



SISTER EUSTACHIA BAUER

of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine
Saviour A Model of a Missionary Religious Sister

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By
Fr. Dr. CHRISTOPHORUS BECKER S.D.S
1875 – 1937
Prefect Apostolic of Assam 1906 – 1915

Translated from the second
German edition by Fr. Bardo M. Buff SDS



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Forward

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:19-20).

It is a special honor and happiness for me to introduce that, this book was written in German, on Rev. Sr. EUSTACHIA BAUER, of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour a model of a Missionary Religious Sister, By Fr. Dr. CHRISTOPHORUS BECKER S.D.S 1875 – 1937, Prefect Apostolic of Assam 1906 – 1915, but later it was translated to English from the second German edition by Fr. Bardo M. Buff SDS. Now the Indian Mission Vicariate publishes this edition under the Salvatorian Spirituality and Charism Series for the members as well readers, that all may have the privilege to imbibe the missionary quality of Sr. Eustachia Bauer SDS and spread the charism of the Society.

The command of Jesus our Saviour was an inspiration and one of the Charisms of our Venerable Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. This thrust and enthusiasm urged Him to send the first missionaries of the Society to a far land in Northeast India (Assam). These Missionaries accepted the call and dedicated themselves to the assigned mission land and did their best service to spread the seed of **FAITH**. Among the first missionaries one of them was Rev Sr. Eustachia Bauer SDS, who arrived in Assam in the year 1906, she was asked to take up the mission at Ralliang. From the beginning, all her thinking and yearning had been directed toward the Missions.

This book describes in details the life, the missionary zeal, apostolic works and commitment to the entrusted mission of Rev. Sr. EUSTACHIA BAUER SDS. She studied the Khasi language, culture, tradition and the special dialect of the Syntang. Well talented as she was, she soon acquired fluency and was able to assist in every way. In a special way in the ministry of orphanage, care of the sick, old people and visiting all people in the villages, catechising, she has brought many a poor and lost children to faith and thereby into the Church. Thus, this mission was remarkable at the mission stations by which many embraced Catholicism.

On behalf of IMV, I express a sentiment of gratitude and appreciation to Fr. Bardo M.Buff SDS, who did the translation works for the members to enhance themselves for missionary works. I wish and pray that, all the readers to learn from such a visionary and missionary like our blessed Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, and that all will embrace the true spirit of an evangelizer and a missionary.

May God bless everyone.

Vicariate Superior
Fr. Alexis Aseervatham SDS

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I

YOUTH - FAMILY - VOCATION



Born on November 3, 1872 at Eitelbrunn in the Diocese of Regensburg Sister Eustachia Bauer had already early to lament the death of her mother. This all the more, as there were ten children in the family, of whom Sr. Eustachia was the oldest. With seriousness and determination far beyond her youth she took the place of her mother and tried to fill the gap for her father and the brothers and sisters, to the best of her abilities. She ran the home all alone and helped with the education of the children. It will suffice to quote the pastor of her native place to know in which spirit she did this. In his letter of condolence he says: "I have known Sr. Eustachia well and I have admired her for her noble, generous and truly Christian sense and for her work in the parental home, for her shining example of virtue given to the young people and the whole community, for her loving devotedness to her relations, to children and the poor. All this has earned her the vocation of a missionary in distant India. This beloved soul has gone before us in faith, hope and charity: let us follow her on her way of following Christ which she went ahead of us." The best proof of the spirit reigning in the home of the discipline and fear of God with which the little house mother knew to rule lies in the result of the education of the youngsters:

no fewer than eight out of the ten entered religious life. One brother, Fr. Boniface is a Benedictine in America. Another is a member of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception. His poor health caused her many a sorrow in her later missionary life. She prayed and caused others to pray for him. He reached the priesthood, but died shortly before his sister returned from the missions. Therefore, the joy to see him denied her. Brother the homestead after death, and brother a veterinarian. Of none remained in joined the Sisters of and are working in After the children for Sr. Eustachia fulfilled, she too stay in the world. to devote her life Lord, and above all in the Missions.

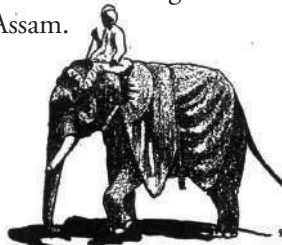


as priest was Josef took over the father's Georg became the six sisters, the world. Five the Holy Cross various places. thus were cared thought her task did not want to She too desired totally to the to work for Him

To this purpose, she sought entry into the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour. October 10, 1903 she was already in the Motherhouse in Rome. After a short period of trial, she received the habit on February 9, 1904 and after the year of her novitiate had passed, she made her first profession in the Holy City. After six years, she made her final profession by which she dedicated herself forever to the Divine Saviour. It was February 9, 1911. By this time, she was already in the missions in India.

From the beginning, all her thinking and yearning had been directed toward the Missions. But the Lord would try her severely.

Already during her Novitiate, she had a sore foot, which would not respond to any treatment. She had in mind not to reveal this suffering to her Superior, fearing she would not be sent into the Missions. But her conscientiousness overcame this fear and she opened herself to Sr. Superior with confidence. The Mother General (Sr. Mary of the Apostles Wüllenweber SDS) consoled her and said: “Dear Sister, you are allowed to take your vows, but to send you to the Missions, that I cannot as long as this foot suffering continues. Put your trust in the Lord, He is so good!” Sr. Eustachia followed her advice and her confidence in God was not in vain. In 1905, she was able to be present at the Canonization of two martyrs of the Capuchin Order, Sts. Agatangelo and Cassian, and she turned with great trust to the new Saints. A picture of them was tied to her foot and she had another Sister join her in three Novenas to the Saints. As on the last day, of the three. Novena the bandage was removed the swelling had disappeared and the foot was completely healed. Joyfully she run to the Rev. Mother who assured her: “This is sign from God to me that you are called to the Missions. Now you may go to Assam!” Sister’s rejoicing was great and she prepared with great diligence for her departure. She enjoyed a short visit in her hometown. The Superior of the Sisters in Assam, Sr. Scholastica Hopfenmüller, happened to be in Europe. With her, two other Missionaries and the newly appointed Apostolic Prefect of Assam (Fr. Dr. Christophorus Becker SDS) she boarded ship at Naples on February 19, 1906. The time of the journey, she spent in meditation and prayer. The travellers reached the Indian coast at Bombay on March 8. Several days more by train, boat and wagon through India and she had reached the goal of her ardent desires and dreams: The Mission of Assam.



II

IN THE SERVICE OF ORPHANS



The Mission of Assam is situated in the extreme Northeast of India. It includes the valley of the Brahmaputra which is surrounded North, East and South by the spurs of the Himalaya Mountains. These separate the country from neighbouring Tibet and China and are inhabited by half-wild peoples where also tigers, elephants, buffaloes and rhinoceroses have their home. In 1889 Assam became an independent mission as an Apostolic Prefecture, which embraced also the adjoining principalities of Bhutan and Manipur. German Salvatorians were the pioneers of this Mission. From the beginning, they resolved to concentrate their activities among the mountain people of Assam. These had the advantage over the peoples in the valleys. Above all the obstacles of the caste system and of polygamy were absent. The question which one of the 63 different tribes of Assam to prefer solved itself by the fact that the English Government had made Shillong the Capital of the country. There then would be the seat of the Mission. This city is situated high in the Khasi Mountains, and so among the Khasi the work was started. Already in 1890, the Congregation of the Salvatorian Sisters had sent forth the first courageous daughters as helpers in the conversion of the Khasi. Their first settlement was also in Shillong. Seven years later, they settled also in the Jaintia Mountains. Here, in Raliang, Fr. Thaddaeus Hofmann SDS had with truly apostolic courage founded a mission station. This station became the centre for the missionary work among

the Syntang people in the Jaintia Mountains. After 5 years, on March 19, 1897 he had the joy of welcoming the first three Salvatorian Sisters as faithful co-workers. The field would be wide: religious instruction,



care of the sick, of orphans and old people, sacristy and church linens, liturgical song, gardening, farming and housekeeping. Soon after her arrival in Assam in 1906 Sr. Eustachia was sent to Raliang. Here then was the scene of her work until the end of her stay in Assam. With

great fervour, Sister took part in the various activities of her co-sisters in Raliang, at the same time studying the language of the Khasi and the special dialect of the Syntang. Well talented as she was, she soon acquired fluency and was able to assist in every way. In the orphanage, she had all kinds of opportunities; Sr. Eustachia has brought many a poor and lost child to it, and thereby into the Church. One Sunday afternoon she took the children of the orphanage for a walk to a neighbouring village and children from there ran towards her. Asked whether there was anybody sick in the village, they led her to a dying woman who was still conscious. A gleam of satisfaction and consolation came over her face as Sister knelt down by her bedside, and with difficulty, she asked that Sr. Eustachia would take care of her three small children. Sister promised it, prayed with the woman, and prepared her for Baptism, which she then received. Already next morning she had died. The three children came to the Orphanage where they also were made children of God by Baptism and educated as Catholics. Such cases happened frequently. But there were also drawbacks. Considering the predicaments, the mission always had to face, Sr. Superior had mixed feelings as she saw the number of her hungry wards steadily increasing. But Sr. Eustachia did not stop halfway. She got busy writing letters to her friends in the home country and did not stop pleading until she had collected the necessary means. In this way she has won many goodhearted benefactors of the poor and the orphans. So it happened also in another case. One day a woman came to the mission and offered her four children for sale. She asked 80 Goldmark for the twelve-year-old, 30 for the one of eight years and for the two youngest, boys of three and four years 20 Marks each. There were not sufficient means at hand, so the sisters could take only the three youngest. And the oldest girl was then sold to some better-situated protestant people a short distance away. It was hard for the girl to be thus separated from her family. As often as she could she came to visit at the orphanage and every so often, she asked the sisters to take her in too. But that could

only be done by remunerating the protestant family if they agreed. Sr. Eustachia did not rest until she had collected the needed money from her benefactors. The people who had bought the girl from her mother were satisfied to hand her over to the sisters for the same price they had paid. The deal was concluded and joyfully the four children were united again at the Orphanage. After sufficient instruction, they received in Baptism the names of their benefactors who had made their freedom possible: Caroline, Crescent, Josef and Michael. Later on, the mother came off and on



to the Orphanage. She would have liked to pay the sisters the original price to enable her to get the children back and to sell them again at a higher price to more prosperous pagans. But none of them could be moved to leave the sisters. Caroline, the oldest, later on married an efficient teacher who had also been educated by the Sisters and then trained in his profession. They made a good Christian pair whom the rest of the family liked to visit. One might wonder how a mother possibly could manage simply to sell her child to foreign people. But this was nothing extraordinary with the Syntang people. There a system of “debt-slavery” was customary. If someone would need money in order to buy rice, build a house or to buy a field or such, he would

as a last resource give his child away for money. Such children are called “slaves” (Mrau) and one could hear the natives say they would “buy themselves a slave”. Very early, those children would come into a foreign home, there to be used for various kinds of work. Only with eighteen years of age, they would begin to contribute anything toward a repayment of the debt. Only then would they receive a yearly wage of about 13 Mark to be taken off the debt. So it could happen that a child for twenty years or longer will remain in the creditors power and dependence until the original price is paid back and freedom regained by his work.

Not only did Sr. Eustachia make every effort to provide means for pagan children or the release of “slaves” but she exerted herself also on behalf of Christian parents of children. After the death of the mother, many difficulties arose at times according to the customs of the Khasi. With the Khasis, so also with the Syntangs, children did belong to the mother, not to the father. When the mother died, care of the children did by no means fall to the responsibility of the father. He has no further concern for his children and will not care for them. He will pack his few things and leave the hut, and will possibly enter into a new marriage. The care of children develops after the mother’s death exclusively upon the relations on the mother’s side. Often these are still pagans, thus the children are in greatest danger to be returned to paganism. So it was certainly in the interest of the Mission to find out whether these relations would not let the children be educated in the Orphanage. The costs would then fall upon the Mission. Sometimes the relatives would simply be too poor for the task in which case they would give them into the charge of the sisters for their education. But the sisters would accept that charge only with a written guarantee that the children would remain there free until their majority. If the sisters had not used this precaution, the relatives would only wait until the children would have grown set somewhat so that they could do some

work. Then they would sell them, as child-slaves, to someone well to do, and they would be lost to the Church. But under these conditions the children would remain in the Mission until they married, they received a Christian education and learned a useful trade. After their wedding, they would settle in a neighbouring Christian village. Many a Christian home arose there through the help of the Mission.



Farewell to the Mission turned always into a real feast for the Sisters. It was a great joy for them to have once again brought a girl to this point and to have made the founding of a Christian home a reality. The day of the wedding was a gala affair. After the wedding ceremony in the church, a festival meal was arranged, consisting of a rare treat of tee and cake. The Missionary Father took part too. The orphans made music and sang. Every girl thus leaving the Mission received a present of 30 Goldmark and some young chickens. This was enough to found a modest new home. In this way, many a good catholic family was formed among the Syntang, and Sr. Eustachia had a considerable share in their success.

Father Bernardine Jung SDS who after the demise of Fr. Thaddaeus Hofmann had taken over the guidance of the station at Raliang could not devote himself to the supervision of the boys' section of the Orphanage, considering all the other missionary work and the necessary travel through the extensive territory. He asked therefore the Sister Superior to commit the direction of the boy's division to Sr. Eustachia. And no better move could have been made. She was a good and devoted mother to all. Her steadily cheerful friendly ways reflected so to speak on the faces of the young. With all her kindness she was firm and suffered no disorderliness, she admonished to prayer and piety. In their free time they were set to various labours in house and stable, field and garden. In order to foster a sound competition each one had allotted to himself a piece of garden to dig and to plant which he had to take care of. Sr. Eustachia's influence upon the boys was great. One of them, by his attitude provided her with special joy. He was not yet baptised and his mother and relatives tried under various pretexts to get him away from the mission so he would not become a Christian. He was sixteen years of age and lived at the Orphanage only temporarily. One day his mother came pleading with tears that he would come home to be present at the wedding of a pagan relative. This the boy could not well resist. But he promised by no pretence to be turned from his resolution to become a catholic, and to return after a few days. Sr. Eustachia almost doubted his strength to resist all allurements, for she sensed that the wedding was only meant to provide an occasion to influence him against the Mission. The temple priest even promised him to hand over to him his own respected and prosperous office, in case he would stay. In spite of all these efforts, the boy remained firm and returned. After his time of probation, he was admitted to Baptism and received the name of Thomas. First Confession and Communion followed shortly. As he was preparing for Confirmation, he received the news of a severe sickness of his mother. At once, he hurried home, five hours away. Here he instructed his

mother so urgently and convincingly in the Christian truths that she consented to become a Christian too. Since it was doubtful that a priest could be present on time, Thomas himself acted without hesitation and administered Holy Baptism to his own mother. So, instead of being drawn away from the true faith, he had the happiness of making her a partaker of the joy of God's children.

III

EMERGENCY BAPTISM OF SICK CHILDREN



ruly inventive was Sr. Eustachia in her endeavour to lead souls to heaven. Many were the cases of emergency Baptism of sick children. Not always did the heathen parents agree, most of them did not want to hear anything about Baptism. Occasionally Sister met them when visiting a Khasi village or when called upon to treat a sick child. The ways of Divine Providence were strange some times. One day a pagan woman brought her child to the Mission and asked for a remedy for it. The medicine was given and Sister asked the woman where she came from, intending to visit her some time in order to keep in contact. The little patient was not dangerously sick. Then, a week later, she went to the village, but she had forgotten to ask the woman's name and could only in general inquire about a sick child. But nobody could tell her anything, although she actually stood, as she learnt later, in front of the proper hut. So, she walked with her companions for half an hour through the mud of the village. Finally, she was directed to a hut where she would find a sick child. But Sister saw at once that this child was not the one she was looking for, but this little one was already at the point of death, and at once she baptised it without the people knowing what she did. After that she had no trouble in finding the sought for mother. Her child was improving and recovered soon. Sister Eustachia had various ways to administering Baptism without arousing the suspicion of the parents. Of great help was the use of the Kneipp cure, which was used with preference and success. A sick child was brought in, it was

near death and Sister realized that there was no time to be lost. She suggested a bath to which the mother consented, so with the bodily cleansing, the soul bath of Baptism was combined and a little Theresia was given back to her mother. If such applications were not advisable, Sister was not at all at a loss for other ways or excuses. One day, on her walk through the villages, she saw a woman standing before her hut with a baby on her arms, and it cried piteously. Sister tried to find out the cause of this crying and she found out that the mother had died and now the child had no milk. She offered to take the baby to the Mission and there to raise it with milk from the cows. But the woman would not agree. One must know that the Syntang as the Khasi in general do not milk their cows and detest the milk. She would have permitted help to the child, but she was afraid it would be lost by being made a Christian. In the long run however, she could not stand the continued wailing. The next day a man came to the Orphanage bringing the child to the Sisters and asking them to take care of it. There was great joy among the orphans who almost fought over the privilege to nurse the little newcomer. But this rejoicing did not last, for a week later the same man came back, at 5 o'clock in the morning, and took up the sleeping child, wrapped in a blanket. "Sister", he said, "please give me the child back. I will gladly pay you for your expenses, but you would not believe how the relatives patter me for giving the child so thoughtlessly." Now Sr. Eustachia was less concerned with the expenses than with the soul of the patient. That it would stay alive among the heathen without a mother seemed impossible. What could she do to make Baptism possible? After some palaver, she took the child from the man's arms and said very friendly: "See, I still have the two rings which the child had on her ankles, and I am going to put them on again!" And out she went. Whilst the man waited, she not only restored to the child the ornaments of her feet, but also honoured it with the distinction of a child of God by Baptism. But she was troubled a bit. Should the child remain alive against all expectations, it



would have difficulties growing up as a Christian among the heathens. But that a problem for the future. Now she entrusted the little one to the care of the Sacred Heart of Mary, much honoured by her, and returned the child to the man. Some months later, on the feast of the S. Heart of Mary, the third Sunday of August, Sister came again through the village where the little charge she had baptized lived. Some men coming from the crematorium met her. They had, as was customary, imbibed freely from the rice-brandy, yet they greeted the sisters respectfully. From them Sr. Eustachia learned that they just had cremated the little one that had been recommended by her to the S. Heart of Mary. On her feast day, her soul had gone to heaven. In her practice to baptize sick children without the relatives knowing it, Sister acquired by and by great skill. According to the report of her Superior at Raliang Sr. Ignatia Greiner, Sr. Eustachia in the last years of her mission activities has administered yearly on the average 50 emergency Baptisms to dying heathen babies. Thus, she has sent a nice troop of little angels ahead of her to heaven.

IV

TEACHING - YOUNG PEOPLES ASSOCIATIONS



he main station at Raliang had a regular elementary school, established according to government regulations. Instruction comprised the ordinary subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, and in addition of course religion, which was not included in the governmental regulations. The teaching was done in the language of the Khasis. For many years, Bartholomäus Schadap was employed as teacher and catechist. But the demand for catechists from the neighbouring villages grew continuously. Lack of means prevented the employment of another teacher, so the direction of the school was now entrusted to the sisters. Sr. Eustachia was now several years in Raliang and was sufficiently acquainted with the language and the ways of the people to be now promoted to the position of teacher and with great zeal she devoted herself to the job. The school building was inside the great mission compound and consisted of a single room containing all classes. A lay brother of the mission had built benches, otherwise unknown. Girls also were in the classes as separation of the genders was not the custom of the Khasis. This school was open not only for the orphans who lived at the Mission. Christian children from the villages and even some heathen children followed the call of the school bell. Some of them came in a peculiar strange outfit. Mothers were busy in field and garden and couldn't care for the littlest of her children. So, the older ones had to take over. But if they wanted to go to school, they couldn't leave the little ones at home alone. By means of a piece of cloth they

bound them to their backs, and so they went to school. That had to be tolerated if one wanted to have the children at school at all. When the little mischief maker was not always satisfied with the doings and got a little too loud, a bit of swinging back and forth on the part of its bearer would help to calm him down and zeal for schoolwork was not diminished. Though there was no obligation to attend school the eagerness of the children was great. Besides the regular admonitions on the part of the Missionary, little gifts and rewards were employed to encourage school attendance. Especially at Christmas time, such gifts exerted great attraction. In general, it was a piece of useful clothing according to the diligence and zeal of the pupils. The louder the colours, the more it was esteemed. Many a parcel of used clothing donated by European benefactors found good use. The sisters provided what was still missing with great care. It was no small job for them to supply 100 or more children with clothing. Many a night was spent to get something ready for all. The older girls could help in the school. Usually this Christmas gift was the only clothing of the village children until the next Christmas came along. For the celebration, a small fir tree as they grow in the Khasi Mountains was decorated with small cookies and candles, made by the Sisters. Also oranges, bananas and toys were used. After the holidays, a raffle was held of all the glory among the children. Then the classroom was cleared again for the everyday work. School was in session only in the forenoon, the afternoon remained for other mission work. Vacation time was scheduled, with regard to the work of the people, for spring and fall, with four weeks for each season. The children thus were able to help in the fields, in the spring in planting the rice, and in the fall the harvest. The school was registered with the government to be eligible for a monthly financial contribution. This demanded the obligation to follow the governmental plans for teaching, but at the same time offered an advantage, for definite goals of learning were set up by which the pupils could obtain the same knowledge and grades as the



children in government schools. No difficulties were encountered with regard to the teaching of religion. Besides such rules the school would be visited occasionally by a government inspector. Such visitations meant also an advantage to the school for the fervour of the pupils would be kept on the alert.



After one of these visitations the English official from Jowai, Mr. Friend-Pereira remarked that the catholic Mission school at Raliang was a model school and had the best administration in the whole district of the Jaintia Mountains. The native chieftain at Raliang, a pagan, called the Doloï, was attracted by the good reputation of the school. He visited it and expressed his full satisfaction. In the eyes of the pagan population, the school thus became a good recommendation for the catholic missionary efforts. The inspector came about two times a year at irregular

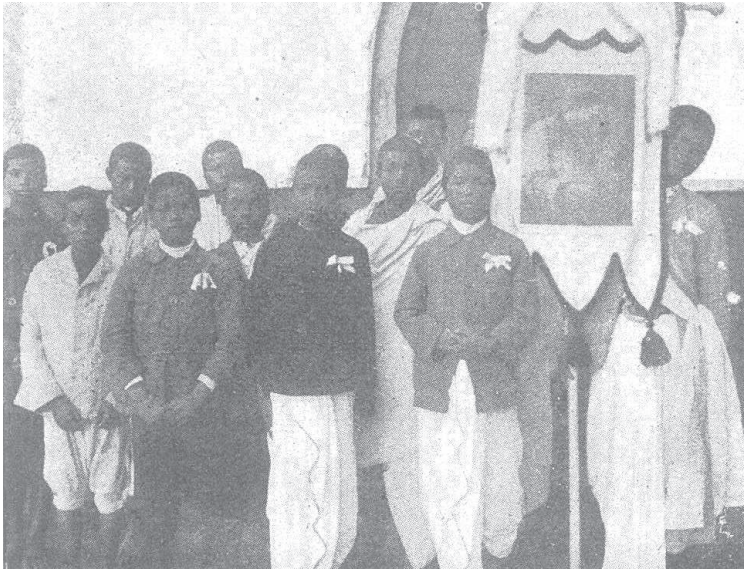
intervals. One time he arrived at Raliang during the rice-vacation. Sr. Eustachia was away on Mission work in a village about 3 hours distant.

She lived there in a small straw hut, which served as a makeshift school and also as a chapel when the Missionary came on his rounds. It was night already when one of the bigger orphan boys, about eighteen years old, came with a letter, which announced the arrival of the inspector. In a hurry, Sister visited a very sick woman, a catechumen, baptized her and returned to the hut to pack her few things. Then they started back homewards the boy in the lead carrying a lantern and a machete - this



as a protection against wild animals. Tracks of tigers, bears or elephants were frequent in the jungle. Happily, none of the beasts appeared, the boy's weapon would have been useless against them. What seemed to be a strong tree root on the way proved to be a snake, which quickly moved away. It was almost midnight when Sr. Eustachia arrived again at Raliang. In the morning, the school was assembled and in spite of the difficulties encountered, the examination proved successful to the great satisfaction of the inspector. At these inspections, the officer was pleasantly surprised by the achievements of the boys in drawing, gymnastics and also in music, whilst the girls impressed him with their

skill in various kinds of needle work. To meet the needs of these simple peoples the Mission endeavoured to provide the children not only with the necessary school learning, but also especially the girls with the different handicrafts, as sewing, mending, knitting and ironing. For grown-up girls a Sunday school was arranged for designing and



cutting, so that all were enabled to make their own cloths. But not enough with that a course in lace-making was instituted for the mere talented, and the result of their work found willing takers among the English ladies in Shillong and elsewhere. It was also a success that Sr. Superior could report to the Prefect Apostolic on June 26, 1913 that the first cloth had been produced at the weaving-mill for which the Sisters had built some quite primitive looms out of bamboo-cane. Now the girls were also instructed in weaving. This branch of the school found such favourable recognition by the government, that, shortly before the war broke out, a considerable monthly amount was

promised as a support and the improvement of this practical field of education and so valuable for the girls of the Syntang region.

Through the efforts of Sr. Eustachia a young woman's society was founded which contributed much to the raising and the cultivation of the religious spirit among the adolescent female youth. As their "uniform" they wore a white veil, wholly enclosing their bodies, and this made a big impression on festival occasions, for instance the Corpus Christi Procession. On such feasts, the girls appeared with their banner, which showed a picture of the Immaculate Conception, the patroness of their Society. The members showed great religious fervour, many went to Holy Communion twice a week, or even three times. The frequent joint reception of the Sacraments on First Fridays and on all Feats of the Bl. Virgin was not only to their own spiritual benefit, but stimulated also the grown-ups to greater fervour. Every other week the Missionary gave a special religious conference to integrate the young people more and more into community life and to make them the leaven of the parish. After service on Sundays and Holydays Sr. Eustachia often took a walk with the girls through the countryside, during which they engaged in conversation and sang religious songs. In the heathen villages they passed all this made a deep impression. This development of the girl's club did not leave the boys cold either. They too wanted such a Society and asked the Missionary often for it. So, on December 8, 1910 a Young Men's Society was formed. It was a truly festival day as it was the Feast of the Patroness of the Raliang Church. Twelve boys made the beginning. As a badge, they received a medal on a blur bow to be worn on their left breast.



V

THE NURSE

he establishment of the Missionary Sisters at Raliang was place of refuge for all the sick and the injured of the district. The method of the missionary work itself forestalled many a bodily discomfort, at least for the Christians. From time to time, a small-pox epidemy raged among the Syntengs. The common people in their ignorance saw in this epidemic a goddess in whose "visit" they even rejoiced. It was an honour and a distinction for them. Some parents even brought their own children to the sick and to have them infected, that is "visited". Even if the newly converted Christians turned away from such superstitious customs, it was not enough to prevent the danger of infection, considering the constant intermingling with close neighbours. So the Missionaries insisted, on sanitary and moral grounds that the new converts settled in their own village, separate from pagans and also from protestants. Whoever became a catholic would pull down his hut, carried it to a Christian village and set it up again. In such a way, several purely catholic villages were founded. The effects of these measures were obvious. Whilst in heathen places the populace often was totally extinguished, the catholic population was spared. In general, there was a wide-open field for the charity of the Sisters. Catholics, Protestants and heathens came from all sides, often from far away to find help or at least relief in their suffering. Here there was one sick, with a fever, or one with an eczema, or with abscesses, or an inflammation of the ear. Some had suffered deep cuts on their feet or legs when cutting down trees, or chopping wood,

or digging with a hoe. This could easily happen as the people always went about barefooted. And these cases occurred every day. There were also cases of severe injuries caused by wild animals, which oftentimes



worsened through neglect and dirt. If there was a wild animal reported in the neighbourhood the men went out together to surround and kill it. And that required courage. The English government did not allow

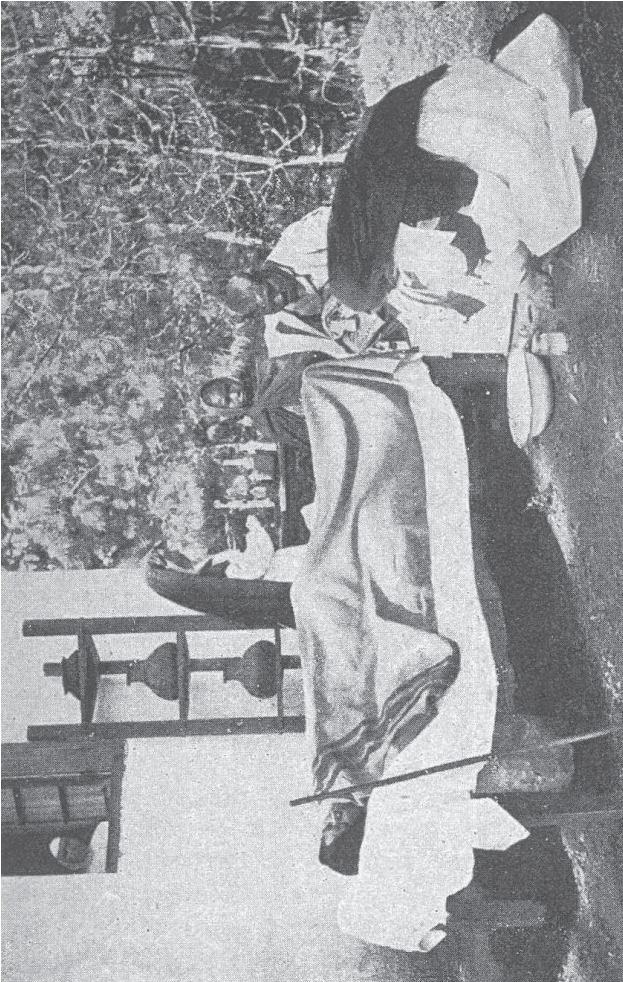
the natives to have firearms, so they had to rely on their own arms, bow and arrows, knife and axe if they wanted to protect crops and fruits against the devastation by elephants, bears and monkeys, and their homes against the attack of tigers. Only rarely someone could call an old muzzle-loader his own, which really could be only of little use in such a fight. Anyhow, here also the old hunting rule did apply that many hounds are the death of the hare. After the kill the beast was solemnly and with shouts of victory carried to the village for a festive meal. But the hunters there was always the one or the other who was badly hurt by the excited animal. At the Sisters, they sought and found refuge and help. The confidence the people had in the good will and the power of the Sisters lead sometimes to funny incidents, so when the oldsters couldn't see so well anymore, or when their loose teeth fell out. Then they came for medicines against such maladies. Sisters had to heal anything and everything; that there was no elixir against the weaknesses of old age was beyond their comprehension.

It cannot be our purpose here to give an exhaustive report of the Sisters' activities in the field of nursing. Some cases only will be related with reference to Sr. Eustachia to show how she had adapted herself to the situation. Four men brought an injured companion whom they by turns carried in a back-basket, and they asked urgently to take care of the patient. The poor man had been attacked by a bear and was in terrible shape, as part of his face had been torn away. Sr. Eustachia took charge right away and cleaned and dressed the wound for several days. But she realized that it could not be healed without being sewn up and ordered that the patient be brought to the nearest doctor who lived about five hours away at the Protestant Mission. And this was no rare case. A woman of Schangpung had been bitten by a snake. Due to neglect the wound had spread out and when she came to the station had extended from the knee to the toes and was full of maggots and the bones were visible. Sister took charge and in time she succeeded

in a complete cure of the foot. The sincere thanks of the woman was her reward. Another man had his hand treated, which had been badly lacerated by a pig. All in all, Sr. Eustachia could report to her Superior at the end of 1909 that she had treated and dressed in the last three months sixty wounded feet. This figure shows how frequently help was needed and given. With all the necessary nursing Sister never lost sight of the foremost purpose of missionary Work: a three-year-old was brought in whose face was covered with ulcers; she baptized the child first and then treated the wounds. Fr. Bernardin Jung of the Mission at Raliang went to St. Xavier, a station 2 hours away in order to conduct services there in honour of St. Francis Xavier. The Sisters and some orphan girls went likewise. After Mass, the teacher asked Sr. Eustachia to visit a sick man in the neighbourhood. Sister gladly agreed and was confronted with a pitiable sight. The man lay motionless on his matt in front of his hut, the whole body was swollen, his face yellow. Asked by the Sister what had happened he said: "Yesterday evening, at moonlight, I saw a big vulture fly to the orange tree and carrying the fruit away, one by one, with his beak. This I didn't like. I ran to the tree wanting to chase the vulture away. Then I heard behind me some panting and I was down on the ground. A bear had seized me and had bitten three deep holes in my right leg." Sr. Eustachia advised to have hayseed packings made, but his sister who was with him, was so clumsy at it that he gladly accepted the offer to bring him to the Mission. There, after some time, Sr. Eustachia had cured him. Having been saved from death from a bear by God's mercy, he was already more responsive and more ready to receive Baptism. Sister did not omit to speak to him about the truths of religion, and she had an attentive and docile pupil. He returned to St. Xavier as a diligent catechumen, and after the time of probation, he could receive the Sacrament.

But there was at times also active opposition to any religious influence on patients. A man from Nongri had the bad luck that a heavy machete used as an axe or a weapon fell on his big toe nearly

separating it from his foot. He was brought to Raliang and was treated. But before his cure was fully effected, his relatives fetched him back



fearing that in the end he might become a catholic. For all that, Sr. Eustachia could not be deterred to visit the man occasionally and to

continue the treatment until his foot was cured. The Sisters achieved manifold good results in the treatment of all kinds of sicknesses and injuries. In consequence, more and more people from near and far requiring help took refuge at the Mission. Thereby the need for medicines and dressings grew although many household remedies and medicinal herbs were used. In the whole around Raliang, there was no other place or opportunity where the sick or injured might find expert care and medical assistance. Therefore, the Prefect Apostolic turned to the Government of Assam in 1913 presenting the situation and asked in the public interest for an annual support for the Sisters Pharmacy. The Government responded readily and promised the annual sum of 500 Rupees, which would help the Sisters in maintaining and extending their activities in this field.

In the huts of the natives, every care for the sick was missing. The patients lay on the ground like anyone else, covered with a piece of clothing or a blanket, an open fire burnt in the hut without any ventilation, there were no windows. Their native religion forbade the Synteng the use of medicine or drugs, only superstitious remedies were used, or sacrifices were offered to placate the evil spirits, which had caused the sickness. The patients remained without any effective alleviation and help, either until natural healing took place or death provided an end to all suffering and sorrow. The people had not the least comprehension of care in sickness. Even if the Sisters gave directions of treatment, they could be sure of grossest clumsiness or absurd application of the simplest remedies. Therefore, it became simply necessary to bring the sick who needed special care to the Mission. Somehow, they had to be housed, either in the hut of a shepherd, or with some old people in their hut, or in a small room, which had served as a school. Naturally the Sisters desired to have a hospital, be it ever so small, with the necessary equipment. Again and again Sr. Eustachia stressed the need for such an institution in

her reports to the Superior. So she related, on Christmas 1910, the case of a man suffering severely from gout who could move neither arm nor foot. “How necessary would be a bed for him, or at least warm blankets,” she said. “But with all his pain he lays on a mat, covered with some rags. To him the Saviour would come as he came to the paralytic in the Gospel. And he will come soon, for the man has



already asked for Baptism.” Indeed, he was soon baptized, receiving the name Matthaëus. Half a year later Sister tells of some other patients who had come for treatment and says: “A second paralytic has joined our Matthaëus. He can feed himself in some way and is not as helpless as others. He is very interested in the catholic religion and has expressed his desire to be baptized. You can see what a source of blessings a hospital at Raliang would be. I could nearly daily list new proofs for the need of one”. Also in her correspondence, Sr. Eustachia endeavoured to win friends and acquaintances for the idea of cooperation in such a project. Early in 1914, this wish became a reality and a small hospital was opened to the joy and satisfaction of everyone. It proved also to be a great help in the general work of the Mission, apart from the relief of bodily suffering. Many of the patients treated or cured learned to acknowledge the Giver of all Good. From

the first day all beds were nearly always occupied, hardly a heathen patient passed away without having found the way to Christianity. Sr. Superior at Raliang, Sr. Ignatia Greiner listed a few examples in the Missionary of 1914. She says: "In July a sick orphan girl, about thirteen or fourteen years old came from Jeupynkat accompanied by



her aunt, dragging herself and wanting to become a catholic and to be cured at the Hospital. The poor thing appeared to suffer much and was so weary that she lay down on the ground in front of the house. She was brought in, but in spite of all efforts and care no recovery effected. The girl received Baptism, which she had desired on July 14 and the same evening the Lord called this flower into his garden. Only a few will have the happiness of dying so shortly after Baptism. At the same time another patient, an old man, who had come from the village of Mauschrot, six hours away, died. In the eleventh hour of his life he should find salvation. "With great fervour", says the Superior, "he learned the necessary prayers by heart which Sister taught him. We admired him for his good memory at his age. He had lost his eyesight almost completely, but the Lord had opened for him the eyes of the spirit that he might find the true faith and salvation for his immortal soul."

Neither could the plague of leprosy deter Sr. Eustachia or stop her heroic determination. Leprosy occurred in the district of Syntang as well as in other parts of Assam. The unfortunate victims were all the more pitiable through the fate, which threatened them from their relatives. Without pity or scruples, they would be chased away for fear of infection, no matter that they would get lost in the wilderness and die of hunger. Many of these hapless people who could live in their huts were supported by the Mission through alms. In 1902 a catholic woman named Barbara was stricken with leprosy. Chased away by her relations she was without shelter and the Mission took her in providing protection and care. A special hut was set up near the church and she received food and treatment. Despite the fact that her fingers and toes decayed she could manage to take care of the little needs of her household, to plant a little garden and carry wood and water. In Sr. Eustachia, she found a loving nurse in her later severe illness and the last years of her life. Risking infection Sister devoted herself to this poor patient. With regard to others, she was extremely careful. Even in church, she took a special kneeler apart from the others in order to prevent any infection. Since 1913 the Government entertained the thought of erecting a special larger Leprosery for this province. For the purpose of taking this Hospital I entered into negotiations with the Government. I visited the Leproseries in Mandalay and Rangoon in Burma in order to be able to make pertinent recommendations in this regard. Sr. Eustachia had hardly heard of these plans when she wrote me putting herself at my disposal: she would, in case the plans were realized, give herself for life to the service of the leprous. She was ready in her charity to devote herself and her health to this arduous task. These plans however could not be carried through as war broke out in 1914. But the Lord will have taken her good intentions for the deed.





Missionaries with Christians near Shillong, Assam 1899



A Salvatorian Sister with orphan girls in Shillong



A group of Orphans in Shillong, Assam 1899



Salavatorian Sister with Christian Women



Sr. Brigitta with Assam Orphans



Sister Scholastica Hopfenmueller SDS with Orphans



Our Sisters in Shillong with Orphans



Salavatorian Sister teaching a class to young Orphan girls



Salavatorian Sisters with young Orphan



Fr. Dominicus Dauderer with some of his school-orphans in Laitkynsew

VI

APOSTOLIC EXPEDITIONS



r. Eustachia was not satisfied to nurse only the sick coming to the Station, she also visited catholic patients in and around Raliang who were taken care of in their huts. Protestants (Methodists) too sometimes sought the help of the Sisters. But Sr. Eustachia worked mostly among the pagan population of the Synteng which was in the majority. Here her apostolic spirit found a vast field. Such excursions were not without danger from the part of wild animals as tigers, or solitary elephants, or snakes in a district covered with primeval forest and thickets. But a good angel always watched over her. Then there were the difficulties of the road in the mountainous region, slippery paths, in the rainy season almost impassable, had to be mastered, rivers had to be waded through and heights to be climbed. In the beginning, Sister went on foot. Once she returned from Tangrain which is on a high level and difficult to approach. She had to cross a river, which was passable in the dry season without danger to life, but as she was heated up, she caught a severe cold. After that, the Superior took care that she could have the use of a small horse at least for greater distances. It was a good tame animal. It had to bear Sister on one of her excursions up a steep mountain. With the strenuous effort, the bellyband got loose and slipped, so that Sister slid down but could jump down in time. The horse got entangled in the harness and the leather straps. Freed by her it made its way up the

hill, there it stopped by the side of a rock waiting for Sister to mount again. On such trips, Sister was in her white clothing visible from afar and many sick and needy people awaited her on the roadside. Some of them had to be bandaged, or asked for medicine or invited her to



visit a sick person in the nearby village. For many, so much under the influence of superstition, this was no small matter. Once an old woman asked for medicine for her sick daughter. Sister went to see the patient and found a young woman sick with fever; she tried to give some relief by cold-water applications. But the old mother was so confused that she couldn't even get a vessel and some cloth together for the treatments, she run to and fro, in and out always calling on her gods. She was afraid these would be angry and would send more calamities upon them because she had called on the Sisters for help. According to her ideas, it was allowed to call only on the gods and to offer some sacrifice, if she would gain the recovery of her sick daughter.

Sister Eustachia did not only look for cases of sickness on her wanderings. It was providential at times that she came just in time to assist a dying person in her last hour and to spend Holy Baptism. She was not always called to such patients, but she tried to provide relief and help for the sick in their sufferings. If they listened to her words, she would recite prayers, make acts of contrition with them, trying to awaken their desire for the true faith. But that procedure did not easily lead to conversion – there were too many obstacles along the way. One time, Sister visited a very sick woman for whom they had fetched medicine at the Mission also asking for a visit. The old mother was near death, eight grownup children surrounded her bed, her husband, a confirmed heathen did not leave her side. Sister stressed the seriousness of her case and admonished her not to reject the grace of God. Four times, she repeated her visit, and once the Missionary himself came. Repeatedly the family praised the Sisters and the Missionary who were like gods and doing good, but accept their religion, that they could not. The man even said to Sister:” I have a feeling that I should follow your religion, but I haven’t got the understanding for it. Ask your God that he might give me insight. I think that I am acting properly, I have always led an honest life with my wife and these children.” The woman lived another week, her condition was pitiful she was unable to lie down, her children and her man took turns holding her up. Otherwise she was resigned, repeated all prayers Sister told her, even declared her willingness to become a child of God. In spite of this she would know nothing of Baptism, much less her husband and children.” What would our Rangbah (the respected and influential people of the village say)” they repeatedly said. Respect and fear of men held them back from giving consent to the Baptism of the mother. They didn’t want to enrage the villagers and to be excluded from their huts. All efforts at her convincing them remained in vain, in spite of her good disposition the woman died without Baptism. Opposition on the part of relatives was frequent. There was the case of an old pagan in Mulei, in whose

hut I called just before nightfall on my way from Shillong to Raliang. I asked for some pinewood chips to light my way and got them. Shortly after that, the man got sick. Two of his daughters came to Raliang for medicine and Sr. Eustachia then visited him. His condition was serious and she warned him of his impending death. Questioned whether he would not renounce his paganism he answered: "Yes, I renounce the evil one and all his works, I believe in the true God." As he asked for Baptism, Sister got ready to administer the Sacrament, but his family hindered her and said: "We do not want him to become a Christian" and asked her to leave. She still prayed over the patient and went away sorrowful to have been unable to fulfil the wish of the man. The matter gave her no rest and she thought of a way how it could yet be done in an inconspicuous manner. And there was a way out. In Raliang, there lived a nephew of the sick man who was already a catholic. In agreement with the Missionary, this man was sent to visit his uncle the next morning and he succeeded to administer Holy Baptism to him. In general mothers were the greatest hindrance in the work of conversion, even grown-up children dare not go against the will of their mother, as she is the head of the family with the Synteng. Family property belongs to the mother and she can bar family members from it at will. Such prospects were not at all pleasant and one had to take them into consideration. Sr. Eustachia had experience in this regard too. She met a young man in one of the villages and admonished him to renounce his heathen religion. He answered: "We know quite well that your religion is the true religion. For a long time already, I don't believe any more in the power of gods. Once I was very sick, but none of the gods would help me, all our sacrifice were good for nothing. In our extreme need, we went to the Missionary Fr. Thaddaeus who died ten years ago. We asked for medicine and I recovered. Since that time, I am thinking of becoming a catholic. But first our mother must die, she adheres too much to her gods. Then our whole family will become catholic." But Sister had also more pleasant experiences. Her happiness

and joy were great when she succeeded in the last moment in leading a patient to heaven. Often times such patients recovered after having received emergency Baptism, then they would come to the Mission for the proper ceremonies to be performed and to receive adequate instructions.

On a Sunday afternoon Sr. Eustachia went with some orphan girls to a heathen village not far from Raliang to visit a woman who had some time ago in her great need offered one of her boys to the Mission for the price of 70 Marks. At that time, this amount could not be raised and in the meantime, Sister had tried to get the money together. They had soon found the hut where they were met by a pitiable sight. The woman, laying on a mat, was near death. Three little children and her husband sat by her side in sorrow. Sister knelt down near her, tried to cool the feverish heat with cold compressions, and asked her about the little boy she had wanted to sell. Under great strain she said that she had sold him already, pressed by her need, for 80 Marks to a chief. Sister pointed out to her that she was near death and asked her if she would not be baptized and become a child of God. With great effort, she whispered, "Yes, I must die. I want to be baptized. I believe in the true God." She turned then to her man to see whether he would agree and he had nothing against it. Sister and the girls prayed the Creed and the Our Father and administered Holy Baptism. The next day already, the woman passed away. In Thatsirba, Sister came once to a sick man coughing heavily with a catarrh of the chest, he was a father of six children. She applied medication and asked if he would not become a Christian, but he must renounce the devilish sacrifices, trust in God and pray to him. The patient promised all that honestly and candidly. His two sisters near him were satisfied and they promised to do the same. Sister prayed the Creed with him, made acts of contrition and sorrow and said some short prayers with him. The man was happy over her consoling words and expressed hopes that he would regain his health through her medications. On a visit next day however,

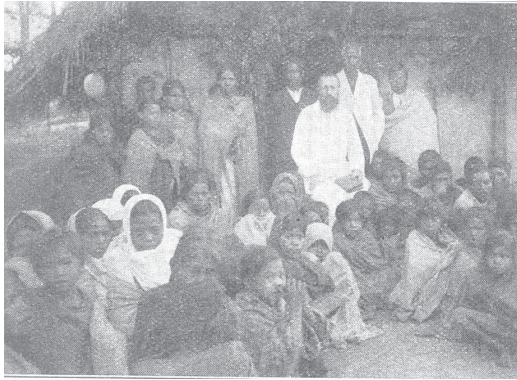
she found the patient in worse condition, and baptized him giving him the name of Joseph. After two days, he was dead. The relatives burned his body immediately and only after this, they informed the Mission of his death. "Last Sunday", Sr. Eustachia wrote to me on March 1, 1911, "I have again abducted a soul from Maukhieu. After Benediction at 3 o'clock, I got underway with about twenty girls. In the village, I inquired for the abode of a certain patient, whose condition I described somehow for I didn't know his name. Happily, we were very near his hut. I went in but didn't see anyone. Upon my call, a very weak voice answered from a corner. It was the patient, she was alone, her man and her children had gone out. No wonder that they felt uncomfortable in this dark hole with the stinking atmosphere. I asked some people standing around for some wood chips - there is nothing else to make light with - and inspected the poor woman. I was terrified to see her in such poor condition. Her whole body seemed to be one crust, except her hands. Her face was swollen; one could not see her eyes at all. To all appearances, the sufferings of the poor woman would end very soon. I told her with all care that there would be no relief for her body, she should therefore consider her immortal soul, then her sickness would help her yet to attain eternal happiness. I was told a snake had bitten the woman, and that had caused this terrible rash. She looked like a leper. I asked whether she had been baptized and was told that she was still a heathen. So, I explained that as a child of God she would suffer meritoriously and asked whether she would not become one through Holy Baptism. She consented quite willingly, so I prayed with her. She answered word by word, and when she did not understand, she asked for the meaning of it. Then I baptized her according to her wish, made a short thanksgiving prayer and took leave of our Theresia, now united with God." Sr. Eustachia had a very edifying experience on one of her missionary walks. She met a dying old woman, she lay on a mat, groaning and mourning, the hut was filled with her sorrowing relatives. The first question was, as usual,

By Divine Providence Sr. Eustachia came one day to a Methodist village, where also some pagans lived and where she intended to visit an old sick woman. Looking for the right hut, she happened unto one where a sick person lay on a mat all wrapped up. Sister believed to be in the right place, called out the name she knew, and was surprised to see a man appearing from under the wrappings, and he was highly feverish. She said some consoling words and offered him some medication. With great effort, he expressed liking of the catholic faith and asked for Baptism, which was administered right away. A few steps away Sister also found the woman she had sought. She was not so seriously ill and said that she would come to the Mission when she felt better and hoped to receive the Sacrament of Baptism there.

These few events may suffice to give us a general impression of the apostolic labours of Sr. Eustachia. From her excursions she returned full of blessed happiness, in spite of her fatigue. Sometimes she brought sundry things back when she had not been able to alleviate needs and sicknesses of children or grown-ups, or when circumstances of eventual conversion came into question. In the letter already quoted, she told me of an old blind mother she visited in Maukhieu in December 1910. "I had met her with her husband who was lame, two years ago. I asked her about him and learned that he had die a heathen. I expressed my sorrow that he had not become a child of God and told her that would be her lot too unless she converted soon. "I am going with you right away," she said. She reached under her filthy coverings for her neck chain the Khasi women usually carry and gave it to her daughter. With that, she was ready to travel. She took my arm and plodded along with me, a stick in her other hand. It was a sight to behold for the many curious onlookers. Slowly we trudged along. After a march of three hours, we arrived at Raliang to the great joy of our people there. Today the happy blind woman is our Magdalena, and lives very content in our Old Peoples Home."

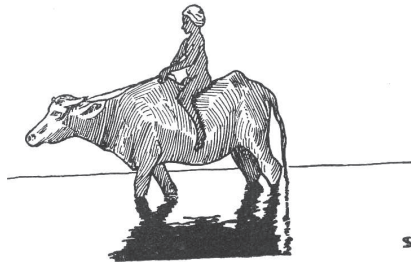
Other things not so beautiful were brought home too. In those huts, there was also much vermin, as flies and lice. Considering her untiring urge to seek out and to care for the sick, it could easily happen that Sister too received such unwelcome guests. Then a thorough cleaning had to take place after her return. “We must not shrink back from this” she wrote in *Salvatorian News* August 1913 “otherwise we have to keep away from the huts of the native people and have to refuse many a black urchin when he tried to climb Sisters lap and to throw his dirty arms around her neck as if she were his mother.” Through her tender and winning ways in the endeavour to be everything to all and to win souls for the Divine Saviour Sister Eustachia won steady growing esteem and popularity. Crowds of heathens thronged around her when she came to the villages where she was already known and accompanied her for a stretch of the way. Her activities made her more and more an Apostle among the Synteng. What Fr. Bernardin Jung wrote in his report of 1911 about the work of the Sister, at the Mission Station of Raliang applied in a special way to Sr. Eustachia. He said: “Mention must be made of the blessed activities of the Sisters, apart from the various occupations in church, school and orphanage, especially through the care of the sick and their visits in the neighbouring villages by which they make a big impression upon the population, both Protestants and pagans, and have brought many souls to heaven.” Wherever Sr. Eustachia could prove herself a faithful helper and co-worker of the Missionary in the sub-stations of the Raliang Mission, she never failed. Just to give an example: In Tangrain a young congregation of Christians had formed of about 200 souls. Their fervour was great and they did not rest until they had erected a very pleasing and roomy chapel, dedication of which was scheduled for January 1913. In spite of the long and very tiring way, Sister went there the day before accompanied by another Sister. The Missionary, Fr. Bernardine Jung was there already and was busy with carpentry making some improvements. The new Christians had

whether the patient would recover or die. The answer was that she would most likely die -this very night. Sister tried to win her over to the Lord, and that was not difficult. Those present said the woman had oftentimes expressed her willingness to accept the catholic religion. Sister prayed with her and baptized her. When the relatives noticed the calm and comfort that had come over the sick one, they asked



Sister to stay with them. This not being possible, she recommended that all those present - who were the daughters of the woman -should say some short prayers with their mother, but they pointed to their brother who was about 3 years old. He would be better at it. He was ready to do it, and asked again, whether his mother really had to die and whether there was no medicine that would help to keep her alive. Sister answered that the good God would like to have his mother with him. Then he was satisfied, knelt down besides the dying patient and said the following prayer: "My Lord and Master dear God! Have mercy on my dear mother. Take this suffering from her, take her soul up into your kingdom and make her happy. Forgive her all her sins, reject her not from your face, I pray, but be merciful and gracious to her. Amen." Coming from the lips of a pagan this was indeed a most edifying prayer.

brought green branches for decorating. The two Sisters got busy too. The altar was prepared with flowers and fresh green. Red blankets they had brought along served as coverings of the bare walls and gave the simple building a festival appearance. After this, the Sisters went to visit all the Christians in their huts, also the catechumens who lived among the Protestants and the heathens. They had encouraging words, medicine for the patient and sweets for the little ones. The children had never seen a Sister before and made big eyes on them. After supper, the gong gave the sign for the Angelus. Then the Christians hurried with torches to their chapel to listen to the instructions of the Missionary, and confessions were heard. When everything was over the Sisters sang some pious hymns with the people and praised them for their fervour. Well-deserved rest on their hard bedsteads however was not given to them. The good people continued through half the night to sing their hymns. So they rose again in the early morning, the celebration began already at 7 o'clock to give the people time to be at their work. The dedication was followed by a sermon and Sung Mass. For the singing the Sisters had to take the lead again; their presence and participation contributed a great deal to the success of the festivities. After the service the Christians surrounded them in grateful joy to take leave. Some of them accompanied the Sisters part of the way back to Raliang whilst the Missionary remained amongst his flocks.



VII

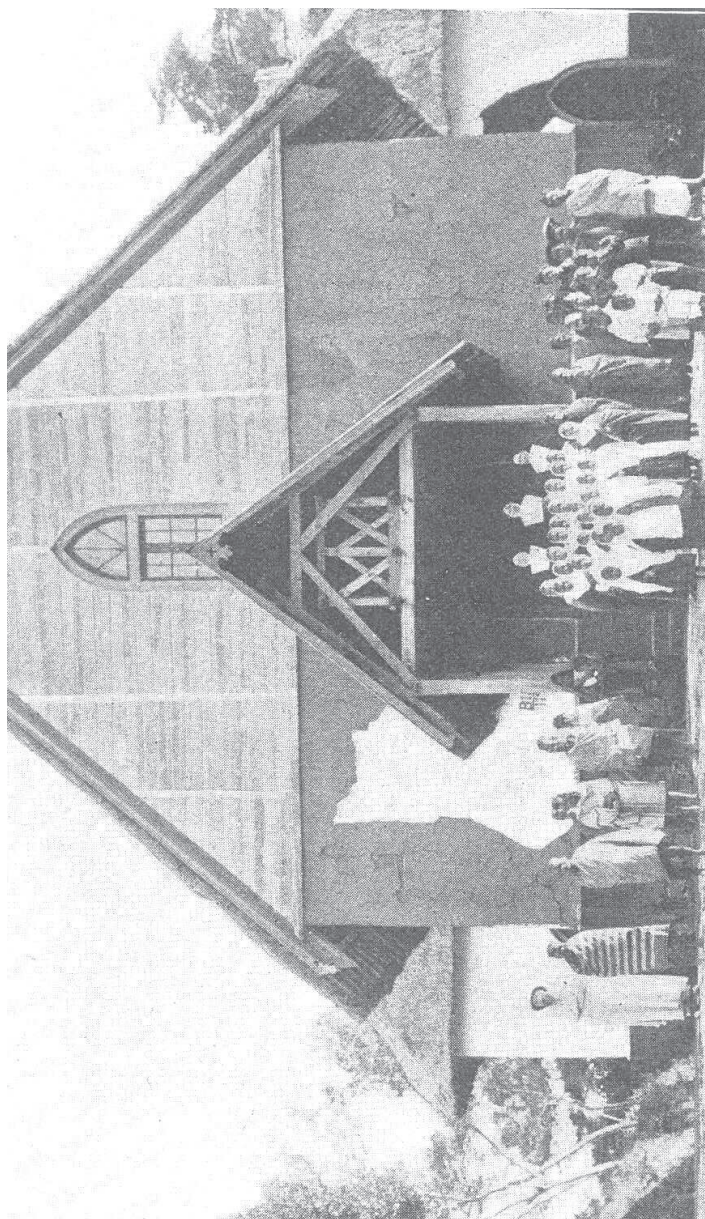
NEW CONQUESTS



Considering the untiring efforts of Sr. Eustachia, it is no wonder that the hearts of the heathens turned more and more to the Sisters and the Mission and that they frequently demanded instruction in the catholic religion and the erection of schools. Sister relates such a case: "An old mother in the heathen village of Lyrmei, five hours distant, sent her daughter not long ago to Raliang asking for a visit by the Sisters. She wanted from us some help towards the healing of her half-closed eyes. In the hope that God would bless this errand - very strenuous for a one-day trip to and fro - we got on the way at 4 o'clock in the morning, not to make the blind woman seeing again, but to help her to get out of the blindness of paganism, if possible. When we were still a few miles away from our goal, we met a worker, who asked us about the cause of our journey. It was the first time that we came into this region. He had hardly heard to whom we wanted to go, when he hurried ahead to announce our coming to the waiting woman. Her children and relatives came to meet us on the way expressing their joy that we had come. Even the blind mother had herself led down the hill where her beautiful new little house with a tin-roof stood. Round about the house there were four more straw-huts where her married sons and daughters lived. In no time, a number of heathens who followed us into the house surrounded us. The mother had some straw-mats spread out on the veranda inviting all to sit down. She herself as the head of the family and of all present had the word. There

were some questions for us, but she ordered silence and said: “Now I want to speak to the Sister.” When I asked her whether she would not become a Catholic and a child of God, she answered: “Certainly, we all would like to go to you and to the true religion, but you must send us a catechist who can stay with us and teach us.” That points out the most difficult matter, which we encounter at every occasion. Twenty catechists could be employed at once if only someone would come up with their salary. The blind woman and her relatives promised us also to build a beautiful new school. Nearly every Sunday some members of this family came to the Station to report any sickness in the neighbourhood. That was very welcome news to us, for it gave us many a chance to help a heathen to eternal happiness.” So far, the report of Sister Eustachia.

By difficulties caused by shortness of cash for the employment of catechists, Sister could not be deterred. She made of every occasion to spread the missionary work. As far as ever possible she and her Sister companions tried to step in and teach in different localities, if only once or twice a week. So the Sisters, with Sodality girls and some orphans once took a walk to the heavily populated village of Kaskein, about two hours distant. It was on Pentecost Sunday 1909. Singing hymns and other songs shorted the way, from afar they were noticed and the village became alive. Near the first house about thirty children, a number of grown-up girls, and young mothers with their babies were assembled. The little ones started crying at the sight of the white Sisters. But they were soon calmed when the nuns greeted them with “Khublei” (God bless), shook hands and said a few good words. Being questioned the people said they had no school and Sisters had never been with them. “Would you not like to learn sewing and making cloths like our orphans?” was a further question. With that, they hit the nail on the head. The bigger girls and also the women were full of joy when they heard that they too could sew with red and



blue and green threads. Over and over, they repeated their wish the Sisters should come to them. They promised to get the village elders to build them a school so that Sisters would be able to teach the children reading and writing and to visit their sick. In consequence it was the job of Sr. Eustachia to take over the teaching and instruction in needle work and thus to open the road to missionary work in this big village. Also in Nongri, Maukhien and other places schools were founded through the efforts of Sr. Eustachia, where she did the teaching.

In the following case, we have an example of how Sr. Eustachia understood to use any opportunity to erect and organize new bases. The Synteng people have the custom to carry their huts to another place after the death of a family member. They are afraid to remain at the same place where a death had occurred in the belief that the evil spirits lived there and had caused this death. As the huts consisted of nothing else but a few boards, posts and a straw roof this transfer was not difficult. On Sunday after Easter 1913, a pagan couple came to the Sisters and asked that they come and drive the evil spirits out of the hut where a woman had recently died. They did not want and could not tear it down and transport it elsewhere. Sr. Eustachia went with a companion and some of the First Communicants, but they found the hut empty and closed, the relatives had found shelter with some neighbours. In the presence of many onlookers, the Sisters and the children knelt down, said five Our Fathers and the Creed, and sprinkled the rooms with Holy Water. Thereby the owners were satisfied and their fear was banished. Sr. Eustachia found the people so well disposed and responsive, she proposed to them to place the hut at their disposal for the instruction of children until a school could be erected. Joyfully the people agreed and Sister came from now on three times a week for instructions, which were very well attended. The confidence and the kindness, which the Sisters found everywhere, were caused in the first place by their large-hearted charitableness in

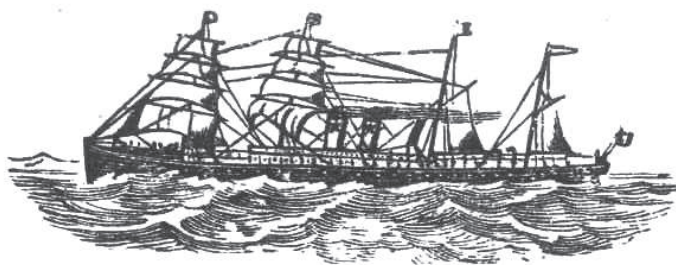
the service of the sick and the dying. The report of the Assam Mission for 1912 informs us of this fact in the short and precise words of Fr. Bernardine Jung: “The praiseworthy efforts of the Sisters in the care of the sick, also among Protestants and pagans have contributed to the fact that the heathen villages finally have given up their prejudices against us and have erected schools, where the Sisters give instructions.” For Sr. Eustachia this meant no little effort and trouble, for oftentimes three schools had to be covered on a one-day trip to a neighbouring village. Sister took her share in these activities with great fervour. The initial shyness of the children was soon overcome. What Sister tells us sounds refreshing: “It is really touching and very encouraging how the dear children meet us so trustingly. Our little scholars come toward us on the way and go with us homewards after school. If poor weather conditions prevent us to come to school, they call out to us already from afar how long they had waited for us in vain. The little shepherds leave their herds back in the hills and run to school where they then devote themselves to reading and writing with a fervour that could shame many a German pupil. Truly, that fervour is like the children: wild. Often, they throw their skate and pencil to the Sister with the words: “Now I have to look after my cattle – I’ll be right back. Before and after classes the boys devoutly take their caps off and pray with us. They want to sing with us on the way and they don’t get tired to start over again, when they are through with the little songs they have learned in school. Sometimes they talk among themselves in a way that would make you laugh. So one of the girls said: “Now I am not afraid of the Sister any more. I can take her already by her hand; I used to run away when I saw her.” Every child wants to be near the Sister, all hang on our cloths and it takes all care not to step on their toes.”

Of course, with all the other subjects of instruction religion was in no ways neglected. It is interesting how Sr. Eustachia describes the beginnings of religious instruction in a heathen village. “When we

pray before and after school the little heathen surround us with open mouths and searching eyes. Instinctively they fold their hands and try to imitate the Sign of the Cross or they play around with our rosary. And with one voice the children of Mulei asked us to bring one for each of them. When we say they must learn to pray first, they wanted to learn and paid great attention. They also like to have Holy Pictures. That gives us a good opportunity to explanations and so to lead them to the Christian truths. One finds really bright and talented children and we have good hopes to win them to our true faith.”

So the seed of the faith was sown into the heathen hearts in these primitive schools in the heathen villages, and this sowing did not remain without reaction on the grown-ups. In Laskein a kindly old pagan granted the Sisters the use of his hut, until a new school building could be erected, and sometimes he listened to their teaching. One day he said to Sr. Eustachia that he was so pleased with her prayers before classes, and that he did the same before sowing his rice. He recited the whole prayer consisting of petitions for many and great fruits. He also showed how he could make the sign of the cross, using all the same words, just as he had heard them from Sister during class. And the Mission became known through the school, as the children naturally told at home what they had learned from the Sisters. That brought more contacts with the area and resulted in invitations to come to the Sunday services in the Mission Station. And the people came. Sr. Eustachia met a pagan, half-blinded, with whom she exchanged a few consoling words. Next Sunday this man had bring himself to Services at Raliang, one hour away. After that, he told the pagans in his village that he had forgotten all his hunger and thirst by all that he had heard and seen. And he had himself instructed in the holy Faith. School days in the heathen villages were also used by the Sisters to visit the sick and to give out medications. Gradually instructions of the adults had to be added, that is of catechumens who desired Baptism. So, the work of

the Sisters grew more and more, but also the results of these efforts to make conquests for the Divine Saviour.



VIII

NATIVE MISSION SISTERS



Her former Superior wrote of Sr. Eustachia that she succeeded by her zealous teaching activities in winning a few girls for the religious life. It was no small task to lead the Khasi and Synteng to an understanding of the idea of religious life. The single state is unknown to them and childless marriage means calamity. It is not only the duty of the children to preserve the name of the family and to propagate the tribe; religious reasons too have to be considered. It is the special obligation of the children to sacrifices and religious ceremonies after the death of parents, without which their souls would not find rest in the other world. Under these circumstances, it can be seen that the prevailing views and customs provided no interest for and were even hostile to the introduction of a “religious state”. But Sr. Eustachia had success in her burning fervour and religious enthusiasm in overcoming these barriers. She made a beginning with a girl by the name of Anna. She came of a family already converted, which belonged to the line of tribal chiefs and was well esteemed. Anna lived with the Sisters for her education and proved herself very faithful and devoted, diligent and skilful in every line. By word and example, Sr. Eustachia awoke in the girl the resolution to break the ice and to become the first missionary Sister among the Khasi. According to their laws of inheritance, the whole possession of her well-to-do mother would have come to her as the youngest

daughter. She was ready to renounce everything in order to dedicate herself totally to the Lord, and she would leave everything, the hut, the cattle, the rice fields to her next youngest sister. Her mother gave her some years' time to think it all over and these years were not easy for her. She had to fight many a hot battle. Some reason was always found to get her home, now it was the pretended sickness of her mother, then the death of a sister - but all these reasons were only pretexts to oppose her decision. But the girl always returned to the Sisters unshaken in her resolution. Some other girls who wanted to join were unable to resist the objections and difficulties, which were raised by parents and relatives. But two, besides Anna, remained steadfast. One of them was Karolina. As a little girl she had in 1910 been offered for sale by her mother, with three younger ones. The mother wanted 70 Marks for her alone as she was already able to work, but there was not sufficient money available, and the Sisters bought only the three smaller ones, whilst neighbouring Protestants bought the bigger girl. Karolina could visit the other three oftentimes and went also to church with them. Once she asked the Sisters to buy her too, so she too could become catholic. Benefactors in Europe provided the necessary sum, and a deal was made with the Protestant neighbour who handed the girl over to the Sisters for the same sum of 70 Marks. In the beginning, Karolina caused some difficulties by her wild behaviour, but after her first Communion, she appeared altogether changed. From now on, she was the good guardian angel of her little sisters. Their heathen mother came often to urge the one or the other by some promise to go with her, having in mind to sell them yet. Karolina understood the intent of her mother and hurried to the Mission as soon as she caught sight of her. Once the four hid in the sacristy for hours when they learned that their mother stood waiting for them in front of the church. They were on no account willing to go back into the heathen surroundings. There was no need of much talking by Sr. Eustachia to let the grace of God work in the heart of Karolina and to lead

her to Gods service. Her evident talents seemed to destine her from the outset to be of great help in schoolwork. A third girl joined the group of devoted souls. It was Barbara from St. Xavier, a small branch station of Raliang. On the occasion of the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the Sisters found when making their rounds a very sick girl to whom they gave the needed care. Already the next day a Christian came to



Raliang asking the Missionary to come, as the sick girl had desired to be baptized. On the feast of St. Barbara, she received Baptism and the name of the Saint. Later on, the girl came to the Sisters where she was noticed by her quiet and modest ways making herself useful in kitchen and garden. So, the three, Anna, Karolina and Barbara were the first of the native Sisters of Assam. December 17, 1911 was then a day of special celebration for the Raliang Mission. After three days of spiritual exercises, the three maids were solemnly invested by the Prefect Apostolic (Fr. Christophorus Becker SDS). For the whole community it was an impressive ceremony. The dress of the new Sisters was in accordance with native customs very simple. A long frock, made of brown cotton, a little cross on the chest, a rosary on the girdle and light brown veil distinguished them from now on

from their former companions. The three happy Sisters left the church with joyful countenance and the impression they made was noticeable among the multitude waiting outside the church for their coming. When they appeared, the people cried out: "We thank the Lord who has brought such a blessing upon our land. May God grant us that our children too may choose such a vocation." Sister Eustachia undertook the introduction of the new Sisters into the spiritual life and their future profession. That required special patience especially with regard to obedience. The Khasi woman doesn't know much about obeying. The girl is or becomes after the death of the mother the head of the house, holds the sceptre and is used to command. It was no small sacrifice to give up such customs and to lead in every respect a life of submissive obedience. But they progressed under the guidance of their capable mistress in every way. Through their exact knowledge of the language and customs, the new Sisters were at the same time of excellent help for the European Sisters. In house and school, in the education of children, visits to the sick and instructions in various female occupations they were of great advantage and supported the Missionary work energetically.



IX

DAYS OF TRIBULATION

shrill dissonance - the outbreak of the War of 1914 - came over the silent, devote, God-centred work of Sister Eustachia. There were no serious consequences in the beginning, apart from annoying limitations, minor vexations and the disconnection of traffic with the home country. So life went on until July 1915, when all German Missionaries, including the Prefect Apostolic were taken to the prisoners-of-war camp of Ahmednagar. The priests stationed in the outer stations in the Khasi Mountains had already been brought together in the Capital of Shillong. Therefore, neither the Sisters could remain in Raliang and their blessed activities were abruptly broken off. For the departure of the Missionaries on July 9, 1915 all Salvatorian Sisters were assembled in Shillong. They stood before the church door to give farewell to the departing, to express their sincere wishes and to receive the last blessings from the Superior of the Assam Mission. In spite of the heartrending lamentations of the Christians, the Sisters remained brave in order not to make the separation more painful, and pious resignation could be noticed in their features. At that time already there were rumours that the Sisters too would have to suffer the same fate of enforced removal from the Mission, but what was thought not to be possible, became a bitter reality. On August 20, 1915 the acting Administrator of the Mission received notice from the Government that the German Salvatorian Sisters should be ready on any day appointed by the Government to leave for Germany; it would not be

before September 9. Personal remonstrations of the Administrator and efforts to have the Sisters kept in the interest of the orphans, the sick



and the aged, and the general missionary work remained in vain. Sister Eustachia received permission to return with the Superior of the Sisters to Raliang in order to regulate things there and to pack their personal effects. They had to return to Shillong within ten days. This last trip to Raliang was very hard. Provisions had to be made for the sick and the aged, the orphans and the young people, and their whole property. The lament of the people was hard to

bear; consoling words and admonitions had to be given. A period of trials lay ahead. All that the great fervour of Missionaries and Sisters had created over the years with difficulties and sacrifices seemed to be shaking and breaking' down. Only protection from above could give consolation and help. For the Sisters in Shillong the days passed slowly, any day could bring the order of expulsion, but September and October

passed without bringing a settlement of the sad affair. The Sisters went about their ordinary occupations and continued with their charitable work. But something special remained for Sr. Eustachia to do: The aged Superior of the English Ladies (Inst. BMV) Mother Mechtilda Costelloe, President of the English Highschool for girls and Boarding School in Shillong was very close to the Missionaries. She had a great attachment to the Prefect Apostolic through whom the founding of her Institute at Shillong was made possible and became a reality. These Sisters, being of Irish nationality could remain at their post without interference, but the treatment of the German Missionaries touched the heart of this good soul, who was advanced in years so much that a severe illness befell her from which she should not recover. Again and again she inquired about the prisoners, praying for them and sending little refreshments. For Mother Mechtilda it was a great consolation that she could have Sister Eustachia as a nurse - her dear little Saint - in her last sickness. October 30, 1915 she took leave from this miserable world, Sr. Eustachia closed her tired eyes. The next day Sister wrote me in prison vamp: "Our dear Mother Mechtilda has gone to her beloved to receive the reward for all she has done for his honour. I nursed her for seven nights and was with her to the last moment. As I entered her room the evening before her death to spend the night with her, she gripped my hand and said under great strain: Have you no news from dear Rev. Father Prefect? These were her last words. She was conscious until a few hours before death. In her suffering she was helpless like a child, always kind and grateful for everything I could do for her and she used to lay her hand upon my head saying: God bless you for it."

On November 5, 1915, the uncertainty came to an end for the German Mission Sisters with an official notice that they had to leave Shillong on the 15th. The departure had been long delayed, and now they had to face the change from the Indian climate to the European winter for which they were, esp. with regard to clothing, not prepared.

It was of little consolation for the Sisters, considering the harsh treatment after years of selfless efforts on behalf of the country and its population, that the government responding to the request of the Deputy Administrator granted 60 Rs. for each of the ten Sisters for warm clothing, and another 200 Rs. to Sister Superior for any other needs during the journey. The apostolic spirit and her pious frame of mind never left Sr. Eustachia. She wrote me on November 7: “The day of our deportation is imminent, so I want to say a last farewell and a hearty Thank you to your paternal love you have shown me during the ten years in the Mission. Crosses have not been wanting, but all have passed and I have hopes that this one also will pass, though it may be the heaviest of all. May the sacrifices, which we have to bring, contribute to the honour of God, and the salvation of souls! With this intention we have begun our missionary work ten years ago and with it we will end it. I wish and pray to God that he may richly bless all the sacrifices and sufferings you have borne, Most Rev. Father Prefect and grant you happier days in the future. I beg your blessing and recommend myself to your prayers. With deepest reverence and respect, I am your in Christo devoted and obedient daughter Sister Eustachia SDS.”

On November 14 in the afternoon, the native Christians arranged a hearty farewell party for the Sisters in the Girl’s school the Sisters had erected for the Khasis. The scenes, which occurred the following morning, were yet more heartrending, and they got on the nerves of the poor Sisters. The poor children cried and would not let go of their good mothers, the Sisters. The Christians shed tears and lamented and even the English people present could not suppress their tears. Was it really necessary to bring such a calamity and such suffering upon a poor people and their greatest benefactors in a corner of the world so far removed, in order to win a war thousands of miles away, these godly women had nothing to do with, except that they belonged to a hated nation that had been victorious up to then? The truck, which provided

for the public traffic between Shillong and Guwahati in the valley of the Brahmaputra, took the Sisters aboard. A Police Superintendent by the name of Shuttleworth accompanied them. Their mind was depressed. In Guwahati, they took the train, which brought them in the afternoon of the next day to Kolkata. There the SS Golconda waited already to take them to Europe. The police escort delivered them to the ship's authorities. All of the 500 passengers were exiled Germans: Consular officers, merchants, protestant Missionaries with wives and children, twenty catholic priests, some missionary Brothers and twenty-seven Sisters. The ship had been in use as a freighter, had only poor accommodations for so many, and presented little chance of moving about. She had no authority to use the shorter and direct way through the Suez Channel, so the route went around Africa, it took almost two months until the destination, the harbour of Tilbury near London was reached. From here, a Dutch Steamer brought the exiles to Vlissingen where, after they had passed through a heavy storm crossing the Channel, they were given a friendly welcome and were treated by the Red Cross - From Kolkata to Vlissingen the passengers had no chance to step on land. From Vlissingen, the train brought them into the German homelands where new goals and activities awaited them. With the departure of the German Salvatorians from the Indian Missions, the work of Sister Eustachia had come to an unhoped for and forcible end. This was the heaviest cross for her. By Gods will and providence, she was to devote her yet remaining energy to another apostolic task.



X

WAR TIME SERVICE



fter a short vacation in her paternal home in Eitelbrunn Sr. Eustachia was sent in March 1916 to Hungary where she was to share in the care of wounded soldiers in the Hospital at Nagyikinda.

This hospital consisted of several pavilions situated in a beautiful park. Here Sister became acquainted with the full horrors of war, but with all the work involved, this healthy abode strengthened so much that she was convinced to have regained her vigour and her rosy looks of the year 1906 when she first went to India. A letter, which she wrote on August 13, 1916, shows how her thoughts still dwelt in the foreign missions. She says: "Over my work here I don't forget the Missions. God may keep them for us or give us another field. Thanks to him that we could do so much during the ten years of our stay there. I think that for those who love God everything will turn to the best, also this expulsion from our Mission field."

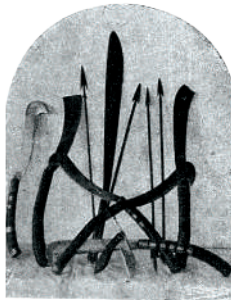
In the extensive buildings of the Orphanage in Lainz in the 13th district of Vienna, a large tract had been arranged as a Reserve Hospital in which the Salvatorian Sisters assumed the nursing, and here Sr. Eustachia was placed in March 1917. At first, she took care of the sick orphan boys who soon grew very fond of their new nurse, for she not only provided well for them but she had many interesting stories and adventures to tell of her missionary life in India, and of elephants, jackals, snakes, apes and bears. The little patients listened attentively and breathlessly, there was no end of wondering and asking questions, and over these interesting tales, they forgot their pains. After a short

while Sr. Eustachia, much to the sorrow of the boys was transferred to the nursing of the wounded soldiers in the Reserve Hospital, for a time in the section of the Officers. Always and everywhere, she showed the same pleasant calm and cheerfulness of her mind. With great conscientiousness, rare, patience and admirable readiness of sacrifice she nursed the sick, nothing was too much for her if it meant to lessen their pains. "If a patient wanted to be bandaged ten times a day, she did it, always with the same patience and friendliness as at the first time", a fellow Sister relates. An old Major was totally lame and had to be nursed like a child. He was so fond of her that he often said: "A mother could not be better than the good Sister Eustachia." In this way, she won the love and the confidence of all her patients. It was a beautiful picture to see these hard men of war, like children, assembled around her and listening with attention to her words, telling of her experiences in the Missions. A wide field was also opened to her untiring spiritual fervour. Many an erring soul had in the grave time of war thrown his faith in God overboard. The good words and admonitions of the Sister, her example, the heaven of peace and love, which was spread over her led many back on the right way; many a one was prepared for a good death and for heaven. The principal power she relied on was the apostolate of prayer. "As long as one can pray for anyone, one must not give him up for lost" was her conviction. For her spiritual exercises, she found always the needed time, in spite of all her work, and over and above these she used every free moment for prayer. The great ward was separated from the chapel by a small room in which Sr. Eustachia knelt during her night watch whenever her help was not required by the patients. The door to the ward remained open so that she was always at their disposal. Behind the other wall, she knew the presence of the great specialist of souls in the Blessed Sacrament. To him she always could present the interests of her charges, whose sickness of soul, as she said, was often more severe than that of the body. "I was edified", so a fellow Sister, "when I found her praying at the change of the

watch.” Should the inflow of sick and wounded ease up at times, Sr. Eustachia loved to spend the remaining free time in the chapel where she would kneel for hours before the tabernacle, using the great book of the Perpetual Adoration. She said often: “My only wish would be that Perpetual Adoration would be introduced in our community. If one gets on in years and cannot be so active anymore, one can at least pray much”. With all her piety, the good Sister was always cheerful and happy. This was the Reflection of her submission to the divine will, to which to cling she always strove and to which she referred all happenings, pleasant or unpleasant. In the circle of her fellow Sisters, she was therefore always welcome. Wherever possible she sought to communicate of her love and to give joy to others. “In our common recreation she cheered us up through her witty and interesting ideas. She was the joy of her companions. She knew also how to bring edifying points into our conversation, so that one could learn from her in every respect. We liked best to listen to her relating experiences in India and her contacts with her dear Khasis. That was her real theme, she was so absorbed in it that we young Sisters also got encouraged in favour of the Missions.” At the end of October, an influenza epidemic broke out in the Orphanage, which soon befell 150 boys. In order to provide room for them three wards occupied by the soldiers had to be vacated. Sr. Eustachia shared with other Sisters in the care of the boys. Thanks to the untiring efforts of the Sisters, not one of them became a victim of this insidious illness. When the crisis had passed, the resistance of Sr. Eustachia had also given way, so that she herself had to be confined to bed for several days. At that time already, the beginning of her ailment was noticeable, but Sister continued working in the service of the sick and wounded until the closing of the Reserve Hospital. After that, another task awaited her: The Superior of the house Sister Bernarda fell seriously ill soon after Christmas 1918. She wanted to have Sr. Eustachia for her nurse. With the great pains she was suffering, it was a great comfort to her that Sister understood so

well how to pray and to console. She recited prayers to her or read to her about submission to the divine will. Sr. Eustachia did not take notice of her own pains and devoted herself entirely to the care of her dear patient. Again and again she had a consoling word for her. But gradually the condition of Sr. Eustachia worsened. A large tumour had formed at her side, which troubled her much. In January 1919 an operation was performed, but Sister did not want to stay in bed whilst the sick Superior would miss her comforter. So, her own situation grew worst and her physician insisted that she should seek recovery in her Bavarian home. This decision meant great suffering for both her and the Superior, but it was accepted by both as the will of God. At the end of February Sr. Eustachia left Vienna. From Munich, she sent the Superior a card with the picture of St. Joseph with some words of consolation. This pleased the patient so much that she kept it near her bed until her death on March 25.

About the work of Sr. Eustachia in Vienna the Commanding Officer of Res. Hospital 20 has made the following statements: "The religious Sister Eustachia Bauer has during this time, through her extraordinary diligence, special zeal and exemplary prudence earned for herself not only fullest satisfaction and appreciation of her Superiors, but also the esteem and love of the innumerable patients entrusted to her nursing and care." A telling memorial to her dedication in the service of the victims of war.



XI

WAY OF THE CROSS



n Munich, the Salvatorian Sisters were in charge of nursing in the Reserve Hospital on Pappenheimerstrasse. There Sr. Eustachia wanted to make a short stop. The local Superior took her at once to a physician who stated the need of an immediate operation, which was then performed in the surgical clinic of the Hospital on the right bank of the Isar. The weeks Sr. Eustachia spent there belonged to a stormy period of history. Munich was under the regime of the "Counsels Republic" the head of which was Kurt Eisner. He was shot down on the open street by young Count Arco who himself was severely wounded and was brought to the Clinic where he was guarded by Red Army men. Sr. Eustachia was lodged in an adjoining room. These exciting events were certainly not very favourable to a quiet recovery. But she did not lose her equanimity - all this was for her another motive to pray. When she was able again to get up, I visited her once, without finding her in her room. Asking for her, I was told by the attending Nun: "Oh, the Sister Eustachia you would find only in the house Chapel". So it was, and so it happened again at various visits during the next few days. Dismissed from the Clinic, Sister went to her home parish for a little more rest. The good Pastor there was very concerned about her. Then her Superior sent her to the Salvatorian College at Passau where some Sisters had taken over the household on account of the war conditions. Here she was

busy with sewing. But her health would not improve noticeably. Therefore, the Superior General decided to call her into her house at Obermais near Meran, at that time the seat of the Generalate and of the Novitiate. The good climate of the world-renowned health-resort should restore Sr. Eustachia to complete health - so it was thought. In fall, she came on her passage to the South to Munich. In consequence of the peace treaty, Meran with South Tyrol had passed under Italian domination, and Sister thought that the formalities concerning her passport could be easily settled at the Italian Consulate in Munich. But there were difficulties as the entry permit could be applied for only at the authorities in Italy. And that took several weeks. This time was not left unused by Sr. Eustachia - the sanctuary of the Mother of God in the Herzogspitalkirche was a great attraction to her. For the rest she was busy with needle-work, wrote articles for Mission Magazines and lectured to young ladies' associations, awaking great enthusiasm for the Missions.

The hope to find recovery in Meran, proved vain, her stay there turned into a real Way of the Cross for Sr. Eustachia. In spite of the means, which the medical arts and love could suggest to her fellow-sisters, her condition only worsened. After a short time, she became completely bedridden. She wrote to me on December 17, 1920 from her sickbed: "It seems that through my sufferings I must make a contribution that our Missionaries are allowed to return to Assam, for they are increasing, on the other hand I am looking so well as if nothing was wrong with me. God's will be done!" Rich blessings streamed forth from the good Sister's sickroom for the whole house during the two years of her illness. Whoever had any request to make, came to her, all were helped through her prayer and her sacrifice in suffering, she had always words of encouragement, consolation or good advice. And as long as she could she busied herself with some small needlework. She showed lively interest in everything that happened, and in her

sickbed she wrote the chronicle of the house. There was no home-celebration for which she did not gladden her companions' hearts by a self-composed poem. Thankful as she was for all the charitable attention, she was tired out by long visits and she thought time could be better employed by prayer.

As long as possible, she dragged herself, supported by two canes, to the house-chapel where she devoted whole hours to prayer. In the beginning of 1921, a large abscess formed on her left knee so that she could no longer stand up and use her foot, so on her request she was carried to service and choir to the chapel. Until three weeks before death she always took part in the recital of the Office loudly and joyfully. Then it became an impossibility and she said it alone on her bed of pains. The cosy little chapel of the Salvatorians in Obermais-Meran was dedicated to the Mother of Good Counsel and really invited to prayer. Here Sr. Eustachia could apply herself to her hearts content to her favourite devotions, the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin. Besides of one hour's meditation and the other daily devotions, she kept daily one hour of adoration, prayed the Stations of the Cross, seven Our Fathers in honour of the Holy Spirit and other devotions. In her hand, she always held the Rosary whenever she was not otherwise occupied. She had so many requests and needs to pray for! Patience is the test of pious souls and it was needed by Sr. Eustachia in rich measures, to all her other painful sufferings dropsy was added $\frac{3}{4}$ years before death. The pains of her side wound which would not heal, and five other tuberculous wounds on her back made laying down a real cross. But no word of complaint came from her lips, she knew only one thing: To do the will of God and she considered everything a grace from God. For every smallest help and easement, she was grateful, and all that was also for her a token of the goodness of God. With all her pains, she was cheerful and serene. Her truly apostolic spirit made her ready for any sacrifice. "In the long run", so

in a letter of April 17, 1921 “my mission on the sick-bed will harvest more souls than I would have won during this time in Assam.” She was convinced of the meaning and the importance of the Apostolate of Suffering, besides the Apostolate of work and prayer. The thought of the Missions always filled her mind as a letter of June 30, 1921 shows which she supposed would be the last one of her life: “God’s Holy Will be done. I shall continue my mission in eternity as far as I will be permitted. God has created me to be a Missionary, so he will have no objection to my urging in missionary matters. Joyfully I have lived and joyfully I will undergo death - it shall be a sacrifice of petition for the Mission. God grant that the doors of the Mission soon be opened again. May you, Rev. Father Prefect experience many joys yet and may God make compensation for everything that has fallen victim to the war years. My sincerest thanks for the confidence that you have placed in me in the Missions. I shall treasure it forever. And I humbly ask forgiveness for all offences you had to endure from me.” The work of the Foreign Missions has a good advocate in Sr. Eustachia. Sr. Theresia who nursed her with great care by day and by night and who gained a deep insight in her virtuous life says of her: “She was for us an example of every virtue and remained a Missionary until the end.” Sr. Eustachia knew how to fill everyone who came in touch with her with her own enthusiasm for Mission work. “All for God and the salvation of souls. Enthusiasm for the Missions is great here. Many candidates are reporting for the Missions. A work so holy is really worth the greatest sacrifices. If I were well, no Mission would be too poor nor too onerous in whatever pagan country it would be. Everywhere souls are of equal value and where there are the greatest difficulties, there life would be the most tolerable. One lives only once and only there one is able to show God how much one loves him. His Holy Will shall be adored. In my prayers I always remember you and the affairs of the Missions.”

Our converts and the cause of the Missions took always a prominent place in her daily prayers. On the feast of the Assumption 1921, the last one she celebrated on earth, she said with greatest fervour and devotion ten thousand Aves to obtain for us a good mission field. Returning from the fourth General Chapter of the Salvatorians in Rome, where the question of the Missions was one of the main topics of discussion, I was able to visit Sr. Eustachia in Meran in October 1921. She was happy to learn that we would take over a new mission field, since India remained closed for us. The memory of all the souls she had won in India for the Saviour, and the many Baptisms she had administered brightened the eve of her life. Her voice became strong, her pure eyes shone with joy and fiery zeal when she spoke about it: “Every soul I was able to save makes me so glad and happy! How thankful I am to God for it! I would not have believed that a person would find such happiness and satisfaction in a total surrender to the will of God. I will be glad to die but if I would to forgo a hundred years of eternal bliss in order to gain one more soul, I would gladly do it. If God however will summon me home, I shall never cease to pray at his throne for our new Mission.”

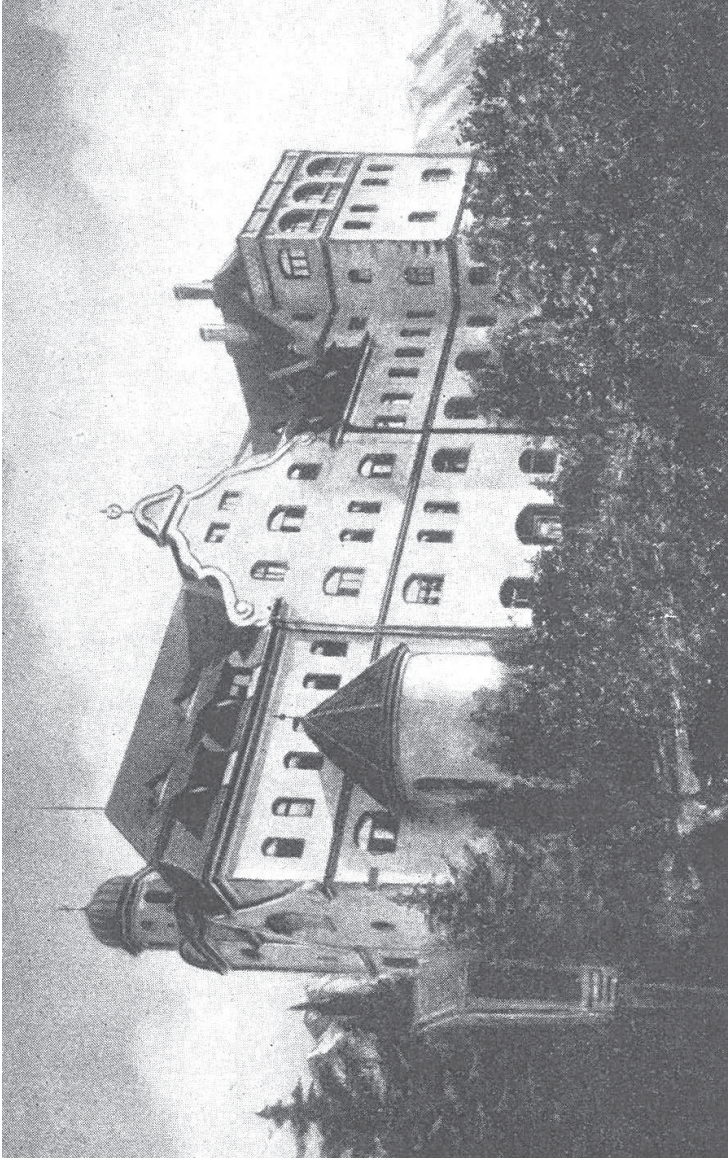
XII

THE CROWN OF LIFE



In the second Sunday of October 1921 her condition had changed so much that she could not be carried to the Chapel any more, but she did not let off with her many prayers. Just now in October, the Rosary was her great joy. Already before 5 o'clock in the morning, she said to her nurse: "I have cut my white, red and yellow roses already for the dear Mother of Heaven", meaning she had already recited her first three rosaries. The good Baroness Lydia von Hoffmann had great sympathy with Sisters suffering and was very solicitous about her with motherly care. In October, she sent her nearly every day a bouquet of fresh roses. The patient was delighted over it and thought them so beautiful as if the dear Mother of Heaven had sent from paradise already. The intensity of her suffering increased in the last weeks constantly. Her mouth and throat became so sore that, she only with great pains could swallow a few drops of milk, tee or wine. "Never before" she said, "have I understood the word of Jesus as well as now, now I know it!" She united her sufferings with those of the crucified Saviour and rejoiced in becoming so much like him. A great consolation for her was always pronouncing the Holy Name of Jesus. "Oh, if they only knew what love and interior sweetness it gives me to pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus! I would go through the whole monastery and again and again call out Jesus, Jesus!" One could hear her calling out in her great pains: "Yes, I want to suffer, I love him above all!" Her

great soul, never narrow-minded still thought of making her suffering fruitful for others. Sr. Theresia told us: “Four days before her death Sr. Eustachia said: The next nine days we like to offer up for Ven. Mother (Superior General), Rev. Fr. General of the Salvatorians, Rev. Fr. Prefect Becker and two other priests. But only three days were left for this offering, as death intervened.” The pains the good Sister had to bear increased during these last days in a most distressing way, yet she remained united to God, calmly and patiently. In the early morning of November 3, she said as her nurse made her bed: “I am so glad, so glad!” Sister was astonished, as she had to suffer so much and asked for the reason. The answer was: “The Blessed Sacrament is coming soon. Heart of Jesus remember me!” During the two years of her sickness, Sr. Eustachia had received Holy Communion daily, she was grateful to Fr. Superior Wolfgang Rusch. “From heaven I shall be grateful to him for this blessing.” Four times, she had received Extreme Unction, due to the changes in her condition from improvement to renewed danger of death. She received her last Holy Communion on November 3. She thanked her nurses and asked all those present forgiveness for her faults. When the Superior, Sr. Martha in the course of the afternoon said to her, full of sympathy: “Dear Sister, now you can hardly stand it anymore with all your pains”, she answered: “O yes, the dear God will give me strength to suffer.” The reward for a life so rich in sacrifice came near, awaited the faithful servant and patient sufferer, a life, which knows no toil, no pain, no sorrow, but only untroubled joy without end. At half past seven in the evening, a haemorrhage occurred and shortly after, she passed away into eternity. It was just her 49th birthday. The four Assistants General of the Congregation, Mother Superior, nearly all the Sisters of the house and Fr. Superior Wolfgang Rusch were kneeling around the deathbed in prayer. “She has led the life of a true Apostle of Christ and has died the death of a Saint.” In these words of the nurse of the deceased summed up the contents of this life. Everyone who had had contact with Sister Eustachia had



this feeling. If a place is holy ground which a good man has stepped on, it is all the more that where a saintly soul has suffered and has returned home to her Lord and Master. I consider it a special blessing that Sister Eustachia could die in this house, which I in 1905 had erected with manifold apprehensions and difficulties. May her spirit continue to work in all who will have the happiness here to serve the Divine Saviour or to prepare for his service! The mortal frame of the faithful servant of Christ was laid out first in her sickroom and on the third day in the chapel. Happy and content as in life she looked also in death. After the ritual blessing, the body was carried to the grave on November 6 in the afternoon. Girls in white carrying white flowers opened the funeral procession, the novices followed with bouquets and wreaths, four strong youths clad in the handsome native costume of the country carried the coffin, decorated with wreaths and white flowers. Besides the Sisters, six priests attended the funeral, an honour well deserved by the deceased who had during all her life such a great esteem for the priesthood. With the singing of the Magnificat, the thanksgiving hymn of the Mother of God, the coffin was lowered into the grave. A golden sunset adorned the firmament; the sun had gone home, not forever, but to awaken in new radiance. It was almost a first greeting of the departed. She had gone, not to die, but to rise again to a new life. A reflection of her loving apostolic heart and a shining example have remained for us beyond her death, a dear bequest and valuable stimulus. Mourning with the family of her fellow Sisters the Mission Superior of past years bows down to the mount, in the Tyrolese mountains. It is covering the faithful and devoted co-worker in the distant Indian Mission. She may have had, like us poor humans, her faults and imperfections, but he cannot remember to have ever noticed on her golden soul anything of lesser goodness and beauty. Thanks be to God under whose sun of grace such a choice fruit has ripened. It will be an everlasting honour for the Sisters of the Divine Saviour that her soul could take root and flourish in their garden. Her

assistance in the Missions would have remained for us of inestimable value. But wherever we shall unfold the banner of the Mission, her good spirit will hover around us and be with us. At the throne of God, she will become the special advocate of our Missionary work, as she has promised. And we put our trust in the promise of a saintly Missionary.





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