tricking her failing strength into going on; the body was unable to respond. Edel had to abandon the superhuman struggle. More dead than alive, she returned on April 11 to Nairobi.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LORD COMETH

"Amen! Come, Lord Jesus."

APOC. XXII—20.

WHEN Edel returned to the convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood at Nairobi, she could not hide her state of complete exhaustion. She had hardly the strength to drag herself to her bed: one could read death in her eyes.

Plainly the end was at hand.

Edel did not fear death, but she hoped it would come quickly and quietly. She had written once in a letter of condolence to a friend: "One thing I am glad of, Winnie: that when your mother had to go, the end came quickly. That is what I would like for myself." But in the spirit of faith, she added: "In all things God knows best. May His Will be done."

God was soon to grant her wish to the very letter. It was not fear of suffering that made her speak thus. She was thinking of others; she wished not to be a burden on her friends, not to inflict her agony on them. The rest did not trouble her for a moment.

Sentiments of detachment and of confiding abandonment to the Will of God had never ceased to grow in her soul. Why should she be troubled? Is not death a rebirth to life, is it not the coming of the Lord?

A Nairobi Missionary, hearing of her unexpected return, went to see her that same afternoon, and again on the following days. He sets down his impressions at his successive visits:

"She was in bed, prostrate, sick," he writes. "It was obvious that the end was only a matter of time."

"Four days after her arrival she was poking fun at me. She was in the highest and most infectious of spirits, but I could not enjoy it. Her state left me heartsick. She expected to be about again in a few weeks. She did rise from bed and sit out in a little bower, to get fresh air, but her walk was very slow and weak. A week later, eleven days after her return from Kisumu, she looked much better, and her cough, which had been troublesome, eased somewhat. She had many sleepless nights, or nights with little sleep. That was April 28, feast of Blessed Grignon de Montfort.

"I saw her again on April 30 and May 1. She was much the same, but at a later date she told me she was getting pains in her stomach, and said she would see the doctor if they continued. I suggested bringing him to her, but she would not hear of it. Her reason for not allowing the doctor to visit her was, I believe, a fear of worrying the kind Sisters with whom she was staying. They and others had often suggested calling the doctor, but she would not hear of it. She did not want, as she said, 'to make a fuss'. A few months earlier, after a very bad night, during which she nearly died, some one asked whether she had called. 'No,' she replied, 'I wouldn't for the world disturb anyone.'

"This reply shows her faithful to that constant self-forgetfulness which, not long before, had made her spend the night outside the door rather than awaken the Nuns at Kilema, and which she never ceased to practise, even on the threshold of death."

Too weak to go to the church, she joined from her room in the Masses that were offered there, for only a partition separated her from the altar. This nearness to the chapel was a joy to her. "How nice to be staying under one roof with Our Lord," she said. She had also the joy of receiving Holy Communion every day in bed. Forgetful of herself to the very last; to the extremest limit, also, was she determined to keep on working. Peacefully, no change in her writing evident, she wrote to Dublin on May 4 a report that would not get there until after her death.

Her mind was still full of Legion business and, after giving the address of the Apostolic Delegation in Cairo for purposes of extension work there, she concluded:

"Miss Dickson is returning to-morrow, after finishing her share of the work for the Kisumu Curia. I shall ask her to send on herself the details of her journey and also the affiliation forms. That will initiate her into things. The first few weeks in Kisumu were too heavy for me—the climate was hot and damp. I was obliged to drop work wholesale during the ten days which preceded the formation of the Curia at Rangala. And finally I had to return to Nairobi. I am having a complete rest here, and shall continue it, D.V., for some weeks more, after which I shall take up correspondence again; that will be my only occupation. At present I am doing a little every day. . . ."

On May 9, another letter to Mr. Duff remarks: "I am not exactly a heavy-weight these days. One of these days I shall get that proper photo taken which you have demanded.

"I am paying for my Kisumu trip and the Curia; it proved too

much for me. It was the only place I had left to do after Kili-manjaro Vicariate, to complete the work of starting Præsidia there in 1937. However, I am taking a good rest in Nairobi since I got back. I do no moving round, and spend most of my time resting in bed, or out of doors in my summer-house!"

How natural it was to be taken in by the lighthearted tone in which her exhausted condition was referred to, as if it had been a passing and minor ailment.

On May 8, a Missionary who came to see her thought she had grown weaker, but as ever she was smiling and happy. Her charming friendliness, her sweetness, seemed to emphasise the struggle that was going on between her soul, still full of life, and her body that was all but drained of it. It was impossible to doubt that the pains in her stomach of which she spoke were really heart attacks, portending the end. Every day Miss Gannon, the devoted President of the Curia, came to inquire for her and to make her comfortable for the night. Missionaries and Legionaries succeeded one another at her bedside.

On May 10, after breakfast, she had a harrowing attack, which again she attributed to the stomach. She seemed thinner, weaker: her skin was growing yellow, her eyes were slightly bloodshot. But the crisis passed, and the invalid at once became again her gracious, cheerful, lively self. One after another, the attacks were repeated that day: her smile, just dimmed for a few moments at the height of the spasms, soon appeared again, reassuring and deceptive. She apologised for the trouble she was giving. Her heart went on beating rapidly, but this day of alarms came to an end like the others, without a fatal issue.

On May 11, there was no change: the same succession of attacks and periods of ease—but always that sweet smile in the ascendant! In the intervals, as soon as she recovered her breath, she would turn to her visitors and speak to them about the Legion and of the religious future of Africa. Death could brush her with his wings but he could not intimidate her! Had she not confided her soul once for all to the Blessed Virgin? Had she not said a thousand times, "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death." At this moment, when "now" and "that hour" coincided, was it not Mary's place to answer her appeal and embrace her with motherly love?

Once upon a time Edel wrote these lines, which now she was living to the full:

"In regard to Mary, I must preserve the attitude of a child to its mother:

I must trust that she will do what is best.

Just tell her my needs or intentions; leave the rest to her.

When Mary intimates her wishes to her Son, she just says 'Jesus'—details unnecessary.

Turn to her for everything, that she may teach us to love Jesus, to serve the Father, to become like a child in our behaviour. Utter trust."

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On Friday, May 12, Edel had a morning free from upset. In her diary at that date, there are notes of matters to be dealt with, written in a firm hand. She even planned to go off next day and take a few weeks' rest at the Irish Convent. She made her preparations for this trip. If she had believed death to be so near, she would never have acted in that way. She spent the afternoon resting on a deck chair in the garden.

Towards four o'clock, Mother Arsenia, the Superior, brought her a new dressing gown, which she tried on with pleasure, and for which she thanked the Mother gleefully. Soon after, Father Butler came to see her. He left at about a quarter to six. It seemed to him that she had not changed much since the preceding week.

After he had left, the boy brought refreshments and Edel thanked him, saying: "This is delicious."

At 6.15 Miss Gannon arrived.

She had taken only a few steps towards the couch when she heard a kind of cry, ending in a moan. She realised with surprise that Edel's usual sunny greeting was missing this time. She drew nearer; Edel, huddled up in her deck chair, seemed to be asleep and in the grip of a nightmare.

Miss Gannon bent over her and spoke to her gently. She got no answer.

She tried then to lift her: Edel showed no sign of animation. One of her hands was clenched over her heart, the other hung limply down.

Powerless to assist her, Miss Gannon called for help. Mother Arsenia came running. A cold cloth was placed on Edel's heart and they tried in vain to make her swallow a few drops of brandy. Already her feet and hands were icy-cold, but the upper arms were still warm. They tried to warm her with a hot-water bottle. Miss Gannon rushed off in her car to get priest and doctor.

After a few moments, Edel recovered consciousness. She pressed

Mother Arsenia's hands hard, and repeated several times in a plaintive tone: "Mother, Mother, what is happening to me? Mother, I am very ill."

"Oh, yes, my dear, you are."

"What has happened to me? Is Jesus coming?" questioned Edel.

"Do you know me still?" asked the Superior.

"M—MM—Mother," breathed Edel with difficulty. Her eyes fell on the candles which were being lighted. She smiled. The priest had just arrived. It was impossible to move the dying girl, so he decided to give her Extreme Unction where she lay, in the little summer house in the garden, where her agony had come upon her. He began the prayers and the holy anointings. Edel remained conscious, and followed with her eyes the course of the sacred rites. She heard the priest invoke over her the power of the Blessed Trinity, the sweet intercession of the glorious Virgin, of St. Joseph, of the Angels and Archangels, of the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins. . . .

It was a foretaste of the Communion of Saints and of Heaven which was opening to her. . . . Like a mother, the Church bent over her, purifying for the great journey her eyes, her hands, her feet, her poor body, burnt up long before its time by a consuming love.

It was a moment of relief for her soul—and for her body, too.

Then, suddenly, the attack began again.

With infinite care they carried Edel to her room and put her to bed: she collapsed among the pillows and lay motionless.

The priest, knowing what the gesture would mean for the dying girl, held near her the Legion statue of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.

It was a poignant moment, the last meeting here below between the Queen of the Legion and the Envoy who had so nobly served Her. In a few moments, the Mother's arms would open to embrace her tenderly; the rays of grace flowing from those hands would flood her with light issuing from the face of God. . . .

They offered her the crucifix.

Edel was born on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross: her life had been one long communion with the Crucified Jesus, that He might complete through her what was wanting to His Redeeming Passion. That cross was her life, her joy, her hope. Several times she kissed the crucifix held out towards her, and murmured in a voice almost inaudible: "Jesus."

She turned her head slightly, pressed strongly the hand of the Superior, who was beside her. Her breath became more and more

laboured. For the last time, she bent her head and said with her last breath: "Jesus, Jesus."

It was her final farewell to earth: the Master had heard her call, had taken her at her word, and was now welcoming her.

While Edel was dying, a little group at her bedside was saying the prayers for the dying: "Proficiscere, anima christiana, de hoc mundo, in nomine Patris . . ." "Go forth, O Christian soul from this world, in the name of the Almighty Father Who created thee; in the name of Jesus, Son of the living God, Who died for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost Who fills thy soul. In the name also, of the glorious and Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God."

Motionless in death, Edel received the farewell of the Church as a pledge of rest and blessedness. In the chapel all the candles had been lighted before the statue of the Blessed Virgin. After the prayers had been said by Father Byrne who, with Father Fullen, had anointed her, by Father Maher, her confessor, by Mother Arsenia, Sister Servita and Miss Gannon, they prepared her for burial. As a delicate mark of their affection, the Sisters laid Edel out for her last sleep in the white habit of the Religious of the Precious Blood.

Her dream of a religious vocation was thus realised symbolically in death. As though the Master desired to show that He had accepted her secret offering of herself, He gave her its crown. The habit also recalled the Precious Blood, so often adored by her in Holy Mass, and ever and always the love and refreshment of her soul.

Now her features had lost their strained look, her face shone with a quiet brightness: "The expression of her countenance was heavenly," writes a witness. "The thought came to me that her serene expression, belonging to another world outside the power of my pen to describe, was a reflection of the beatific vision."

Sheaves of roses and white flowers were spread in profusion over her bed. They said in their own way that death is a mystery of light and joy. *Intra in gaudium Domini*: Enter into the joy of thy Lord, into the joy which is God, says the Church to her children when they die in her arms.

Red petals, in honour of her who followed the path of the Apostles and who was a martyr to her own fiery zeal.

White flowers strewn there, symbols of purity, in honour of her who preserved for God alone the original freshness of her only love.

By that couch it was not Death that was celebrating victory; it was Life. A long pilgrimage was over: Edel knew rest in God at last. For Him she had journeyed over great spaces; for Him she had fallen exhausted, far from her own people, in a foreign land. Pro-

vidence had not even allowed her to die among her own countrywomen, the Irish Sisters, to whom she had intended to go the next day. Detached from all things, she died as she had lived, in bare simplicity and abandonment.

Those who knelt to pray in the chamber of death could only murmur the one prayer completely appropriate to that life: the *Magnificat*.

That same day, at about 8 o'clock in the evening, Edel's body was laid in the coffin and brought in procession to St. Austin's church. It was to await there the day of burial which had been fixed for the following Sunday. That was the last long meeting of Edel with the God of the Eucharist, the final watch, prolonging into Eternity that adoration of the Master which was the breath of her soul.

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On Sunday, May 14, the funeral took place. His Excellency Mgr. Heffernan officiated, and there were over twenty priests and a large crowd of all classes in the church.

The burial service seemed like a triumph: never had Nairobi seen a more affecting, impressive funeral.

The sky was overcast; rain threatened, but it did not fall till the service was over.

The Legionaries had claimed the privilege of carrying Edel's remains on their shoulders to the cemetery.

On the way, the crowd prayerfully recited the rosary. For the last time Edel was causing to ascend to her Queen those *Aves* which she had so dearly loved and made loved here below.

The procession stopped at the little cemetery reserved for the Missionaries. By an exceptional privilege she was to be buried there: it was a place of honour befitting Our Lady's messenger.

Her grave was dug immediately beside another of recent date, that of Bishop Shanahan, the unforgettable Missionary of Southern Nigeria. The meeting which the Lord did not allow in this world, between those two heroes of the missionary apostolate, was realised in the mystery of death. The same earth covers those pioneers of Christ in the land of Africa.

Edel Quinn, Bishop Shanahan: two glories of the same Irish fatherland, two pioneers of the Kingdom of God, two servants faithful unto death. Edel, the frail young girl who sacrificed to God her health and her life; the Bishop, founder of Christian communities

who had come back to die on the beloved soil of Africa: a blending of the priestly and lay apostolate, united for the same cause.

Slowly, Edel's body disappeared into the earth open to receive it, while the Church's last blessing descended upon her: "Through the mercy of God may she rest in peace."

It seemed as if all was over, but now the Legionaries—Edel's children by adoption, for whose sake she had died there after having given them her heart and her labours—had one last farewell to offer her.

In English first, then in Kiswahili, prayers went up to Heaven, which must have brought great joy to her who had gone. They rose in the silence, loudly and rhythmically spoken, in the tone of victory:

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?" It was the antiphon of the Catena, the great Legion prayer. To the invitation in the words the crowd replied with the Magnificat, which burst forth like a song of triumph:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . .

"For behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed.

"He hath exalted the humble . . . He hath filled the hungry with good things."

Our Lady's own hymn seemed charged with a new meaning, with an emotion that wrung all hearts.

Edel had died far from her country and her people; so that in the land of Africa her spiritual children might, in their turn, accomplish Our Lady's prophecy! Edel had presented to her Queen new generations who would proclaim her glory.

Edel had died, unknown to the world which in that year 1944 was trembling with fear before the powers of the day. *Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*. The promise made to the humble was about to be realised for Edel: her name would grow for ever greater in the gratitude of men. . . .

That Magnificat chanted over her grave was the Marian farewell of her African children.

When it was finished, a voice arose, calling in turn on the patrons of the Legion: after the Queen of the Legion, St. Michael and the holy Guardian Angels, then Saints Peter and Paul*. To each invocation the crowd responded; then suddenly all voices rose together in a final prayer which fell on the hidden coffin like a heavenly dew on freshly turned earth.

*St. John the Baptist was not placed among the patrons of the Legion until the 18th December, 1949.

It was a prayer that had been on Edel's lips ten thousand times. A prayer that gave her strength to keep moving tirelessly ever onward. A prayer that is a summons to heroic action—a call to which her life had so magnificently responded:

"Confer, O Lord, on us,
 who serve beneath the standard of Mary,
 that fulness of faith in Thee and trust in her
 to which it is given to conquer the world.
 Grant us a lively faith, animated by charity,
 which will enable us to perform all our actions
 from the motive of pure love of Thee,
 and ever to see Thee and serve Thee in our neighbour;
 a faith firm and immovable as a rock,
 through which we shall rest tranquil and steadfast
 amid the crosses, toils, and disappointments of life;
 a courageous faith which will inspire us
 to undertake and carry out without hesitation
 great things for God and for the salvation of souls;
 a faith which will be our Legion's Pillar of Fire—
 to lead us forth united—
 to kindle everywhere the fires of Divine Love—
 to enlighten those who are in darkness and in the shadow of
 death—
 to inflame those who are lukewarm—
 to bring back life to those who are dead in sin;
 and which will guide our own feet in the Way of Peace,
 so that—the battle of life over—
 our Legion may reassemble
 without the loss of anyone,
 in the Kingdom of Thy Love and Glory. Amen.
 May the souls of our departed Legionaries and the souls of all the
 faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.
 Amen.

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Edel's whole life is framed in those words.

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The next day a Solemn Requiem was celebrated by the Pro-vicar, Rev. Father Finnegan, in the presence of Bishop Heffernan and a

large attendance of clergy and laity who had come from all parts to pay Edel a last tribute of gratitude. In the other Vicariates of Africa, and in Mauritius, services were celebrated also, uniting Bishops, Missionaries and Legionaries in a common prayer for the repose of her soul.

Her memory is vivid still. The Africans cherish her name lovingly. "Long after we have all disappeared," said a Nairobi priest to a brother-missionary, "the name of Edel Quinn will be spoken with veneration on African soil."

Unsophisticated souls have deep intuitions. The Africans, who sense a hidden danger long before the white man's watchfulness is roused, divined often better than Europeans the heroism of Our Lady's messenger. They understood her from the first, and gave her their hearts. Edel loved them with a mother's love, and she—their smiling, indefatigable Envoy—has become for them a legendary figure.

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While all Nairobi mourned, Dublin learned with an infinitely sorrowful surprise of Edel's death; for neither she herself nor anyone else in Africa had warned the Legion authorities of her grave condition.

A letter from her, dated April, 26, had just arrived. It ended with these words:

"I was very tired out after the Kisumu trip, so am resting at present."

When Mr. Duff, to whom the note was written, saw these words, they brought a tragic presentiment: "If Edel admits that she is so worn out as to be unable to work, she must be going to die." In that confession of tiredness, he read clearly that her task was finished, that the repose of eternity was about to begin. Grief-stricken, he read the letter again and again. At that very moment, a cable was brought to him. It was a confirmation of his fears; Edel was dead. Through Miss Dickson, the Nairobi Comitium sent him that word. Before announcing the news generally, he had a pressing duty; he set out at once for Edel's home on the Monkstown Road. As soon as he crossed the threshold, Mrs. Quinn, seeing him from upstairs, cried out in anguish and burst into tears in her room. No word had been spoken; but Edel's mother had divined immediately the meaning of that unexpected visit. For her and all the family it was the hour of completion of sacrifice; their courageous acceptance of God's Will

complemented the Fiat spoken eight years earlier at the time of Edel's departure on her great adventure. That Fiat had never been retracted. Now in the midst of tears it is reaffirmed. In those sorrowful hours, a telegram arrived which brought to the whole Legion family a very great consolation. The Holy See, having learnt of Edel's death, and fearing that Dublin might not have received the news on account of the war—it was in May, 1944—had graciously desired to transmit the news directly. In the name of His Holiness Pius XII, the Cardinal Secretary of State telegraphed to the Nuncio in Dublin:

"Please inform President Legion of Mary Envoy died happy death Nairobi, May 12. Father McCarthy pays high tribute to African missionary labours of deceased since 1936.

Signed,
CARDINAL MAGLIONE."

This telegram from the Vatican expressed the gratitude of the Holy See, after receiving the report of the acting Apostolic Delegate, Father McCarthy, the present Bishop of Zanzibar. By this gesture, Rome ratified and approved a life which takes an outstanding place in the contemporary history of the Church's Missions.

In their turn, the Bishops, Spiritual Directors, and Legionaries of Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda united to pay a last tribute to Edel and to perpetuate her memory. They erected over her tomb a magnificent Celtic cross (in remembrance of Ireland) in marble from Kenya, her adopted country. At the base of the cross, the Legion Vexillum recalls the ideal that animated her life. Underneath, an inscription sums up for future ages the story of a heroic apostolate:

EDEL QUINN

Envoy of the Legion of Mary in East Africa from 30th October, 1936, to 12th May, 1944, on which day she died at Nairobi.

She fulfilled this mission with such devotion and courage as to stir every heart and to leave the Legion of Mary and Africa itself for ever in her debt. The Holy Father himself paid tribute to her great services to the Church.

Of your goodness, therefore, will you give her generous remembrance in your prayers.

R.I.P.

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This heroic tale owed its origin to the appeal of Mgr. Heffernan, Bishop of Zanzibar.

He, too, had at once telegraphed the news of Edel's death. He had witnessed the first hour of her great adventure and was present at its ending. He hastened to express to the heads of the Legion his gratitude and his admiration for the heroic Envoy.

The passing of time had only served to widen and to deepen his enthusiasm. He who had played, as Mr. Duff phrased it, the part of "Fons et Origo" in that glorious life, was good enough to express to us in intimate conversations at Kimmage Manor the impressions he treasured of Edel Quinn:

"After a year of Miss Quinn's work," he said, "the atmosphere of my diocese had changed. Without any noise, she had brought a germ of life. The Legion had come at the right hour to instil vigour into everything that was already there. There was nothing strained or nervy about her or in her piety. She never argued; but she succeeded in overcoming all resistance. Her favourite sayings were:

"'Let us start the Legion, the rest will come; Our Lady will make plain to us what she wants.'

"'Let Our Lady do the work.'

"'The Legion will be the answer to all your problems.'

"She used to say these things simply, with an admirable faith. She believed that the Blessed Virgin is a Mother who comes to protect, to help everywhere and always, to welcome all her children without any distinction. She was one with Mary and the Legion.

"She never preached, but everyone felt that she lived in the presence of God. In the midst of difficulties she used to say simply: 'Why could we not trust Our Lady?'

"She never insisted on her opinions.

"The nuns were much struck by her example, and many priests have said to me: 'It is a grace for us to have Miss Quinn on the Mission.' The renewal of Catholic vitality was noticeable in the Legionaries, who were gradually transformed. Priests, too, experienced, without knowing it, a spiritual metamorphosis. One could almost feel the passing of grace. What she brought to us was Catholic Action in all its purity.

"She transformed certain African workers from the point of view of apostolic zeal. She succeeded in bringing together persons whom neither I, their Bishop, nor my Missionaries could have united.

"In her presence questions of race and of social rank disappeared.

"It was impossible to speak to her without knowing that she was profoundly united to God.

"She arrived in Zanzibar at a crucial time. Materially, many matters had been settled, but a wind of spirituality was needed to

vivify the whole. Her coming among us was a direct and special favour from God for my Vicariate.

"God's hand was visible there.

"She knew no African languages, but that did not hinder her action. Always so retiring when she herself was in question, she knew how to direct a meeting in a masterly manner; nothing upset her or interfered with her work.

"Towards those whom she called Headquarters, she was docility itself. She wanted to be constantly united to them in spirit and in policy. She behaved as a disciple would towards his masters. She did everything without constraint, joyfully, naturally, and with irresistible humour. She was naturally supernatural."

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We think those words of authority require no comment. While we wrote them down, according as Mgr. Heffernan called up his recollections and multiplied examples to illustrate his statements and define his thoughts, we saw as it were an epitome of that life passing before us, and we thought of these words of Lavedan: "There are souls lily-white and golden, which God sometimes creates in the likeness of His Son—just as He adds a new star to the firmament—and which He drops among men to prove to them His existence."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SECRET OF AN INSPIRATION

"It is good to hide the secrets of a King, but honourable to reveal and confess the works of God."

TOBIAS XII.

Edel's missionary activity was written forever in the annals of the faith. Everyone was struck by the miracle of the will overcoming a failing body. All appreciated, too, that under the visible action there was an intense union with God. She never of her own accord spoke of herself, nor of her spiritual life, nor of spirituality in general. She kept for God alone the secrets of the King, following the example of Christ, who did not reveal to men the bliss of the Beatific Vision which He enjoyed; of Mary, who did not allow the transports of her continual adoration to be guessed; of Joseph, who never betrayed the inward ecstasy which was a foretaste of Heaven to him; of many, many saints, whose secret was confided to God alone and kept jealously by Him. Edel's mission was not to speak to men of the inner workings of grace which she had experienced. An internal fire does not throw out flames. Her radiation was like that of a hidden fragrance, perfuming the air.

A priest in Nairobi wrote concerning her on May 9, 1945: "It always puzzled me that there was no direct manifestation of the fire that burnt within. She never, in word or manner, gave any indication of her interior. The Little Flower, whom she resembled so much, did so. Edel was always perfectly natural and perfectly supernatural. Her humility always impressed me as much as her courage. Archbishop Leen says he watched her closely. I think everybody did. The good she did was due largely to a radiation of her personality. Her influence was exerted by her very presence. I had the impression that she carried about with her some of the heavenly fragrance of Our Lady."

He added also that he had never succeeded in persuading her to write her "Story of a Soul". And the Dublin correspondent, in his reply, confirmed the priest's opinion:

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"It is very interesting to know that you had often tried to induce Edel to write her autobiography. Without question such a document would have been of immense value, but I could not imagine her undertaking it. Her tendency was in the other direction. She had a definite shrinking from any writing for the public eye. She used to enjoin silence on us in respect of the most ordinary things—things in which we simply could not understand her attitude of retirement. In these circumstances it would be a physical impossibility for her to write an autobiography. Of course, the world is the poorer thereby.

"You further remark that she never manifested her interior. This is in complete accord with what I have said above. I suppose that to her could be applied the words of Scripture: The Glory of the King's Daughter is within."

For all that, if Edel never revealed her feelings, it is possible for us to guess something of them. Not enough, indeed, to satisfy an unbridled curiosity, yet enough to show us the essential link by which prayer vivifies action: enough to make us realise that action without grace is nothing, and that the shortest and surest road to men's hearts is through union with God. In every fibre of her being, Edel was devoted to the glory of God. Throughout her most adventurous journeys, she preserved deep in her soul a longing for silence and contemplation, whose vehemence we can hardly appreciate. Illness put an end to her intention of being a Poor Clare, but her aspiration towards the total giving of herself to God did not disappear on that account.

"Try to live as Envoy and Prætorian to the fullest," she writes. "Leave the rest to others."

Her earlier contemplative vocation was admirably in harmony with her great missionary vocation.

In a sense, her life of constant external activity was one long solitude. Far from her own people, in the midst of strangers, whose language was often unknown to her, without the possibility of any real let-down of strain, Edel lived all through the day on her morning Communion and on her union with God. She went straight on, detached from all things, a sort of wanderer on the face of the earth, uncertain of what the next day would bring forth, but with all her faculties brimful of the glory of God, which dazzled her and which she desired to spread and manifest without.

Moreover, she lived to a unique degree in union with Mary. Long before, she had made the consecration to her in the spirit of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort. She made this engagement the centre of

her life, not as a simple promise, but as a sacred vow to Our Lady. As the child, carried in its mother's arms, lives and breathes with her, so Edel trusted herself to the Blessed Virgin, blindly and once for all.

"Let us renounce our own human views to take on Mary's," she writes, "and so be led by her Spirit in all things. Let us adopt her outlook, her thoughts in everything. Let us not allow our natural inclinations to cramp us."

She asked her saint of predilection, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, as a special gift "to teach her her filial love of Our Lady".

She read and re-read the *Secret of Mary* of St. Louis-Marie, and found it an ever-fresh and gushing spring of spiritual refreshment.

She found with joy the same spirit in the virile pages of the *Legion Handbook*; it was as though the spring had become a river and carried souls irresistibly to the sea. For the *Handbook* in her eyes was before all else Mary's Mediation in action, a dynamic force, an instrument of conquest. It has been said of Edel that she was the incarnation of the *Handbook*; and it is true. That book was the complete expression of her adherence to Mary and to the principles of her spiritual maternity. Anyone who wishes to understand the secret of her life has but to read those pages so dense with thought. Edel had made of them the substance of her soul before making them the secret of her apostolic success. "The Legion," a Nairobi Missionary said to us, "was Edel's life, because Mary was her life. The two were one." The same witness has given us a few loose pages of Edel's, a sort of examination of conscience, a memorandum written at the end of a retreat. Some of the sentences are incomplete; she cared little for literary style. Such as they are, however, they enable us to take soundings in the deep parts of her soul. "Thy speech doth discover thee," they said to St. Peter, "thou wast also with Jesus of Nazareth." The tone of those jerky notes, thrown on the paper without connection or link, lets us listen in to her dialogue with God. The priest who communicated those notes writes some lines which are the best introduction to them:

"These notes do throw light on Edel's interior life, but to what extent is another question. I have never really felt myself that they gave much idea of the structure of her soul, or of the importance and force of certain ideas as compared with others. In that I may be mistaken. Her interior life seemed to me to be mysterious, hidden—hidden from herself as well as from others. Her interior was a garden enclosed; there was in her a fountain of life of great power, sealed off from herself and others. Certain principles exerted a tremendous

driving power in her life, but were so much taken for granted by her that she never thought of mentioning them.

"Did she give the impression of living in a state of continual prayer? She did not give it to me. I could not say that I felt an aroma of prayer, so to speak. She did not seem to withdraw from prayer to engage in conversation. But what I did feel very strongly and very often was that she was surrounded by a protecting wall of grace; that there was something very robust about her spirit. I realised that virtuous action—and by virtuous action I mean grace-aided action, supernatural action—was second nature to her and came from her, as it were, naturally, without deliberate effort. She did the right thing, the supernatural thing, by instinct. I think my word 'instinct' is right. I think a powerful divine instinct played a very big part in her life; she was driven by it, guided by it, followed it; and without always being able to give a theological explanation of it, acted on it.

"By this divine instinct I mean, of course, the action of the Holy Spirit in her soul. To this she was very faithful, utterly generous. She did not allow self to obstruct it. With her, to will was to do. To make a resolution was to fulfil it. There was no wavering, no struggle, with the fortunes of nature and grace fluctuating. No prolonged process of reasoning was required to brace the will to do, to face the ordeal. Owing to her habitual generosity, she saw at once what was to be done, and promptly and resolutely set herself to do it. The result was that this action of the Spirit became very strong under its influence; she saw clearly what she ought to do. She had a tranquil assurance that what she did was right. Hence, great peace and radiance of soul. The light and strength of this action of the Holy Ghost in her soul was ample for her own personal guidance. She probably could not, as a moralist could, discuss the pros and cons of the way she acted, or state the relative play of various principles.

"The natural and the supernatural in her seemed to be perfectly blended, to co-operate in complete harmony. She seemed to have complete control of her emotions. It would be impossible for anyone who knew her even a little to doubt that she ever acted from any but the highest and purest motives.

"I remember that on one occasion at least, if not on two or three, I asked her her reason for acting in a certain way. I did so, because I did not know that a supernatural motive was present. Her answer was: 'Our Lady, of course.' These words came out at once, and were spoken in a tone and with an emphasis that said: 'How extraordinary that it should be necessary to ask! Is it not obvious?'

"If no one ever criticised her, the explanation is simple to me. Her approach was always the friendly approach of the Legion; and her conduct was always prudent and flawless."

This letter helps us to understand the spiritual atmosphere in which Edel lived; it explains the notes from which we give a few passages, grouping them under some general headings.

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To live in Christ, through the Spirit and through Mary.

"In Christ and led by His Spirit, we can offer through Mary to the Eternal Father the infinite merits and satisfactions of Christ to make reparation for our sins and for the sins of the world, to give thanks and glory to God. Try and realise this.

"He makes us sharers in His life, so that, as He has taken our sins on Him, He may make us 'partners' in His merits. In Him we have everything—and what must that mean! What power it gives us to obtain graces for souls and ourselves! We cannot ask too much.

"Let us ask the grace to live in realisation of our life in Christ, through Mary, adoring the Trinity. If our faith in this were stronger, we would never forget it for long, or be absorbed exclusively in the exterior events of the day.

"In Christ Jesus we have all. Realise this. Often offer Him to the Trinity present in our soul, giving all honour, reparation and glory throughout the day.

"Our thoughts and wishes for sanctity, our thirst for love of God, are not our own, but the Holy Spirit's. Therefore, if He puts them in our mind, He must mean to teach us how to fulfil them.

"Our very sinfulness and weakness only make the things He does in us show forth His grace the more.

"That we may 'decrease' (like the Baptist), let Jesus work His Will in us.

"It seems as if God is demanding my life more completely for Himself.

"Less softness.

"More in His company in the Blessed Sacrament.

"Unite with Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament, adoring His Father. Ask Our Lady to pray and adore for me. Realise that I am the temple of God, the dwelling-place of the Trinity. Ask Our Lady to help me to 'put on Christ'.

"Christ's example: hidden life in obedience to Mary, doing the Father's will.

"Letting Jesus live again in me His life for the Father.

"United with Him in love for the Father, with Mary loving Jesus in me.

"Let Him pour His love into my heart which will be His refuge, where He will find His Mother to love and console Him for the ingratitude of souls.

"Through her call down graces on the Legion, the officers, those worked for; offering His merits to the Eternal Father in reparation for Legionaries who have failed Him, for souls to win them back.

"Consider 'extra holiness' as necessary.

"Christ's merits to supply deficiencies.

"Think of the love of God the Father for us; of the abasement and the utter giving of Christ; His abasement as a Babe and Child, completely dependent on Mary. All this to win souls, to give them His Divine Life, to gain their love. Let us try in our small measure to win souls for Him. If impossible by direct action, then let it be by prayer, by asking Mary to offer Christ's merits to the Father to draw grace down to souls.

"Practise interior charity daily in our life with Mary and Jesus, led by the Spirit, for the Father. Our love and childlike confidence is all He wants. We are children of the Father; what confidence that should give us!

"Led by the Spirit of Jesus, realise that of ourselves we cannot have a good thought. If our good desires come from the Holy Spirit, how boldly can we expect their fulfilment, by offering Christ's merits to His Father through Mary.

"Holiness our aim. 'Perfect as Our Father.' Our holiness lies in keeping His life in us, in increasing it by ever closer union with Him Who is its source."

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We seize in these lines the profound Christocentrism of her piety. Constantly she returns to Him who alone has access to the Father, to Him Who offers God the unique and perfect adoration of the human race. But she knows, too, that Christ was born and continues to be born "of the Holy Ghost and of Mary". She constantly appeals to the Spirit of Christ to reproduce in her the image of the Son, to inspire her, to give her His life. We sense a familiarity with the Spirit who alone penetrates the depths of God and administers the work of holiness and of the apostolate. And we remark also

how the Blessed Virgin is always near to her, the constant Mediatrix of God's graces. Edel "breathes" Mary, so as the better to breathe inspiration from the Holy Ghost, so as the more to receive the virtue of the Most High Who covers Her with His shadow.

Here is a passage in which she takes up again the subject of union with Mary under its many aspects:

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"Let us clothe ourselves with Christ. Ask Mary Mediatrix to pour His Divine Life into our souls, so that it may be He Who lives and no longer we. Ask Mary each day to obtain for us strength for that day, to carry on His work and hers. When I make mistakes, ask Mary to settle matters. She knows how stupid I am, how little I can do right by myself; but she is my Mother. She knows how to make all things work together in balanced harmony. I have the sense of her help and her possessive care.

"Mary our Mother: this title means more than 'Our Lady'.

"Often remember Christ's words: 'Son, behold thy Mother.' Like St. John, I must take her to my own. As the *Handbook* suggests, pray that the full efficacy which Christ put in that word 'Mother' be developed by my acceptance of it.

"In Him we adore the Trinity. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. Try and adore the Trinity in our soul, even in the midst of trouble or external duties.

"When we think of Jesus as a baby in His Mother's care, how much we feel compelled to kneel, to adore the Word made Flesh, to reverence God in His wonderful abasement. Can we ever fathom the incomprehensible depths of God's love? What could we refuse to that love? No humiliation too great in face of His.

"We give our acts to Mary, then she takes such of them as have spiritual value and uses them to build up Christ in us.

"The Immaculate Heart of Mary is a symbol of God's love.

"Be hers, in order to be all the more His.

"Mary, Mother of the life of our souls. Turn to her in all circumstances so that she may teach us to love Jesus, to serve the Father, to become like a child in our attitude—trusting utterly, never doubting, showing loving tenderness in the little things.

"Our Lady, dwelling-place of the Trinity.

"Since God gave us His Son through her, let us go to Him through her.

"Imitate Our Lady in her silent adoration of the Word made Flesh in her womb.

"Adore the Word in our souls.

"Often desire Our Lord with love.

"If Our Lord spent thirty years in obedience and dependence on Mary, doing His Father's will, what better example have we? Unite ourselves to Him, and ask Mary to teach us how to love perfectly, how to fulfil daily God's will in all things. 'As the Father hath loved Me, abide in My love.' 'I am the Vine.' With Him and helped by Mary, let us adore the Trinity.

"Let us take up the position of a child with Mary and God the Father. Try and realise what this attitude implies, how we should depend at each moment, and never get very far away from our Mother. 'To be, like Him, in her care . . . taught everything by her.'

"Amongst other things, ask for the grace to realise how much Mary is our Mother, the grace to realise continually the divine life in us, our union with God.

"If we want to be more full of God's life, it can only be got—apart from the sacraments—through prayer. Let us put ourselves in union with Him by faith, prayer—for long fixed times, morning and evening apart from visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Let us do our part to win His grace; the Holy Spirit and Our Lady will help."

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Faithful echo of St. Louis-Marie, Edel had a very marked sense of Mary's part in our lives. Her devotion to Mary was not a series of transitory acts but a fundamental attitude, a declared dependence ever affecting her conduct. According to the promise of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, "Mary had become for Edel everything with Jesus, enlightening her mind by Her pure faith, deepening her heart by Her humility, broadening and inflaming it by Her charity, purifying it by Her purity, ennobling and increasing it by Her maternal care." The whole "Secret of Mary" may be seen running like a faint but indestructible thread through the soul and life of Edel. It was from this union with Mary that she drew the strength to look the Crucified straight in the face, to stand by His Cross on Calvary.

She has left us some of the fruits of a favourite meditation, the Passion, in notes written during Holy Week, 1943:

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"I have realised the meaning of 'Christ delivered Himself'. He

put Himself completely in their hands, and let them work their will on Him. His infinite submission in this. His silence. Mocked and spat upon—and He is God!

“That is why the saints valued harsh treatment—and they regarded themselves as justly ill-treated. We who have sinned should be glad when we are put aside and treated as we deserve. If people knew us as we really are, how astonished they would be! How differently they would behave towards us!

“Christ ‘sanctified Himself’ for us. How rich we are! His excessive sufferings are all for us, a repairing of our sins, a meriting of graces for us.

“Let us offer to the Eternal Father those sufferings endured for our sins. What great confidence we can have in spite of our failures in the past.

“By His grace and the merits of His sufferings, resolve never to sin again.

“What is impossible for us is possible for Him; take Him at His word.

“Ask Mary to secure these graces for us. Expect great things, a burning love. It is the Holy Spirit Who breathes these desires into us.”

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That great love of the Cross fed her devotion to the Mass, which was her own especial mark.

She writes: “At Mass I united myself to the victim Christ, through Mary’s hands, for the glory of the Trinity, in thanksgiving for everything, and on behalf of souls. At Mass always to have special intention of offering and hearing it on behalf of those souls who cannot hear it themselves by reason of sickness, distance, work or war. Place this intention in Mary’s hands.”

The Cross also stimulates her personal generosity: “How pale is our love of Christ, how little we are ready to do and sacrifice for Him even in little things, when it costs an effort. Try and overcome this by the practice of little sacrifices. How few hearts give Him full entry! He would pour Himself into souls but they will not receive. Even His priests have so many other interests; how few are wholly His! Can we not aim at emptying our hearts of everything, so that He may fill them completely, pour His love, His ‘merciful’ love into them. Let us be in the mind of Christ, taught by Mary, working for the Father, led by the Spirit of Love. Cut out all else. To cut out

all, how difficult! But can we give Him less, for really how little it is as reparation and gratitude?

“I am almost afraid of this enjoyment and sweetness in Our Lord these days. Ask to be equally faithful when all is black. Now rejoice the Bridegroom is there. All that He permits is good.”

Edel did not stop at aspirations and wishes. Her practical resolutions show her determination to take every step which will lead on towards the ideal she had proposed to herself.

Here are a few notes thrown on paper without order, merely as reminders:

“Resolve to be in chapel at least 10-15 minutes before Mass. Meditation each morning for an hour if I have the strength for it. Act as Jesus and Mary would act towards other people. Remember that these others are the temples of God, and that we cannot know the motives of their acts. Try and act as Mary would. Adopt the point of view of Mary, her patience, her understanding love which accepts our least effort, however imperfect it may be.

“Let me remember my own failings. It is no part of our duty to judge others, so let us not torment ourselves about their doings. We will love our neighbour—and we will be unable to speak ill or criticise—if in each one we see Christ. *Noli iudicare*. Restrain the tongue; employ it as you think Mary would have used her speech.

“*Charity* a new commandment: ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ Practical aspect: ‘See Thee and serve Thee in our neighbour.’ I must be prompt in the service of Legionaries, in replying to letters, reports, etc. We must have charity towards ourselves. We must prove our love by fidelity to prayer.

“I must enlist all my powers in the service of the Legion.”

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These fragmentary notes throw light on Edel’s interior life: they help us to know her life of prayer and show how much she was at home in that spiritual world. One does not wonder to hear that she was greatly loved and admired by the contemplative souls that she met on her way.

We shall conclude this chapter by quoting an appreciation from the Superior of a contemplative community in Africa. It expresses the tribute of souls consecrated to silence to one who fought in the front line of the Church Militant for the purpose of bringing forth as visible fruit their sacrifices and prayers:

"Some years before her death, it was said of Mother Janet Stuart, Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart, by one who knew her well, that *she had long since finished with herself*. To those who had the privilege of knowing Edel Quinn during her years in East Africa, came the same conviction. She lived for God, for Our Lady and the Legion.

"On two occasions Edel stayed for some weeks at our convent. Tired out, she needed complete rest, and it was arranged by the Bishop that she should come to us. These visits will not soon be forgotten by the community. Edel had about her an atmosphere of light—of grace and brightness—not easily described, but of which all were conscious.

"Frail though she was, one could never think of her as an invalid, for in her the spirit completely dominated. Yet, quite simply and gratefully, she accepted all that was done for her. It was clear she had no pre-occupation with what concerned herself or her comfort.

"I had two or three long intimate talks with her, while she was our guest here. These left on my mind an indelible impression of one living near to God in strong and simple faith. Though interested in all that was really worthwhile in religious literature, old and new, the substantial food of her inner life she found in her Missal and in the New Testament. She also read and re-read the works of Abbot Marmion and some of Dr. Edward Leen's books. Much occupied as she was with Legion interests, Edel was wonderfully faithful to her rule of life, Mass and Communion, prayers, the daily office of Our Lady, the Rosary and Spiritual reading: all had their appointed place in her day.

"Her conduct in all circumstances and her dealings with persons were characterised by prudence, consummate tact, and a gracious kindness that never flagged. Likewise she had a most keen sense of humour. As someone remarked, a good joke was never lost on her. Her laugh was as merry and unconstrained as a child's. Yet, looking back on those days, it is Edel's strength—her fortitude—that stands out most vividly. Willing and ready to undertake any labour when there was question of Our Lady and the Legion—from long and difficult journeys to the problems discussed at meetings and the correspondence involved in the work of extension—each in turn was faced with serene courage and carried through to the end. Her loyalty to Legion principles and rules reached to the smallest detail. For all that earnestness and purposefulness, there was nothing hard or rigid about Edel. Herself free from so many of life's embarrassments, she had a true womanly sympathy where others were con-

cerned, and could enter into their difficulties. With her shrewd commonsense, she was capable of forming a practical judgment and giving wise advice. The amazing thing to remember is that Edel was all the time suffering from an incurable, inexorable disease. Seeing her, erect and graceful, perfectly yet simply dressed—for in this as in everything, she was the perfect Envoy of Mary, bringing the thought of Our Lady instantly to one's mind—it was easy to forget the burden of suffering she bore day by day. The last time I saw her, she had just returned from a long safari. She had succeeded in starting the Legion in another Vicariate—her last effort for Our Lady. She spoke now of settling up finally her Legion affairs. 'You know,' she said, 'one cannot tell what may happen.' I felt sure I should never again see her on earth: her work was finished; soon she would be taken from us. Some weeks later came the word that she had gone to God. On a calm and beautiful mid-May morning, Our Lady came to fetch home her brave Legionary.

"St Teresa of Avila declares that perfection, sanctity, consists in a love of God and of one's neighbour, even unto self-oblivion. If this be true, as undoubtedly it is, then those who knew Edel Quinn in her last years have seen its radiant portrait. "

"Without in any way anticipating the verdict of Holy Church, we can think happily of her now as close to Our Lady, yet not too far from earth for our least desires to reach her there."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TESTIMONY OF MANY WITNESSES

"In the evening of life, you will be judged on your love."

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

THE death of Edel brought proof of the profound and unanimous admiration she had inspired. From all the regions which she had traversed: Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Mauritius, Nyasaland, South Africa, testimony flowed in. All who wrote had similar reports of the affection and reverence that were felt for her. Bishops, missionaries, nuns, African and European lay people, all drew the same luminous picture of her.

Here, to begin with is the voice of authority, that of the Bishops who had known her best. We have already quoted the letter of Mgr. Heffernan, who had seen her at work for the longest period. After him, the closest observer was incontestably His Excellency Mgr. Leen, Archbishop of Mauritius.

On the announcement of Edel Quinn's death, he wrote to Dublin (May 17, 1944):

"Strange, our regret on hearing the news was dominated by a certain joy and satisfaction, due to the feeling that a saint had gone to her reward after her wonderful sacrifice. She made a profound impression on all who came into contact with her here. And personally, I had the firm conviction that hers was the real, genuine holiness."

A little later, on June 21, he celebrated a Solemn Requiem Mass for her in the Cathedral in the presence of the Legionaries of Mauritius.

On November 9, 1944, he expressed the same thoughts, weighing his words, for he knew they were going far:

"Since my last letter, I have often thought of writing to you about an idea that pursues me: *I am persuaded that Edel's cause will one day be introduced.*¹ I am convinced that her spiritual life attained the heroic. Her utter selflessness and entire and confiding abandonment

¹ Underlined by the Archbishop.

to Providence were never at fault. The success that attended her efforts was simply marvellous (should I say miraculous?) in face of difficulties the confronting of which demanded heroic courage."

Some years later (November 13, 1949) His Excellency Monsignor Leen, hearing that a life of Edel was about to be written, sent us this letter, which is doubly precious: It was one of the last he ever wrote, and it gives the ultimate expression of his opinion in a matter that was sacred to him:

"I am happy to learn that you are going to write the life of Edel Quinn. I shall collect the few notes there are on her work here and send them to you by next mail. At the time of her death, I wrote to Mr. Duff that I should not be surprised to see her cause for Beatification introduced. She was heroic in the accomplishment of her mission. I have rarely seen a soul so completely forgetful of self. The success that crowned her efforts was really astonishing. Difficulties of language, of health, etc., gave her no concern. She was very simple in her devotions: Mass and Communion were the framework of her spiritual life.

"She was wholly abandoned to Providence. The dangers of travel did not alarm her at all. One day I asked her if she was ready to set off for China. She replied without the least hesitation: 'Yes, if I am sent there.' And she was in earnest."

The death of the Archbishop, which occurred alas! some days after his letter, prevented him from himself preparing the promised notes. That final letter is the more touching inasmuch as it has the value of a last testament. There is an allusion in it to the letter he had written to Mr. Duff. Let us quote from the latter's reply:

"Your Excellency's further references to Edel Quinn are interesting and consoling. The suggestion that her Cause may some day be introduced will possibly strike in some the note of surprise. For definitely she was not of what one might call the conventional type—a fact which makes one wonder if the saints are being correctly interpreted to us. She was utterly natural, and she moved around among people without creating any fuss or excitement. She had no special practices that singled her out and created talk. She always presented the appearance of good spirits, though unquestionably she had abundance of causes for feeling differently. By reason moreover of her sensitive disposition, she must often have been in the depths interiorly. She was what would be called pleasant company. All these things masked the amazing strength of character which she possessed. She was determined to give herself without reserve to the Lord—that is, to do whole-time religious work. She pursued this ideal

through adverse circumstances. Originally, she arranged to go to the Poor Clares, but her first collapse took place on the eve of her entry. Years of deplorable health followed. There are few who would have built up such wreckage into her African achievement. How she won everybody around to the letting of her undertake it must remain one of the mysteries.

"Your Excellency refers to the heroic note in her. That was her great characteristic. I knew her very well, probably better than most, and I could never discern in her any of the timidities and reluctances which lurk in the strongest. As far as I could judge, the natural in her would always yield to the supernatural. The leaving of Ireland, of her people and her close friends, undoubtedly must have pierced her, for she was not only human but affectionate. But certainly no considerations of the kind availed to hold her back for a second, or to play any part in a decision. We pleaded with her in 1940 to come home for a spell—to see everybody, to build herself up. But she would not even consider the idea. I am convinced that she never intended to come home again. Her extensive journeyings in Africa, commonly in territories that were wild and primitive, were undertaken in the same spirit. Any woman, one would say, would have to conquer revulsions to face that. If Edel had to make that fight, she gave no signs of it. In those conditions one would expect loneliness to become the elemental and indeed devastating emotion. Did it with her? So unfathomable a person was she that I really cannot even venture an opinion.

"Her delicacy was so extreme that little illnesses and wearinesses must to her have been like big ones to us. Yet I have to say, 'must have been'. I do not know, for she just laughed her way along through the utterly determined plan of campaign which she had mapped out for herself. Once upon a time, she had told Father Creedon that ever since she was a little girl she had prayed every day to be a martyr. I am satisfied that she looked on every step of hers in Africa as being a substitute offering for that—what one might call a martyrdom in slow motion. It would seem to follow from this that her attitude towards danger or death would be a sort of friendly approach.

"She had a tremendous sense of responsibility. Her methods were detailed and perfect. Her attitude towards everyone around her was one of consideration. If building for the Church is an important ingredient of sanctity, she possessed it. She now ranks with the great builders of the Church in Africa. Her organising has become part of the fabric of the Church there, contributing as well to its

future growth and spirit. The methods she introduced are now standard technique for mobilising the faithful and making them part of the active principle of the Church."

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This reply to His Excellency Monsignor Leen corroborates admirably the impressions of the Archbishop himself. In it we hear an echo from the most authoritative source in Edel's native land.

Another Missionary Bishop, His Excellency Monsignor Julien, Vicar Apostolic of Nyasa, was intimately connected with Edel during her stay in Nyasaland. On November 2, 1944, he wrote: "Missionaries and Legionaries, we were all profoundly grieved when we heard about our dear apostle's death. We have had prayers said in all our churches for the repose of her soul. She was considered a saint by everyone in Nyasa.

"We have no doubt that her reward will be great among the apostles of Africa in Heaven, from where she will, I am sure, continue to intercede for us and to pray for the Legion of Mary."

This tribute is made the more strikingly significant by the fact that Edel's stay in the Vicariate was short and was interrupted by the illness that brought her to death's door in 1941.

Another Bishop's voice, that of Dr. Morrisroe, of Achonry, strikes the same note. He wrote on June 12, 1944: "Her loss to Legion activities will be hard to replace and I do not wonder that her death has awakened the sympathy of Rome, for the services she rendered to the Faith are beyond reckoning."

His Excellency Monsignor Riberi has paid notable tribute to her in the preface of this book, and his words need not be repeated here. But we must point to the striking agreement between the Bishops who knew her best: Monsignor Riberi, Monsignor Heffernan and his successor, Monsignor McCarthy, Monsignor Leen, Monsignor Julien, Monsignor Morrisroe—their evidence compels our attention.

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But not alone were heard the voices of the Bishops. Those of the Missionaries of Africa were raised as loudly in accents of admiration. A Priest of Nairobi, after having given Mrs. Quinn all details about Edel's death, concluded in these words:

"I hope you will not grieve too much over the death of your

child. Of course, you will suffer from a loss so great. But I hope you will feel no regret for her stay in Africa or for its ending; therein is reason for joy and gratitude and for nothing else.

"A very supernatural person told me that when holy souls go to Heaven, God gives special graces to those who loved them and were good to them. I have had experience of this. During Edel's last days on earth and since her death, I have received very special graces, and joy, peace and thanksgiving. You should be a very happy mother. I think you are; you have every reason to be. I never knew anyone who was loved and admired as that child was. All—good, bad and indifferent, black, brown and white—instinctively recognised her goodness and holiness. All looked on it as a privilege to know her and to help her.

"She was a child of Providence. The Love of God arranged everything for her last days and disposed her as she would have wished it, with the delicate foresight of Love. I believe it firmly and I would not have those last days different in any way from what they were.

"The sun of her life set serenely and sweetly, calmly and radiantly. Many people have said to me that, in their opinion, she went straight to Heaven. All will echo what one person said: 'What a wonderful welcome Our Lady must have had for her!'

"She was a living lesson of Christianity. Wherever she passed, she shed the sweet odour of Christ."

These words, we know, were not written lightly, or merely with the intention of consoling a mother. They express an intimate conviction.

Here is another letter, written by a Kenya Missionary. He describes Edel's death and his personal impressions: "Within four weeks she was dead. For me they were most distressing weeks. I knew that people at home had no idea of her state, that she was not telling them. She would not allow me to do it. She needed so much what they would like to give her, and yet she would have none of it. She believed she would be all right again with a few weeks' rest. She did not think the end was so near, though at times she thought it might occur. No death, except perhaps my mother's, has ever had such an effect on me; it rocked me to the depths. I have the certainty that she is with God. I feel so thankful to God for the extraordinary privilege of being intimately associated with her. It has been one of the great graces of my life. I think I once mentioned to you a youthful desire of mine to be associated with saints. I now see that God has graciously and liberally granted that desire.

"The way she always smiled and joked about everything reminded me of the Little Flower. Her attitude in her illness recalled that of Pope Pius XI, refusing to give in and sharply rebuking the Cardinals who sought to persuade him to rest. If she had been in authority over me, I should have had an awful time of it. She always reminded me of St. Paul's 'daily solicitude for all the churches'. The thought that anything was wrong in a Legion Præsidium would deprive her of nights of sleep. The prospect of death would not cost her a thought; nor would a dangerous job; nor would the menacing of her health! She had extraordinary humility.

"The deepest sentiment, perhaps, in my mind after her death was: 'The Lord hath done this and it is marvellous in our eyes.' It was God did it. It brought home to me in a very vivid way how much the saints are God's work, and how true it is that when we honour them, it is God we honour. She always gave the impression of extraordinary fidelity to the grace of a vocation, and of a vocation developed to an extraordinary degree. But sanctity costs! I could see it so much in her case; her attention was given so cheerfully and readily that few understood the cost of what they asked.

"I wonder very much whether it would not be better for me to treasure these things in secret than to talk about them. I have a sort of fear that I may be spilling a treasure.

"I mentioned above that her death rocked me to the depths. It did, but it was afterwards that I realised it. At the time I could only make acts of thanksgiving, by offering up all the Masses being offered at the moment in the world."

No, we do not think there is any danger of wasting treasures by revealing these memories. The spiritual echoes of Edel's death help us so much to penetrate her inner life and to realise its supernatural power!

Father Lynch, Spiritual Director of a Curia, another witness of her daily life, wrote on May 23, 1944: "You have long before now heard of the death of Edel Quinn. She died in a most peaceful and saintly manner. I have no intention of portraying her in this short letter, because, when speaking of her one is up against something which flesh and blood cannot explain. The work she did and the energy with which she accomplished it in these seven or eight years is out of all proportion to her frail and delicate constitution. No one ever heard her speak of her health. She was always happy, and loved to see others so. No Legionary work was beyond her. Anything the Legion needed had to be done, no matter what it cost her. After a long Curia meeting, she would go over with each President every

detail of his Præsidium. Our Curia meetings usually begin at 2.30 p.m. It is an unfortunate hour, but it cannot be otherwise. It is the most trying hour of the day, but she was more than equal to the situation. Such was her fighting spirit; such the mastery of her splendid soul over her weak body."

Time only confirmed these impressions.

The same Missionary wrote to us on January 5, 1950: "Edel Quinn was, I believe, the most self-sacrificing person I ever met. She never weighed the difficulties that lay before her. She saw only the objective—the establishment of the Legion of Mary as a powerful instrument for bringing souls to God. She was ever ready to travel near or far for the Legion. She never thought of the hardships of a journey.

"To say she was a strong character is altogether an understatement. My experience is that she was nothing short of heroic. She seemed to keep going by the strength of her iron will. When she returned from South Africa and Mauritius, it was obvious that but a short period remained before her great reward. Her physical state was at a very low ebb. How she kept going I do not know."

It was not necessary to live long beside her to wonder at her smiling heroism—even casual acquaintances were impressed by it. Priests, on a brief passage through Kenya during the war, remember Edel very vividly, too.

One could continue for long quoting similar tributes from Priests. We shall conclude by these lines from Father Patrick O'Carroll, Provincial of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Ireland, who, after expressing his sympathy, added:

"I cannot imagine that she will 'rest in peace' and, what is more, I am afraid she will not let those to whom she was devoted in life rest much either."

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After the Bishops and the Missionaries, let us give the testimony of some nuns of different orders and countries. The Superior of a contemplative convent in Africa writes on May 15, 1944: "You will have heard before this of Miss Quinn's holy death. As long as the Church in East Africa lasts, so will her memory. The work she accomplished was amazing. She was loved and, more than that, revered by all who knew her. Always bright and full of life and fun, she won her way even in seemingly impossible places and situations. It would not, I think, be possible to imagine any one more indifferent

to her own comfort. She simply *never* considered herself, and that in spite of health so frail that she should by right have been a complete invalid for years past! She certainly spent herself, and was spent, to the last hour of her life for God and Our Lady. We think of her as the *first Legion martyr*, a most joyous and lovable martyr, who will surely have much power now to help us all."

Mother Arsenia, Superior of the German community of the Precious Blood, who was present at Edel's death, after having described those short last moments, adds: "During her sickness she was always cheerful; she never complained. She was like a little saint."

Mother M. Gualbert, of the Franciscan Convent of Mangu-Thika, wrote to Mrs. Quinn on December 8, 1944: "You ought to feel proud to be the mother of a little saint. We feel that we were privileged to have known her. Sister Gabriel and I are so happy that we were with her in her last week on earth. The Holy Ghost Fathers thought the world of her. 'We have buried a Saint', was the universal declaration on the day of the funeral."

From a Carmelite Convent in Africa: "We looked upon each visit from Edel as a privilege, which indeed it was, a little as if an angel had spent some weeks with us."

Sister M. Angelita, of Kilimanjaro Vicariate, wrote in 1950: "I have several letters from her, and I shall cherish them like relics. When Sister Sieglinda wrote to me that Edel Quinn had gone to Heaven on May 12, I felt sure that we had got a new saint praying for us at the Throne of God. Since then I have asked her help in difficulties, and oftentimes my petitions are granted. She is surely a saint in Heaven, ready to console us and to help us here. I think it is a very great privilege for our congregation that Edel Quinn liked to stay often at our convents and actually died in the arms of one of our Sisters."

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We may complete these diverse tributes by adding a few lay voices chosen from many:

A veteran of the Army of Africa, Joseph Ibbett, wrote to us of his own accord from Cambridge on March 7, 1951: "May I say that Bishops and Priests, as well as laymen, had profound respect for her. There was nothing sanctimonious about Edel Quinn. She was undoubtedly holy, yet ordinary, sensible, practical; her holiness was obvious to all. We started several Præsidia among the members of

the Forces in East Africa, composed mainly of men from England. There was no false piety about her in dealing with these tough chaps. She was just as much at home with the soldiers as she was in every other section of society. And they took to her. Imagine a woman entering an R.A.F. Station to speak to the Commanding Officer (a non-Catholic) about forming the Legion of Mary! He received her with a great respect."

A lady in Nairobi, Mrs. O'Shea, wrote on December 14, 1944, to Mrs. Quinn: "We all loved Edel so dearly. I am thrilled by the thought that now there is a saint in Heaven whom I have actually known. I often go to her grave and have a little talk with her, and every week my two children go there and tend it and put flowers on it for you."

Miss Gannon, her companion of the first hour and of the last, writes: "She was a darling and no one here doubts that she is now a saint, having sacrificed all."

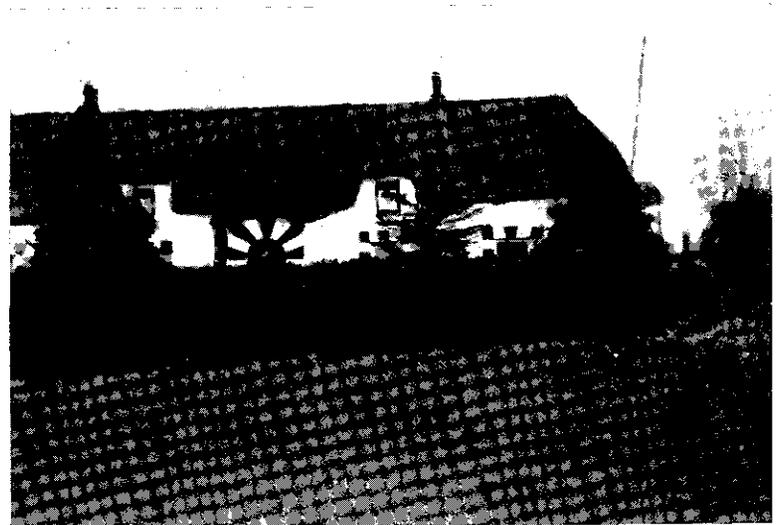
This unanimous impression has not been dimmed by time. The memory of Edel is still living where she passed, as is evidenced by this letter from Mrs. Dorothy Wynne, a convert who has become one of the outstanding figures in the Legion of South Africa. She writes on November 13, 1946: "A Benedictine nun who came into close touch with Edel suggested to me that her life-story should be written. I have been hearing about her at almost every mission we have visited on this tour of rural Præsidia—especially at Nongoma Hospital, where she was a patient for some time. At another mission I met the Sister who had nursed her, and she could not speak highly enough of Edel. The Benedictine Sister said she would consider it a great privilege to collect all she could from the Sisters who had known her and write it down for me."

What Mrs. Wynne does not say in her letter is that the memory of Edel Quinn upheld her in her own Legionary travels. On a tour of extension through the Congo and Portuguese East Africa, when she was completely exhausted, she used to ask herself: "How did Edel Quinn manage to handle conditions like these, she who had not a quarter of my strength?" And the thought had given her the courage to continue to the end.

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Among those who give testimony about Edel, there is one whom we would wish to quote again, because he bridges the present moment

From the Cradle in Kanturk



Monsignor Riberi endorses the author's statement that "hidden in the depths of the African bush, Edel Quinn was helping, without knowing it, to save China." Cast this solemn thought back to the country cottage in which she was born.

..... to the Grave in Kenya



In the Missionaries' cemetery at Nairobi she awaits the glorious resurrection. "In very truth she spent herself in the planting of the Legion of Mary in the soil of Africa."—(The Holy See).

and the past. The reader will not have forgotten the young Frenchman who asked Edel to unite her life with his. After her refusal, they kept up a correspondence which gradually died out. The young businessman, as we have said, had left Ireland, had married, and believed that Edel had entered the convent. He knew nothing of the African adventure. One day, by chance, he learnt of her death in Nairobi in the service of the Legion, of whose existence he was also unaware. He wrote spontaneously to the President of the Concilium: "I am not at all astonished that Ireland has given the Legion to the world. Without knowing anything of it, I have often repeated to Frenchmen that your country had clearly a great mission to fulfil for the future of humanity. I had the privilege of observing that spiritual values are a very dense growth on the soil of Ireland, and that no given space in square miles would be big enough to hold them."

Then he spoke of his friendship with Edel and said that if one day her life was being written, he could supply some letters which he had kept as priceless things. Later, he sent them to us. His covering letter concluded in these terms, which he has since confirmed to us in conversation:

"More than twenty years have passed away. In all that time the memory of Edel Quinn has not left me. I enshrine it in the depth of my heart as a supremely precious possession. I know that she prayed much for me, and her petitions were heard. I owe her innumerable graces for myself and for my family. I am conscious that her influence for good and against evil in my life has been immense, and I thank her daily for it in my prayers.

"I had heard nothing of Edel Quinn for many years and I imagined that she had taken her vows in religion and was now a cloistered nun. In 1945 I asked my wife to call our third child, whom we were expecting, by the name of Edel (if it were a girl) in memory of Edel Quinn. And that is what took place. When I announced this news to friends in Dublin, they told me of Edel's death in Africa. The Secretary of the Legion of Mary had the great kindness to send me the photograph of her grave in Nairobi, and it touched me deeply. That picture of Edel, a Missionary of the Legion of Mary, has now replaced in my mind that of the girl of nineteen whom I knew. I can imagine her perfectly: a frail being, worn by illness and a trying climate, knowing that she was doomed and joyously offering her sufferings to God. Yes, joyously, for she could not have done otherwise, having offered her whole life in sacrifice, as she had told me seventeen years before when she announced to

me her irrevocable decision of entering the Poor Clare Convent in Belfast.

"I then came to understand that Edel Quinn had been called very early to the contemplative life and into the way of perfection. When her religious vocation was thwarted by illness, she proved in compensation to be as gifted for action as for contemplation. She found in the Legion of Mary the means of realising her destiny and of keeping the promises she had made to herself and to God.

"Edel Quinn was of the metal of which saints are made. Let those for whom her life has been an inspiration and a lesson unite themselves to her in prayer and dare to ask for graces. I am sure that she will hear them."

¹ Letter of P.L. to the author, 20 December, 1949.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MESSAGE OF A LIFE

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith."

ST. JOHN, FIRST EPISTLE, v. 4.

EDEL QUINN fell, only a few years ago, in the front line of the Church Militant. Forgetfulness grows quickly over the graves of men. Time is no respecter of ephemeral glory. But it defines perspectives, sets in relief what deserves to survive and what is of worth for eternity. Charity does not die. The example of an offering of self so sublime as that of Edel Quinn stands out with growing clearness—indeed, in fiery lines—against the grey background of our time. Her example is too lofty and too pure not to attract attention, respect, and perhaps even more—if the Church should speak one day.

The message of that life is an invitation to believe with a lively faith that "all things are possible to God".

Edel Quinn was a soul filled with faith. She believed like a child, without reserve or bargaining or fear. Since we can do nothing without God, why—with God—should we not be all-powerful? How can we doubt of God's promises? Why must we be warding off His Love which wishes to bear us on to sublimity? Edel's faith was of the same vintage as that of the Apostles and Martyrs; the same as that of St. Patrick, which is the national glory of her people. Unexpectedly, the Lord invited her to come to Him across the waters—to Africa instead of Wales. Edel replied with the unrestraint of St. Peter, who hurled himself into the waters to go to meet the Master. She did not quaver at the storms which threw themselves upon her. She went ahead without seeking to plan her path for herself, anxious only not to miss the successive calls of God. She would go where the Lord told her to go. As with St. Peter, "another would gird her". Like a yacht with sail finely set to catch the fitful breeze, she moved towards unknown destinations.

Edel believed in the mystery of Pentecost. She was convinced that the Spirit still breathes to-day and issues His commands, as He did of old to Paul of Tarsus: "Pass over into Macedonia," or again: "Set

out for Rome," or again: "Stop in Jerusalem." Why should the Spirit have ceased to guide His apostles? Is He not ever present among us unto the consummation of time? Edel opened her soul to the breath of God. In other days monks from her native land had with their poor oars or sails put out into the heart of the ocean, looking for souls for God. Fearlessly she followed in their tracks. God was Guide and Providence enough for her. The only reward she desired was to hear her Master say to her one day: "Woman, great is thy faith." The miracle of her life was God's reply to her absolute confidence. How could God have disappointed His child when she trusted herself blindly to Him? We say "blindly", for humanly speaking, the adventure was a hopeless one, the obstacles were too many and too great to be surmounted. To the eyes of natural prudence, it was madness to set off for Africa, to travel the high-roads in tropical heat, to escape from a sanatorium and take up again her interrupted mission, to drag herself as far as Kisumu, when everyone who met her saw death looking out through her eyes. Madness or the wisdom of God? Edel presents to us again the Apostolic paradox. "But we," said Saint Paul, "preach Christ crucified . . . unto the Gentiles foolishness . . . Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Her life gives the lie to our laborious and too clever plans; it does not fit in at all with that philosophy of compromise and of mediocrity that we too easily call Christian humanism.

Untiringly, in every generation that arises, God asks for souls who will repeat the lesson of the Crib and of Calvary and give once more the example of love without limits. Edel Quinn was the love of God passing the bounds of convention and moderation; she was charity aflame, setting the world on fire. "*Et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* And what will I but that it be enkindled" Edel kindled everywhere "the fires of divine love". Each Legion branch founded by her became a source of light and heat. The African knows the importance of the fires which are lit as a protection against the witchcraft of the night, and around which the village gathers for ceremonies and palavers. Each Præsidium is a fire of intense spiritual life kindled by Our Lady. It repels the shadowy approach of the Evil One, who more than anywhere else prowls around in pagan lands. It pours its warmth into all who come near it. It lights the torches that will extend from place to place those burning fires. Edel felt acutely the distress of pagan souls and the peremptory need to breathe a spirit of conquest into the new-born Christian communities. "The heart-breaking thing," she wrote once, "is that there is work in abundance

and people ready to do it, but they are not even being given the chance."

That chance was what she brought in the name of Our Lady. It was the Legion, which offered a method accessible to all. It was her rôle to communicate the spark. The flame that she bore in her wasted body might be quenched at any moment. She knew this. "While it was yet day", and while her precarious flame was still defying the extinction of death, she was in haste to transmit the fire that consumed her. Does not one candle suffice to light all those carried in a great procession? Edel was that candle, itself more than half-consumed, yet offering its light to every soul encountered and inflaming it with a new and active love. That is why her time in Africa, though so short, was so fruitful. Once Christianity is endowed with its full vitality, it will grow with intense rapidity and contagious power to communicate itself. As long as the Legion exists in the continent of Africa, Edel Quinn will not cease from working. Wherever she passed, Christians doing nothing about their brothers' salvation, could no longer say, like the idle labourers of the Gospel: "No one has hired us." In a practical and concrete way, she showed how the primary Christian duty of apostleship was to be made to take shape among the simplest peoples. She proved by vivid demonstration that the appeal of the Popes can be heard and answered by all Christians, even the most unpolished and primitive.

In the building up of this African lay army, Edel Quinn co-operated in an incidental but invaluable way towards the recruiting of priestly vocations. Legion Præsidia are schools of zeal; vocations germinate in them naturally and find there the most favourable climate for their full development. Numberless vocations have been born under the aegis of Our Lady of the Legion. Here again Edel Quinn has truly deserved the Church's blessing for having rendered, in the words of His Excellency Bishop Morrisroe, "service beyond reckoning".

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* *

Her life was heroic if judged by the faith that inspired it.

It was heroic, too, if judged by the courage that sprang from that faith.

Her courage makes of her a legendary figure. It was the expression of her faith. Heroism is not a purely secular virtue, reserved to the soldier or the explorer. Christianity, too, is based on courage: it cannot breathe in an atmosphere of cowardice. People speak much

of the gentleness of the saints, and a great deal less of their fortitude. But sweetness and energy must not be separated, under pain of making the one insipid and the other hard. Edel combined harmoniously gentleness and superhuman courage. Her smile and her manner were captivating, but anyone who followed her was led and urged towards arduous tasks. She adapted herself to all by her thoughtful charity, but took iron grip on souls and wrested them from mediocrity and sterility. Edel was attractive and lovable; everyone that met her speaks of her charm. But that fascinating exterior hid an incredible strength. No one ever discovered a shadow of fear in her. She never appeared to hesitate at the call of duty. It was not that she took risks for pleasure; adventure as such did not attract her. She had no taste for bravado. But when duty is definitely marked out and calls for bold action, then bravado is transfigured into bravery, and taking risks becomes the height of prudence.

A Priest in Nairobi asked her once:

"Did you ever refuse anything to Our Lady?"

"No," she replied, "I could not refuse anything to her that I thought she wanted."

We can read her soul in that reply. All through her life she kept her eyes fixed on Mary's: at the least sign she was ready to follow her.

Shortly after her death, Mr. Duff described to a priest-correspondent that incomparable force of soul: "The universal tendency towards exaggeration in print will cause most people to take the account of her life with the proverbial grain of salt. But this salt need not be consumed in connection with Miss Quinn. She was really an amazing figure. She was alike very gentle and sweet and very strong. No one of us ever sounded in her the basic weakness which is in all of us. I am not suggesting that it did not exist in her, but only that we did not dig deep enough. No one ever saw her downcast. Again I say 'saw'. We may be sure she suffered gigantically in her spirit, but she never betrayed the fact. I do trust that we will be able to get some account of her life's adventure onto paper. It could not but be a genuine help to multitudes. Her life possesses everything to strike and stimulate: youth, beauty, ill-health, courage, and then the romantic setting of equatorial Africa."

Indeed, the life of Edel can be a valuable aid to many. It explains and illustrates what the Legion insistently asks of its members: the courage to undertake great things for God. It invites us to give to God, "good measure pressed down and running over".

The Legion Promise, in the light of Edel's life, takes on a magnificent tone of reality and attractiveness.

In making that promise do we not beg the Holy Ghost to descend upon us, so that our poor actions may be sustained by His strength and may become the instruments of His mighty purposes?

The power of God, which can turn weakness into strength, shines out in that life, which verifies St. Paul's words: "*Virtus in infirmitate perficitur*—Strength is made perfect in infirmity." It is the triumph of grace in a soul that carried its treasure in a vessel most fragile.

The life of Edel Quinn appears as a challenging demonstration of that action of the Holy Ghost. He takes possession of a humble and docile soul and causes it to bear fruit a hundredfold. The power of God, which sustained the martyrs, took hold of Edel and made her rise superior to her weakness, her exhaustion, and even her agony itself. To those who cannot understand the working in her of that Holy Power, she will ever be an enigma. But for those who know that God reveals Himself in wondrous ways in those He sanctifies, her life is a splendid invitation to confidence.

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An intrepid faith, a complete faith.

In Edel's life, prayer and action were harmonised in an unforgettable way. It was her all-embracing faith that combined the two elements.

She was Martha in the eyes of the world, by her active service of Christ in His brethren. She was Mary in the eyes of God, by her unforgotten vocation to cloistered contemplation, by her dedication to God alone. The two currents fused in her like two rivers that come together to form one. She lived that double but united love with such seeming ease that none could see a dividing line in the waters. Edel loved men with God's own Love; in going to them she did not leave Him. She immersed herself in the glory of God and prayed that it might be communicated to all. But her prayer led her to the ends of the earth for the extension of His Kingdom. Her contemplative vocation drew her to the solitude of the convent cell, to that "better part" at the feet of the Master. Her vocation as an Envoy drove her from Mission station to Mission station, over a territory wider than Europe, and far out into the Indian Ocean.

Prayer and action supported one another, were interwoven.

That fusion is particularly noticeable in her devotion to Mary. The Legion asked her to be the child and the soldier of the Blessed Virgin;

the child who trusts blindly, the soldier who fights. Edel lived in the state of dependence on Mary which conditioned her every decision. She could not love her Mother without taking part in her grief, in her mediation, in her spiritual maternity of men. It was an active devotion in the strongest sense, that is, it so blended devotedness with devotion that each gave meaning and vitality to the other.

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* * *

Edel Quinn's was a life built on one inspiration and one purpose. She was the model of a faith without apparent flaw. Does anyone find it surprising that her life should be at once so devoted to Mary and so entirely centred on Christ? The same impulse that urged her towards the Mother led her to the Son. She loved Mary with the heart of Christ; she loved Christ with the heart of Mary.

A few lines from her notes give the key to this double yet single love:

“ Realise that Mary loves us because we are Christ's legacy to Her.
Let us give ourselves completely to Her, to be made all His, to be consumed unceasingly.
Let us try to give utterly, in every possible way, without counting the cost, to be spent for Christ.
As Jesus and with Him, to love Mary.
Mary in me will love Her Son.”

Edel Quinn's secret is there. It is not Edel whom we have been watching as she lived her life.

It is Christ Who in her has been loving Mary.

It is Mary who through her has been loving Jesus.

That love is not of this world; it springs from the Holy Ghost.

The glory of Edel Quinn is that she gave herself up without reserve to the fire of that Love and to its magnificence, and that she flung at the world that cry of faith: “ *Et nos credidimus Caritati—*
As for us, we have believed in Love.”

THE END.

GLOSSARY

Explanations of terms which occur frequently in the pages of this book.

THE CONCILIUM is the central governing body of the Legion. It meets at Dublin, Ireland, at 3 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month.

THE SENATUS is the governing body of the Legion for a country or a region.

THE CURIA is the governing body for a district. Where there are several Curiae in a diocese and where one of them is given superintending powers over the others, that one is called a Comitium.

THE PRAESIDIUM is the basic unit of organisation of the Legion. Its membership might go as high as thirty; but the average would be considerably lower. Each Praesidium has a Spiritual Director, a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Praesidium meets weekly, its procedure being: Prayer to the Holy Ghost and the Rosary; spiritual reading; minutes of previous meeting; report by each member on his work; Catena; Allocutio; treasurer's statement; assignment of work and other business; final prayers, followed by the priest's blessing.

CATENA designates the prayers said at the mid-way point of every Legion meeting, and which form as well a daily duty of each Legionary, active or auxiliary. Comprised are the antiphon, “Who is she, etc.”, the Magnificat, versicle and response, and prayer of Our Lady Mediatrix of All Graces.

THE ALLOCUTIO is the five-minute talk given after the Catena by the Spiritual Director (or in his absence by the President).

TESSERA is the prayer-card of the Legion, the first page of which contains the distinctive Legion picture.

VEXILLUM is the Legion standard which forms part of the little Legion altar at meetings. About one foot high, it is made of metal set in an onyx base. A representation of the Vexillum appears at the end of this section.

ACIES is the main annual function of the Legion, held near to the Feast of the Annunciation. The central part of the ceremonial is the procession to a large model of the Vexillum and the repetition there by each Legionary of a formula of consecration to Our Lady.

PRAETORIAN is the member who assumes certain additional devotional duties, namely: daily Mass and Holy Communion, and the daily recitation of all the Legion prayers and some form of Office approved by the Church.

THE AUXILIARY is one who is unable or unwilling to assume the duties of active membership but who engages to recite daily for the intentions of Our Blessed Lady all the prayers of the Tesseræ.

ADJUTORIAN is the special name given to priests and religious who become Legion Auxiliaries.

MARIA LEGIONIS is the name of the central Legion magazine, published quarterly by the Concilium.

THE HANDBOOK is the official exposition of the principles, rules, methods, and spirit of the Legion. As its name indicates, the Legionary is supposed to be familiar with its contents.

VICARIATE is the missionary area administered by a Vicar Apostolic, who is equivalent to a bishop.

PREFECTURE is the missionary area administered by a Prefect Apostolic, who has all the powers of a bishop except that of Ordaining.

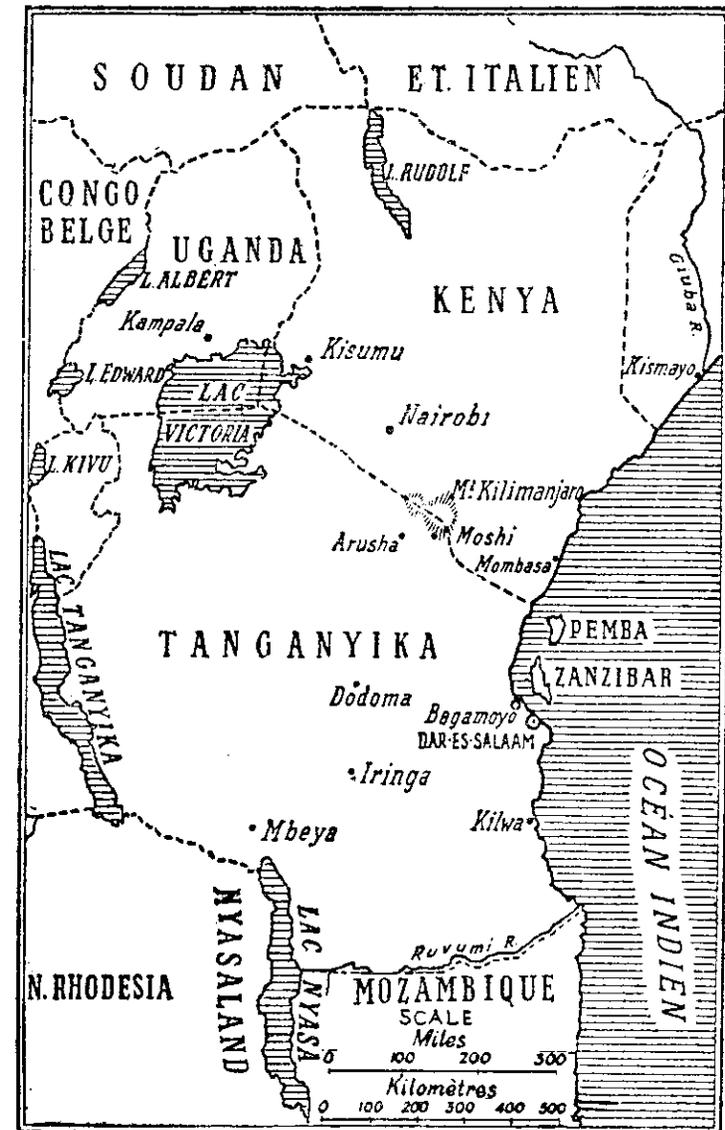
SAFARI is the missionary's visit to his out-stations and to new territory. A safari may mean an extensive and prolonged round.



The address

of the CONCILIUM LEGIONIS is :—

DE MONTFORT HOUSE,
NORTH BRUNSWICK STREET
DUBLIN, IRELAND.

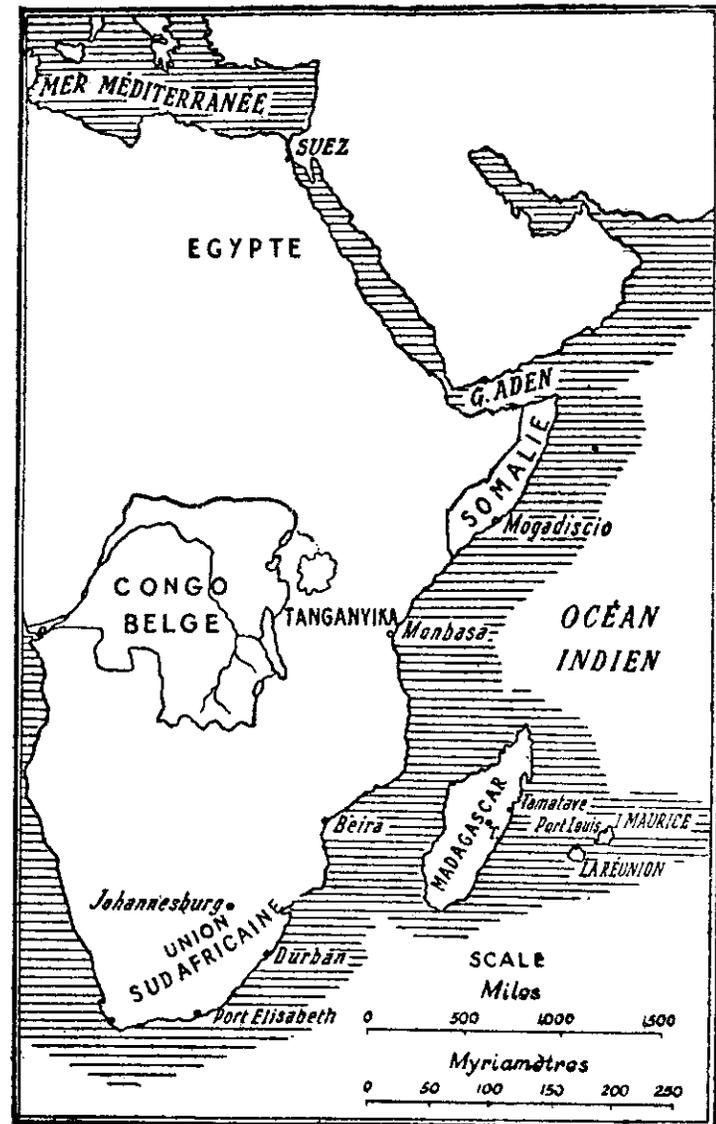


EDEL'S ENVOY EMPIRE

" Her journeying brought her through the towns and villages, the jungle paths and swamps of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and out to Mauritius in the Indian Ocean."

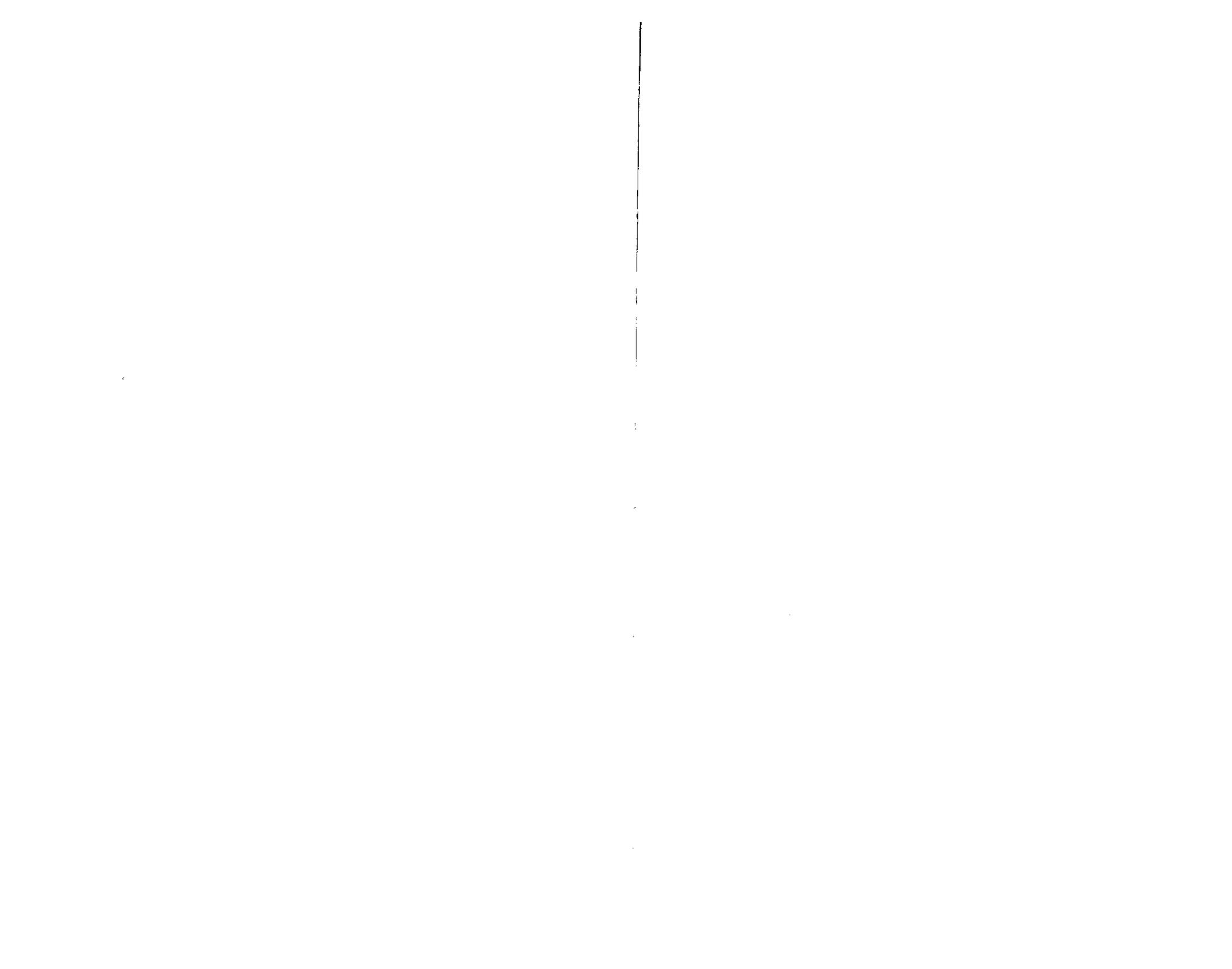
—(The Life, P. 200.)

“Travelling is not easy in Africa. Great distances often separate one Mission from another. The roads are dreadful and often impassable during the rainy season. But the turning wheels of the dilapidated Ford carry Edel ever on. She heeds neither the chaffing of her friends nor the tortured protests of her engine. She is not held back by the worst road nor by the absence of one. Imperturbably the gallant girl proceeds, without a thought of the dangers around her, trusting not too blindly in ‘Rolls-Royce’ but ever so firmly in the Providence of God.”—(*The Life*, P. 156.)



AFRICA

“She would be a Poor Clare in her heart but her convent would be the roads of Africa.”—(*The Life*, P. 76.)



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