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Priest and Pioneer

A MEMOIR OF FATHER OSMUND VICTOR, C.R.
OF SOUTH AFRICA

BY
DORIS THOMPSON

With a Preface by
Sir John Kennedy
(Author of *The Business of War*)

and a Foreword by
Lord Malvern



THE FAITH PRESS, LTD.
7 TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1
MOREHOUSE - GORHAM CO., NEW YORK, U.S.A.

FOREWORD

by LORD MALVERN

FATHER VICTOR was Dean of Salisbury for a period of fourteen years during the period I was Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia.

He was a great but humble man, full of wisdom and learning, who possessed the gift of being able to teach others.

His unbounded energy and drive enabled him not only to fill his Cathedral Church with his great family of worshippers, it also enabled him to play a great part in furnishing the granite shell which was Salisbury Cathedral when he was appointed Dean.

To present and future generations of Salisbury, the Cathedral Cloisters will ever be a memorial to this splendid Dean.

I am deeply grateful for the friendship I received from Osmund Victor but even more for the great work he did for the country and for Mashonaland in particular.

Whilst never sacrificing any of his principles his wisdom enabled him to understand the very great difficulties in this land inhabited by people of different colours and diverse cultures.

Great Christian, scholar, teacher, architect and builder, Father Victor, friend of all who knew him, left his mark on Mashonaland, particularly Salisbury and the Cathedral, also the seven parishes created around Salisbury largely by his assistance.

Lastly, and most important, he left his great spiritual mark on those whom he attracted to worship with him in the Cathedral.

MALVERN.

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PREFACE

by SIR JOHN KENNEDY

FATHER OSMUND VICTOR must rank amongst the greatest of the devoted band of churchmen who have given their lives to the Church in South Africa and Rhodesia.

Except for an interlude of war service in France, he lived and worked in Southern Africa for forty years.

For more than twenty years he was a missionary. For much of that time he was Archbishop's Commissary for Missions, and he flashed like a meteor up and down the 'Salient of South Africa' as he called it, leaving behind him a trail of sparks which kindled into flame, spiritually in inspired teaching, and materially in the new and beautiful churches he designed and which grew up wherever he went.

For the last fifteen years, while he was Dean of Salisbury, his parish was smaller but still vast, stretching north as far as the Zambesi two hundred miles away. Here his zest, faith, and tireless energy continued to find expression in enlightened and memorable teaching and preaching, and again his love of architecture bore fruit in the planning and creation of daughter churches and cloisters, and in the adornment of his cathedral.

His ministry was surely unique in its range and quality.

In this book Miss Thompson has succeeded to a remarkable degree in capturing something of his vivid and lovable personality, and a great debt of gratitude is due to her for setting down the record of his life. It was written for his friends, all of whom will treasure the memories it recalls, and will find that he lives again for them in its pages. But I believe a far wider circle will find inspiration and guidance in his letters and teaching which this book contains. Indeed it seems to me that it can be recommended as a *vade mecum* for every Christian worker.

JOHN KENNEDY.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

'There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

'And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.'

Acts xvi. 9, 10.

THIS little book concentrates upon the work in Africa of one of the pioneer Fathers from the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield—Father Osmund Victor.

Ordained in 1903, just as this African work was beginning, little did he realize that in seven years' time he would become a missionary on the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. From thence, his field of work would expand to cover the whole of the Transvaal; thereafter the whole Union of South Africa. At length, in the last fifteen years, he was called to Southern Rhodesia where he made a vital and lasting contribution to the work of the Anglican Church there.

It was in November, 1902, that the Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, Father Walter Frere, received a telegram asking for help from Bishop Carter, newly elected Diocesan of Pretoria, South Africa. Immediately the Community responded to the call, and three men left on December 13th, 1902, to establish a Branch House. Its home was a tumble-down old farmhouse on the outskirts of the mining centre of Johannesburg—No. 10 Sherwell Street.

It was interesting but not surprising that Bishop Carter should turn to Mirfield at this juncture. He himself had been an 'aspirant' in its early days (the Community was but ten years old in 1902). Moreover, only a Community could deal adequately with the situation. There was no money for stipends; priests must be unencumbered and able to move long distances at short notice. Austerity in buildings and in travelling conditions must be the order of the day. Quick adaptability to new and ever-changing circumstances was essential.

It was but seven months since the Peace of Vereeniging had been signed in Pretoria, on May 31st, 1902, between the Boer generals of the South African Republics and the British government. On the one hand, Louis Botha, Jan Smuts, Albert Hertzog; on the other, Lord Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa,

and Lord Kitchener, Commanding Officer of the British forces. Thus had ended the second South African War, popularly known as the Boer War.

For what purpose all this waste? Some saw it (and these not only the Afrikaner people), merely as the subduing of a proud, heroic little nation to satisfy imperialistic ambitions—Colonialism we would call it to-day. Others approved it as a necessity—a backward, unprogressive, isolationist, and impoverished people must be prevented, in the interests of peace and progress, from blocking the way to the opening up of a great, dark continent.

To understand both these points of view is essential if the responsibility of Britisher and Afrikaner alike for much in the present situation in the Union is to be justly estimated and sympathetically appraised. For 150 years British wealth and efficiency had built up a mighty empire, and in its train had brought the benefits of freedom and progress to conquered peoples. Tacitly the Britisher accepted the dogma that the Union Jack was synonymous with life and liberty. And so it seemed in South Africa in 1902.

Having concluded peace, Britain lost no time. Lord Milner was appointed first Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony; a settled government was created and capital spent to repair the damages inflicted by war upon the conquered Republics. Paternal to begin with, the Constitution developed rapidly into Representative Government in 1903, and Responsible in 1905 and 1906 respectively. Local government, education, mining assets were all developed by able young men—the 'Milner Kindergarten'—sent out to rehabilitate the country. Acts of generosity and faith culminated in the Union of South Africa in 1910. Then indeed it seemed possible that Boer and Britisher—Afrikaner and Englishman, might become welded together to form a united South African nation. Hopes were high in those days.

But in reality the second South African War was the 'swan song' of British benevolent imperialism. No generosity, no economic or constitutional progress could remove from the hearts of many the sense of bitter humiliation which defeat and forced surrender had brought with it. General Botha and General Smuts, who, after bitter suffering, had accepted the inevitable conquest, had also advocated co-operation with the British as a stepping-stone to greater opportunity. But these men were looked upon as traitors by the majority of their compatriots. These latter would wait and watch and work underground for a generation or more, in unrelenting opposition, to win the country back.

All this was as yet hidden in those early hopeful years of 1902–10, when Lord Milner and his team embarked on schemes of recon-

struction, and when Bishop Carter sent his telegram to Mirfield.

The Diocese of Pretoria had been established by Archbishop West Jones in 1878 with Bishop Bousfield as its first Diocesan. Before the Boer War there were but a handful of priests ministering to 'uitlanders'¹ in the mining centre of Johannesburg and trekking to sparsely populated country areas farther afield. Few churches existed; there was S. Mary's Church Hall, used for all purposes in Johannesburg. Parishes were non-existent; services were held, as often as not, in Dutch Reformed churches, private houses, hotel dining-rooms.

The foundations of evangelical work among Africans, whether in mine locations along the Reef, flanking Johannesburg on both sides, or in country kraals, had been laid by Canon Farmer, an intrepid pioneer missionary, struggling single-handed to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of Africans. Canon Farmer himself realized that a settled mission of at least six men was necessary if the opportunity presented by a concentrated labour force of some 200,000 on the mines, was to be met. His hope was partially fulfilled when the three men from the Community of the Resurrection arrived at the end of 1902.

The work required of these men was boundless. There was the building up of new congregations among European mining and farming communities. Upon such foundations permanent parishes would eventually grow up under their own priests. There was school work—visiting, teaching—and, indeed, in the case of S. John's College, Johannesburg, the administration of the whole school. There was African work, pastoral and evangelical; the necessity of establishing schools for Africans; the urgent need to lay the foundations of an indigenous ministry.

The scope of the work might well have dismayed any three men and could have fully employed five times that number. Remarkable were the achievements of these few. The Kingdom of God indeed came with power in those days. Who can compute the influence of this, the first overseas undertaking of the Community of the Resurrection? Their shepherding acted as leaven among the scattered little flocks, black and white, strewn as they were along that vast 'ridge of waters,' magnet for capitalist and labourer alike, fruitful soil for material ambition and scepticism.

¹ Term used to signify Britishers and other foreigners attracted to the Transvaal by the gold rush.

CHAPTER II

FATHER VICTOR'S EARLY YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1910-17

"Raise up a native priesthood in every place where you preach the Gospel," has been the commission of Christian missionaries from the earliest times, and the Church is only said to have definitely taken root in a country when its bishops and priests are native to that country. "I would rather see you ordain one indigenous priest than baptize 50,000 heathen," said Pope Innocent XI.

White Fathers in Africa, ATTWATER.

'We work for a glorious future which we are not destined to see, the golden age which has not been but will yet be. We are only morning stars shining in the dark, but the glorious morning will break. The present Mission stations (U.M.C.A.) may be broken up whether by French soldiery as in Tahiti or by Boers as in South Africa. Our duty is onward, onward. Many missions in old times seemed bad failures. Noah thought his a failure, Isaiah his, Jeremiah is sitting down weeping over his people, Ezekiel's rebellious crew are no better. St. Paul said, "All seek their own." Yet the cause of God is still carried on to more development of His Will and Character.'

DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

On September 27th, 1909, Osmund Victor was writing to his father, 'I think this Chapter may have far reaching results for me. They are in a great fix again in South Africa for men, this time for the native work.¹ . . . This means that the three left for the native work are responsible for more than they can possibly manage. . . . The work has none of the glamour of Central Africa where the native is untouched by civilization. . . . I cannot say that I feel enthusiastic about it altogether, not because it involves leaving England which I should not personally mind if called upon to do so, though it would probably be four or possibly five years before one could get a furlough. But rather because I have not felt very drawn towards the native work, and that is not a thing one can take up for a short time and then drop. Possibly however that is a thing one cannot hope to be interested in until one has got into it. In any case one realized at profession the possibility of being sent

¹ Over the generations, various terms have been used to describe the Bantu people. Each in its own period was considered the courteous appellation. So, in these early years of the century, the word 'native' (practically always used by Father Victor in his letters), was the correct expression of his day. 'Native' had replaced the name 'Kaffir,' a once honourable designation. In due time 'native' came to be considered derogatory and the word 'Bantu' replaced it. Only for a short space, however, for the black people of Africa now prefer the name 'African,' for to Africa they look as their only homeland.

out, and if the Community feel I ought to go I should be ready and bound to do so.'

Not four or five years but from 1910 to 1954 Father Victor's life centred on Africa. There were two breaks in this service; once for two years at the war in 1917, and again for nearly another two in 1937. The Union of South Africa claimed him for a quarter of a century; Southern Rhodesia for the last fifteen years. Throughout the whole of the first period he concentrated greatly upon work among Africans. Almost from the time of his arrival until his first furlough in 1914 he was in charge of the College of the Resurrection for native Ordinands and Catechists. It was founded in April 1903 at 10 Sherwell Street, Johannesburg. 'We like to remember the date,' writes Father Victor. 'It was the same month which saw the stables at Mirfield transformed into a College for the same end. It was a happy coincidence that the two colleges, as twin sisters, should set out on their work together. The work of the Ministry is one throughout the world, and there will always be a close bond of fellowship between those who, whether black or white, are proud to call themselves Sons of the Resurrection.

"Each to each may be unknown,
Wide apart their lots be thrown,
Differing tongues their lips may speak,
One be strong and one be weak—
Yet in sacrament and prayer
Each with other hath a share." ²

Mention has already been made of the pioneering work of Canon Farmer. Training of Catechists had been begun by him in Pretoria before the South African War. The College of the Resurrection commemorated and replaced this. For eight years at this Community centre, situated in a slum quarter of Johannesburg, the work was carried on under austere and limiting conditions. A move to Rosettenville was under consideration when Osmund Victor arrived; he supported it strongly, and before long he was drawing up plans for the buildings to be.

The great advantage of Rosettenville was that it was but three miles from the outskirts of the town. Mission work by the Community of the Resurrection had already begun there. A house for a native deacon, a tin building serving as a church, and S. Agnes' Industrial School for girls in charge of the Grey Ladies, were already in existence.

Rosettenville was one of the few spots within reasonable distance of the city where Africans were allowed to live. Normally residence for Africans was confined to locations some miles from the city;

² *The Thin Black Line*, O. Victor, C.R.

only domestic servants living in yard rooms behind private houses might live in the city itself.

So to Rosettenville they moved in 1912, and Father Victor's organizing and creative powers were fully occupied in its development. On May 17th, 1912, he writes, 'With regard to the College the way seemed to point to it as my work when I first came out, and I have had no cause to alter my opinion since. It is rather a new thing in Community to have a lot of constructive work of one's own to do and I like it for that reason, I think, rather than because it happens to be native. Whether it will be wise or necessary to stop at it indefinitely is a different matter and is a point on which we shall become clear when my furlough comes. At the present moment the way seems so far clear that the making of it more of an institution is the work that needs doing now. This can be done by providing buildings, increasing numbers, raising the standard of education.'

To this, therefore, he set his mind and energies. Looking back in 1914 he sums it all up, 'When on a certain Easter Tuesday a long line of waggons trailed its way across the veldt from Sherwell Street to Rosettenville carrying to its new home the Community furniture . . . a sorry collection, very much ashamed to find itself exposed to public gaze in the broad light of day . . . there came also the College buildings, a hideous pile of iron and splintered wood.

'One of the advantages, or disadvantages, of corrugated iron sheds is that they can be smashed up and pieced together again. This is what happened here, for the building of the Priory made it impossible at the same time to think of building a new College. So we settled down to work again in the old rooms, which looked dingier than ever in their new surroundings, and became less watertight than before. Then more and more students came along and something had to be done.

'When our one brick building had to do duty as kitchen, dining-room, classroom and general living room, it is obvious that not much could be expected in the way of developing College life or work.'

So he explains how kind friends contributed; one gave land for a new native church; £800 was raised and they began to build the college. In May 1913 he writes, 'The roof is on the main part of the College and the Oratory is half built. A lot of detailed work on the small windows and altar fittings which make it slow work. The new roof, corrugated iron, shines like silver at present under a brilliant moon. When painted red it is not at all unpleasing and looks very like tiling. The classrooms thrown into one make quite a noble hall, walls about fourteen feet high and open timber roof above, stained dark with heavy beams, upright posts and struts. It will hold about one hundred and fifty people. I am thinking of

covering the walls with dark red washable distemper up to four feet from the top with cream border above.'

Everything had to be done very simply of course. He goes on, 'It now remains to go forward to the completion of the whole scheme for we can hardly rest half way. Students have doubled in number, and the building so far done has not enabled us to dispense with any of our old iron rooms. Rooms for fifteen to twenty students, a workshop and a store room are immediate necessities. Later on, the building of the tower will complete the entire scheme.'

So it all began. It would be continued over the years to make of the Priory, Rosettenville, a power house of African work with church, college, school, Retreat House, all provided for in dignity and simplicity.

Two classes of students were trained at the College. There were catechists—older men, faithful Christians, but with little educational background. Many such had done most faithful work for years among their own people, going about preaching the word up and down the Witwatersrand and back at home in their tribal environment.

These men realized the need for some education, more spiritual training. Great sacrifices indeed were made by them, their wives and families, in order that they might spend six months or a year in just such a centre as the Priory College provided. There they received the elements of education—at least the three 'Rs,' for many were quite illiterate. There also they gained elementary training in Bible study, in Prayer Book teaching, and in Church doctrine.

Later, the catechist would return to his own people, attached probably to an African Church, to be the 'dog's body' to the priest; ready to turn his hand to the 'serving of tables,' the teaching of catechumens, candidates for baptism and confirmation; tending the sick, and a hundred and one other services for the greater glory of God.

There were also ordinands who did a great deal more. The ordinand generally had a full two year course at the College in which he covered similar ground to that of the catechist, only more intensively. In addition he studied South African and English church history and a little early church history. He was prepared for pastoral work, for the taking of church services. After two years he must pass the Bishop's examination for Deacon's Orders. There was, of course, the further stage, only to be undertaken after five years' faithful service as a deacon. He might then return to the College for a year, to be concluded by taking the Bishop's examination for the priesthood.

Since 1933 the need for a higher standard of education and train-

ing was recognized by the substitution of a three years' course for the Diaconate (the first two years in preparation for the Bishop's examination and the third year in preparation for the Provincial L.Th. Examination) and a one and a half year's course for the priesthood.

Of the need for such an indigenous priesthood Canon Farmer had eloquently spoken: 'There can be no doubt that the very best missionary must be the properly trained native, and the end of our work must be a native ministry. It is exceedingly difficult for the Englishman to appeal to the native mind. There is the language difficulty which makes preaching for us almost impossible. . . . I have frequently had before me a congregation of Amaxosa, Basutu, Bechuana; and while I have had to address them in Zulu, there has been an interpreter taking up my words and turning them into Sesutu, and another doing the same in Sechuana. All the time one has to remember to put one's thoughts into translatable sentences, and under the circumstances, it is impossible to do more than give the simplest instruction.

'On the other hand, I have heard a native preacher appeal to his audience in metaphor, simile and parable, in a way that reached their emotions and in a manner that we cannot aspire to. But to ordain natives without their being properly trained would be fatal to the spiritual life of the church. This training we must set ourselves to give. These men that I have been writing about, who have already proved their zeal, and many others, are fitting material, and earnestly long to be found worthy of a vocation.'

In the College there were activities outside purely academic work—the care of the great native church, training of the choir, pastoral work for the congregation, night classes for local houseboys. Great emphasis was also laid upon industrial training, and manual work of one kind and another found its place in the programme. 'The worker in the mission field,' wrote Father Victor, 'should be able to turn his hand to anything. He may have to build his church, his house, his school, and he will almost certainly have to furnish them. There will be trees to be planted, and gardens to be laid out, and ground to be fenced in.'

In this connection a letter of his dated October 17th, 1912, is interesting. He says, 'I am starting to give students lessons in elementary carpentry. This is really rather funny because I don't know anything about it really and have never had a single lesson myself. However, we made a writing table to-day with bookshelf attached to it, out of old packing case wood planed up and the result astounded them. Carpentry makes a pleasant change from gardening and will be really useful to them in furnishing their houses and churches. Their knowledge of it is absolutely nil so

that I start with a good advantage and only hope that no carpenter will come along to laugh and give the game away.'

In 1913 he writes of working in copper: 'I finished my copper altar bookstand last Saturday week and am now doing a copper box for altar bread with brass angle pieces at the corners fastened with copper rivets. The stand is very heavy and looks as if it would last for ever.' In 1915 he bought, with gift money, forge and anvil for doing the work at the Priory itself.

Above all, there was the devotional side. Writing of the need for an Oratory in the College buildings, Father Victor says, 'It would be quite a tiny place and so I think it would be possible to make it quite a gem and that without great cost. Also I am sure it would be a great thing to have. Natives will join in public prayer to any extent, their capacity for services is inexhaustible but they have little or no idea of private prayer, and it is in teaching this that I think we fail most of all in College.' The Oratory, of his own planning, himself superintending the execution, was placed over the entrance gateway, reached from the outside by a flight of stone steps.

Writing after it was in use, he says, 'In the early days of race development, consciousness is tribal rather than individual and personal. In religion this shows itself in a great love for public worship, and for services of what would seem to be of interminable length; and in a corresponding feeling of difficulty in the matter of personal private devotions. The new College Oratory is a great help in this direction, providing as it does a place of quiet, and easily accessible for meditation and intercession.'³

Finally he says, 'On a larger scale it would be difficult to find a finer presentment of Christian worship, or any more inspiring service than, shall we say, the Solemn Eucharist which precedes the Native Conference, or which accompanies the ordination of an old student.

'The cathedral choir, filled with students and with native delegates from all over the Transvaal, or it may be some central church crowded to its utmost extent till there is no standing-room anywhere, and many in the court outside catch what glimpses they can of the service through open windows. Thunderous singing, every one bearing his enthusiastic part, scarlet clad acolytes moving here and there with an entire absence of stiffness or self-consciousness, and obviously feeling quite at home; in the sanctuary the bishop surrounded by his clergy, black and white; and behind, the altar ablaze with lights and seen through a haze of incense.

'These are times to see visions and to dream dreams.

³ *The Thin Black Line*, O Victor, C.R.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

"A great multitude of all nations and kindreds and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."

'And so, with the ringing of prophecy in our ears and the beginning of its fulfilment before our eyes, we may look forward to the day, not so far ahead now, when through the medium of priests sprung from her own soil, and offering the One Great Sacrifice at her own altars, Ethiopia in all her length and breadth shall stretch out her hands unto God.'⁴

The need for a large African church to be built on the land generously given for the purpose was ever in the forefront of Father Victor's mind and in 1916 he drew up plans for it, submitting these to the diocesan architect, Mr. Fleming. In August he writes, 'I have just finished roughly colouring and inking in a process reproduction of my church plans. Fleming's criticism is that the outlines lack interest—the roof line ought to be broken. It needs a campanile, of course, but I could not even attempt to design that even if we were ever able to do it. . . . My idea throughout has been to aim at something not too difficult to construct—straight walls and no buttresses which are hard to build and take a lot of time though they would improve the outside greatly.

'The seating accommodation is, of course, very small for so large a building but our needs are not so great and my aim was to make a very large sanctuary for the College and ceremonial purposes. The inside pleases Fleming. There is a clear processional path round the narrow aisle and in front of the Lady Altar which latter would serve for plain services before the whole congregation. The Communion step comes there and the High Altar would only be used for High Mass and there is a great space all round it. Coloured pictures are meant to go on each brick pier. These are very solid, 5 feet by 2 feet 6 inches, and about 1,000 bricks in each. The walls are very thick too. As we build directly on rock, a small concrete foundation only is necessary to get a flat surface. The small aisle chapel would be useful mainly for Confessions and for a Christmas Crib, etc. We should not use the altar much, if at all. But a statue of Our Lady would go on the wall by the Lady Altar, *à la* S. Alban's, Holborn.

'We should be able to use up our present iron and wood for the roof, and the windows being small would not be very expensive. The tower ones are merely openings like in a tower.

'I don't like the lipped roof at the west end. It ought to be a

⁴ *The Thin Black Line*, O. Victor, C.R.

big gable after the Italian manner but that is beyond us. The double doors resemble the Wesleyan Chapel rather but the niche obviates that a little. However, all that part comes last. I am wondering now whether I shall ever have courage and opportunity to make even a beginning.'

He got no further than that before being recalled to Britain, but, in the event, he had both opportunity and courage to translate this ambitious plan into bricks and mortar. In February 1921 he was pegging out the foundations of it. In August 1925 he writes, 'The roof timbers are all on now and by the end of the week the whole church should be covered in and weather-tight. Then will come the glazing of the windows for which we have already got an estimate and after that the cream washing of the upper walls and the painting (black or slate colour) of the pillars. Then the flooring with concrete slabs, alternate black and red, in fifteen inch squares. Meantime the baldachino on pillars, eight feet from centre to centre at the base, and the whole about sixteen feet in height.'

On Passion Sunday, 1926, the Superior, Father Talbot, wrote to Mirfield, 'The most notable outward changes since my last visit are of course the church, the school and the hostel; the last of which is still rising at a pace which should turn the Retreat House green with jealousy. The church is a real joy. A native woman from the country district, on being asked if she liked the church, said, "It isn't a church; it is the gate of Heaven!" Wasn't that delightful? And truly it is one of the most worshipful buildings I know. All is nobly focussed upon the sanctuary, which is approached by six or seven broad steps flanked by a balustrade. The baldachino, of a very beautiful blue touched at the base and capitals with gold, and ceiled in passion-red, is of the shape which I have always wished for at Mirfield, that is to say, the top is not nearly so deep and avoids the tank-like appearance. The whole colour scheme of the church, not yet completed so far as ceiling is concerned, is most satisfying. The floor especially is delightful, composed of square cement blocks, coloured alternately deep red and black, and then oiled to produce an admirable surface texture. It makes one wonder whether we could not employ the same method at Mirfield, instead of waiting for marble.

'The long series of arches lie upon black pillars of cement topped by a band of terra-cotta red. Above these, the walls, pierced at intervals by narrow twin lancet windows, are white, and the ceiling is to be gay with colours. Then what give great interest and vista to the church are the chapels—one little one jutting out northwards from the aisle (this is not yet finished but large enough to hold an altar), one at the east end of the north aisle with a fine rococo

gilded altar piece crawling with cherubs; the third pushed out from the south aisle and on a lower level than the main church; and the fourth at the east of the south aisle which is there widened in a way the north aisle is not. Here the altar stands under a broad low arch and here the Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved. The Baptistery is in the west end, lifted above the floor level by three steps, and protected by a low red wall. I cannot tell you how satisfying and beautiful it is; and the services with all the students, the hostel boys, and the S. Agnes' girls forming the main nucleus of the worshippers, are most devout and reverent. The singing is very striking; the girls have been excellently taught and their rather strident voices have been toned down—almost to excess—while the boys' voices in rich and sonorous tones supply admirable harmonies by the light of nature—a very good light so far as I can judge. The tone of their singing is what that of black velvet would be, could it sing. And the whole effect is like that of a vast and very melodious bumble bee, or like a redeemed and beautiful harmonium (as distinct from an organ). The rich blurry effect is increased by the fact that, as far as I can make out, they sing in English, Dutch, Sechuana and Sekosa words all at once. The combined result is obviously the really catholic liturgical language—a palinquist of sound. Anyway, I love it.'

Writing after his recall in 1917, Father Victor reveals how this native work, to which he had felt little attraction at first, had won his heart. 'It was not easy to say good-bye to these native people. The altar is the best place for it, but a very public place I found.'

'On the boat a whole sheaf of wires and letters, and more good-byes, were waiting. Grandiloquent rather, some of them:

'“We have thought it meet to humble and respectfully address these words to you prior to your departure from this our native soil. May God the Omnipotent and Omniscient One guide your perilous voyage. Farewell, dear Father in Christ. *Hamba gahle Baba*” (Good-bye, Father).

'Others, somewhat blunt: “I hope Father will get to England safely and not drown.”

'And others yet again delightfully simple: “What I want to say to Father, here is my hand and my heart and my beast love.”

'And still there are some of our blood who, when these native folk are in question, refuse the hand, despise the heart, and deny the very existence of the soul.'

“You bid me bless
Yon graceless pomp of guttered steel,
Yon Dives lounging at his listless meal—
Killing long hours at Lazarus' expense,
Yon Temple of our Tribal Deity,
Where faith is of such moving potency,
Christ's Mount and Sermon are cast headlong thence:
But I have blessed as He hath bid me bless,
And not as you.

“You bid me curse
Yon thatched huts set on everlasting hills,
Yon slow, sure husbandman his tilth that tills,
Yon worn wife reaping with her dwarfish blade,
Yon foison of dwarf cattle black and red,
Yon Nazareth schoolroom, yon low Bethlehem shed—
Where poor folk bless the Lord who all folk made;
But I have blessed as He hath bid me bless,
And not as you.”⁵

⁵ *Balaam*, Arthur Shearley Cripps.

CHAPTER III

EXTRACTS FROM TREK LETTERS, 1911-16

MANY are the letters written during this early period of African work all showing Osmund Victor's keen interest in the country—geographically and historically. A few extracts may be of interest especially in view of the tremendous developments since those days.

August 4th, 1911. Pietersburg to Messina

About 9.30 blasts on a coach horn heard, and up rolled the coach for the north—various other post carts going off with long teams of mules furiously in other directions. One might have imagined oneself back in the eighteenth century. The coach, one of the real old sort, a great heavy body slung on huge leather straps and swaying all over the place. Room inside for nine—luckily we were only four, rather a squash otherwise. Luggage on top, mail bags at the back, eight mules and two native drivers, red body and yellow wheels. So with much blowing of horns we started off—rather like a ship putting her nose into it going out of port, and at first I thought the same personal results might follow. However, the road proved fairly level and the swaying was not so bad and we bowled along at a good pace. It is all done under contract with the Government and fresh relays of mules are put in about every hour. A slight wind blew the dust to the side, but even so one got fairly well covered.

The country very level and covered with bush. The sun very hot. Every hour or so we came up to a shanty with team of mules waiting ready in charge of a native boy. We had about ten minutes to stretch legs while they installed the new lot. The mules have to go hard while they are at it but only get two journeys of about one hour each a week and are in splendid condition.

Middle day we arrived at *Klepdam*, a small wayside hotel with ostrich farm around and rocky hills. Here we lunched on roast chicken and were soon off again. About 5 p.m. we came to a river where we had half an hour's rest at a small hotel but no food to be had. Beginning to think I had had enough but found we had only gone half way, i.e. forty miles.

Ten miles farther on arrived *Bandolier Kop*. It was now dark. Here we got some dinner—more roast chicken.

The rail has now been nearly finished as far as this and is to be opened soon. It will therefore be an important place for a time. If

I had gone a month later I might have done all this part by rail, but although fatiguing, it is interesting to have done the journey by coach before it disappears.

After food we left the old coach and got into a lightweight post cart—a sort of covered wagonette to hold four only with seats back and front instead of sideways. The moon was now up and made things nearly as light as day, so we set off at 9 p.m. for the last thirty miles' stretch.

Before getting to *Bandolier Kop* the country had been getting more and more wooded with great isolated hills at intervals made of vast boulders and almost invariably native kraals to the foot. One of these was very large with hundreds of huts clustered like mushrooms, with the chief's house in the middle. We passed parties of natives slowly making their way home up country from the mines and enjoying themselves much, taking everything in their usual leisurely way.

About 10 p.m. the great range of the *Zoutpansberg* (Salt Pan Mountains) began to tower up in front and at last about 11 p.m. we arrived at *Louis Trichardt*, a little place at the foot of the mountains, and which until eight years ago was the farthest limit reached and settled in by white men. We rolled into the hotel courtyard and I soon got a room and to bed as soon as possible rather fagged after eighty miles heat and dust and having to be up again at 4 a.m. next morning.

August 5th, 1911

Here a small shanty dignified by the name of *Sulphur Springs Hotel*. 9 a.m. by this time. Had a primitive breakfast, surroundings none too clean but no more food to be had till we got to *Messina*, i.e. 5 p.m.

Then on for the rest of the day, mile after mile and hour after hour, over a road yards deep in sand so that we had to go walking pace most of the way. The road was cut straight through the bush. Quite impassable and probably never explored by any one white or native. The whole way—forty miles—never a house or farm or sign of habitation except a rough reed stable where we drew up from time to time for relays. No water except once when we came to a river and one marshy place. The undergrowth very thick but the trees small for the most part except for baobabs which grew more and more numerous as we went along and towered like oaks out of a forest for endless miles as far as the eye could see. Plenty of euphorbias also like seven branch candlesticks. One baobab that I measured when we drew up once was over sixty feet round the stem.

Altogether, probably much the same country that Dennis¹ is accustomed to.

At last towards evening we arrived at Messina, standing on a little eminence with hills in all directions and the Matabele Mountains rising beyond the Limpopo some six-eight miles away. Got some food about 7 p.m. and made friends with some of the mine engineers before turning in.

Sunday, August 6th, 1911

Messina is the most northerly place in the Transvaal. Up to about eight years ago, all the country this side of the Berg was in the hands of a native chief who would not allow white men to enter. He has been wiped out, and in a few years' time the rail will have come up here and then the country will have a chance of being opened out.

A chap named Grenfell heard rumours during the war of the old copper workings near the Limpopo. He sent a man up to inspect. He found his way somehow through the bush and found the ridge where the mine now is, covered with ancient workings. Grenfell determined to do a gamble and risk all his money in starting a mine. It has been going for five years and though not extensive yet is the richest copper mine in the world. Smelting of copper is apparently a high art and only a few people in the world can do it. They have not got so far as to smelt here yet but dig it out and send it to Swansea in South Wales. It goes in small sacks two hundred tons a month, one hundred and fifty miles by road to Pietersburg, nearly three thousand miles to Capetown by rail and so by sea.

It could never be done were it not for the fact that the rock is mostly 50%-70% copper, i.e. as nearly pure ore as you could get anywhere. The supply is apparently inexhaustible and goes for miles. As soon as the rail comes, that is in about two years, other companies will open out, smelting will be done here, they will be able to work the less rich rock and vast fortunes will be made. They have got £20,000 of copper in one dump which is not worth while to send away but which they will smelt when they get their own works.

The strange thing about it is that ancients in prehistoric times knew all about it and also how to smelt which is a tremendously scientific process and involves a great knowledge of metallurgy. They worked all over this part and their workings are all round the mine. Even the natives knew something about it, and did some smelting on their own in more recent times. There is no doubt that the original workers were the same people as those who worked

¹ Dennis Victor—U.M.C.A. missionary, Nyasaland—later, Bishop of Lebombo.

all over Rhodesia endless ages ago. There is also little doubt that they were Phœnician and that Rhodesia is the Ophir of King Solomon. In Rhodesia they mined for gold over an area of eight hundred miles and at the lowest computation took away seventy millions' worth. They must have been strangers working in a hostile country, for they had forts everywhere. The Queen of Sheba probably lived at the vast ruins of Zimbabwe in Rhodesia which are as extensive and wonderful as the temples of Egypt. A stranger thing still is that, in spite of all their knowledge, they could not pump water and always left their workings when they came to water level. Rhodesia, every one in South Africa agrees, is going to be one of the great countries of the world. It is wonderfully rich in all sorts of minerals and the climate is splendid though bordering on the Equator.

The Tropic of Capricorn runs somewhere a few miles north of Pietersburg so that this place is well inside the tropics.

Sunday morning, I went round the place with a surveyor. Water is scarce but they pick up a good deal from the mine and have five acres under cultivation in consequence. All sorts of vegetables do well in winter, bananas, palms, etc., etc.

The Limpopo is some five miles away and I shall not be able to get down to it.

In the afternoon, I went round to visit the people in the married quarters. There was a good deal of malaria but they have pretty well stamped it out and it is now not unhealthy and children do not seem much the worse for the heat. It was very close and sultry all day. I dined with the mine manager in the evening and afterwards had a service, very impromptu as there were no prayer books, and many nationalities and denominations were represented.

August 8th, 1911

Dawn began to come about an hour after we started on the return journey, but owing to heavy clouds it was never bright all day long. We were not held up by lions and the journey passed uneventfully and we got in here (Louis Trichardt) about 5 p.m., by which time I was getting rather fed up with the whole business.

The first question every one asks on arrival is whether lions have been seen.

At first I thought that this was done to make a game of newcomers but I have found out since that this is not the case. Lions and leopards, etc. take donkeys, cattle and mules. At Messina they come sometimes right into the mining camp. Some people go for years without seeing one but, on the other hand, others have encounters with them now and then.

The Messina coach has been held up by them several times already this year. They are often seen crossing the road and sometimes sit down and await the coach. Then there is nothing to be done except to stand until they clear. They do not attack the coach unless they are hungry and try to snatch one of the mules. It is no good turning round as they only follow and it is not much good firing as they will probably only get wounded and then they get very ferocious and will go for any one. One chap from the camp was killed in that way only a short time ago, and another, who was a good shot, killed four before breakfast while they were drinking at a river. Several have had to climb trees and have had to stop there all day long until the lions have got tired and gone off. It is the old lions that are the danger. They are not quick enough to hunt much and getting turned out by their fellows roam the country in parties of half a dozen and go for transport animals. All through the bush from Messina to the mountains they are found, but especially down by a river about five miles out from Messina. I was glad that it was light by the time we got there.

Tigers² are sometimes come across, but very seldom. They are much more fierce and there is no getting away from them by climbing trees. Monkeys, of course, are many, and baboons, also all sorts of brightly coloured birds—cockatoos, etc.

When we got in I found a room had been prepared for me in the Resident Magistrate's house, but as he was away on furlough I went to the Chief of Police for meals. A man, Clarke by name, from Essex, with his wife and boy, church people and quite nice. They are all mounted constabulary of course in these parts, and are more like soldiers.

August 9th, 1911

Louis Trichardt lies at the foot of the Berg. To the north and east are ranges of mountains and to the south and west a great plain, absolutely flat to the horizon except for distant kopjes rising like islands from the sea. The whole plain covered with bush, and a swampy river flowing through it some miles away. A bad place for fever but Trichardt itself being on the lower slopes and higher up is much more healthy. It was started only about ten years ago as an outpost of the Dutch against the natives. There are about three hundred people all told, all nationalities, and many Indian store keepers. Most of the English people are away at present, and though we shall have a service this evening in the reading room, very few are likely to be present, especially as a week-day service is somewhat unusual. After breakfast my host took me over

² Tigers, usual name given to leopards in S.A.

the police quarters and prison. About twenty natives in gaol, three of them for murder and the rest for cattle stealing, etc.

Afterwards I returned to my abode to say Offices and write this, which I am doing in my overcoat as it is horribly cold and these houses, built for great heat with wide verandahs and shaded by thick creepers, hardly let in the light of day. I only hope the sun appears to-morrow.

In the afternoon, I did a little visiting; about fifteen turned up to the service at night which was not so bad, and it went off fairly well in spite of want of musical accompaniment.

August 10th, 1911

A very fine day but fresh wind and not over warm. When the clouds lifted from the mountains, of which the highest point is just above Trichardt, they looked disappointingly low.

A field, a cottage beyond it, then a steep slope and behind a hill-side covered with what looked like bracken, then a ring of trees and a crag on top rising sheer out of the trees.

This is what it looked like and I put it down at about eight hundred feet. When I came to inquire, I found I had made a slight miscalculation. The cottage was really a large house three miles away, the slopes were lofty hills with two deep valleys between them, the bracken above were trees, and the trees at the top sixty-seventy feet high, while the crag rose seven hundred feet from the trees. The top is three thousand feet above Trichardt and takes about five hours' hard climbing to reach. When one gets right away in the low country, one realizes its height better, it is a landmark for fifty miles, I should think.

August 11th, 1911

Lovedale Park. Low hilly country this time with a fine view of the range of mountains behind. At last came to a Police Camp called *Fort Edward* in the top of a hill, and below a sort of basin the farm called Lovedale Park.

This is quite the show place of the district. One of the early settlers came up here about thirty years ago when white people were almost unheard of. When he died his wife carried it on but the farm is now worked by the husband of one of the daughters. He is at present away on a shooting expedition. It shows well what thirty years' work can do in these parts. Then it was all bare veldt with bush in parts.

Now it is covered with trees about seventy feet high, a large area of ground is under splendid cultivation and the garden is a perfect sight. They say it is quite at its worst at this time of the year;

what it is like in the summer I do not know. Even now it is a blaze of flowers and heavy with the scent of violets which grow almost like small bushes one and a half feet high.

There is plenty of water which runs in streams all through the garden, and palms, bananas, paw paws, roses—all sorts of English flowers and many I have never seen—abound. A great gnarled trunk which spread itself all over one side of the house stoep, I found to be a rose bush planted some years ago by the old lady. On one side of the house is a huge cage with about seventy canaries in it who sing hard all day long. Except for a glimpse of the mountains on one side, it all lies in a hollow quite shut in, and surrounded by farm lands, fruit orchards and cattle kraals. A pure white peacock and peahen strutted about and there were others of the coloured variety about also. Altogether, what with the trees and flowers and stillness broken only by the song of birds and gurgly water and the hum of bees, when in the middle of the garden one came across the grave of the old settler, one could appreciate the text on his grave stone: 'This shall be my rest, here will I dwell for I have a delight therein.'

The other side came out after supper when we happened to turn on to native subjects, and mine hostess flamed out against the 'Christian nigger,' and against those who would educate them or treat them as human beings.

One gets to hear this sort of thing so often, and one's first idea is to lose one's temper and give it them back hard and hot as one can. It is not difficult as they have no arguments, only a fanatical belief in the eternal and divinely ordered superiority of the white race, the importance of swearing at the native all day long, of sjamboking him on frequent occasions, and the worse than folly of treating him with the barest kindness.

On the other hand, it is perfectly useless to say anything. Their prejudice is in the blood and is not reached by argument. She is a Colonial, of course. It is always in colonial born people one finds this at its worst. Home-bred people are not half so bad. The reason, of course, is not far to seek. They are descended from the early settlers who lived in danger of their lives amid hordes of savages, and who only maintained their position at all by treating the natives in the most remorseless way. It will take generations to work out.

When one sees the sort of feeling common among all classes and even among sane and respectable communicants, one no longer wonders at the negro lynching in America. It is easy of course for a newcomer or people at home to condemn it offhand, but it may

prove to be right in a way and only a perversion of a divinely implanted instinct against race mixture.

However, as it is past 11 p.m., it is no good moralizing and I expect I had better turn in.

May 1916. To Rhodesia

Left the Priory, Rosettenville, at 5 p.m. on Sunday. At 7 a.m. on Tuesday reached Bulawayo—having crossed the Matoppo Range in the night. Early in the nineteenth century, when Chaka was building up the Zulu power and engaged in killing the million men whom he disposed of during his life, many of his generals cleared off and set up on their own. The most famous—Moseliketse—trekked up to the Transvaal and settled down there for some years, but was driven out eventually by the pioneer Boers and moved farther north. He ended by driving out the Mashona and settling down in their country with Bulawayo as his chief kraal. This was the birth of the Matabele who are, in consequence, closely allied to the Zulu. Another lot went still farther and became the Angoni tribe in Northern Rhodesia, conquering many weaker peoples round Lake Nyasa. Bulawayo was the native capital until Rhodes and the Chartered Company came up and, finding the Matabele impregnable in the Matoppas, ended by making a treaty with them and setting up a white town at Bulawayo. Lobengula, the Matabele king, became a dependant and the site of his kraal is now covered by Government House.

So much for history. Southern Rhodesia, therefore, falls into two main divisions. The west is all Matabele and the east all Mashona. Esau and Jacob they are—the Matabele beefy and warlike, never conquered yet, even by Europeans, and very hard to evangelize. And the Mashona weak and despised and swarming into the Church and intellectually much quicker and more assimilative and religious. And the country in its features falls into two clear divisions likewise. Matabeleland dull and uninteresting, flat and bush-covered with the Matoppas range running through it. All very dull from the train especially as the rail, as usual, follows the watershed in order to avoid valleys and rivers and so misses the best scenery. Beyond Salisbury, Mashona land begins and at once it is all hills thickly covered with forest. The great features are gigantic outcrops of granite in all directions—huge rounded blocks piled up like pebbles. They are really most remarkable, sometimes a vast block thousands and thousands of tons in weight poised on another on one point and seeming as if it must topple over with a blow. The effect over the wider stretches of country is most strange. It looks as if one was surveying the remains of some old civilisation

with ruined castles and cathedrals piled up in all directions and forest land between. Sometimes a hill stands up formed of one huge rounded block smooth and rounded and five hundred feet high.

There followed three or four hours' wait and a change of train—Salisbury was reached next morning at 7 a.m. Thence in another train to Umtali in Mashonaland. After a night in a hotel there came the motor journey to Penhalonga. The first part of the drive is very famous. We climbed up and up over a mountain range by the Christmas Pass with Umtali left far below in the plain. One of my fellow travellers had formed part of the original pioneer column which opened up the country twenty years ago for Europeans. They came over the pass first of all on Christmas Day—hence the name. Then down the other side across five miles of plain and then, at the opening of the Penhalonga Valley, covered with small gold mines, I left the car and turned up a path which led to the Mission Station two miles off.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY LIFE

'For the heart guides the steps and has intentions too deep for the mind to grasp at once. The true Christian is necessarily he who has the wishing heart.'

'I am a wanderer, I remember well
How once the city I desired to reach lay hid
When suddenly its spires afar
Flashed through the circling clouds;
Soon the vapours closed again
But I had seen the city, and once such glance
No darkness could obscure.'

Russian Pilgrim to Jerusalem.

OSMUND VICTOR, whose letters and writings so vividly bring to life the 'milieu' in which those pioneer Fathers worked in South Africa, was born in 1880 at Malvern Link. He was the eldest son of the curate of S. Matthias, the Reverend Henry Ernest Victor, and of Edith Caroline DuBuisson, his wife.

On his father's side he was descended from Sardinian stock. Hence the volatile temperament, the artistic gifts, the sunniness, the fun of his nature. On his mother's side he was of Huguenot extraction. Her own sanctity and quietness, her sensitive nature, her dedication were passed on to her son. And thus we have that happy, complicated, yet so simple little person.

There had been priests for two or three generations on both sides of the family. The fact that all three sons took Holy Orders speaks for itself. Osmund eventually was professed as a monk in the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield. Dennis, after twenty-seven years with the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, became Bishop of Lebombo, much loved throughout his diocese and by the ever increasing hosts of children in South Africa and England who knew him as 'Uncle Bombo.' Jerom is serving the Church in a less spectacular but equally faithful way, as a parish priest in England.

There were three daughters of the marriage. Morna and Natalie completed the first group of four children; Caroline, with Jerom, made a later pair. Natalie, fourth child of the family, is still remembered for her books and her painting. Deeply consecrated, she helped many by her talks and her example. Her books, though out of print, are surely not out of date with their practical advice and their spiritual understanding of the Christian faith.¹ Artistic too,

¹ *The Romance of Home Life* (under pseudonym Emily Heath), Wells Gardner; *Go and tell the King's Household*, Faith Press; *Surrender*, Faith Press; *A Catholic looks at war*, James Clarke and Co.

her paintings, particularly flower studies, are exquisite and most unusual. Becoming a convinced pacifist in belief, it was perhaps a happy thing that she died in 1940, just before the bombing of London and the worst horrors of another world war.

Morna and Caroline now maintain the old home in Hereford. Osmund and Dennis loved to return here from Africa. In its peace both men spent the last days of their lives.

Osmund and his brother Dennis, two years his junior, were sent to school at Denstone. Neither of them appears to have been extended in his studies, and school life passed with little incident. It is interesting to find Osmund spending two days at his old school in 1936. For one and a half hours he spoke on Africa to the Sixth Form there, and on the Sunday he preached on the Gospel for mid-Lent.

Between school and university Osmund did a year's work as a schoolmaster at Worksop, after which he went to Durham University. There he took his B.A. degree. From thence he proceeded to Ely Theological College. It was at Durham and Ely that his innate love of study, of delving to the fundamentals of things, was developed. It was not enough for him to admire a grand piece of architecture, he must get out measuring rod, pen and pencil, and wrest the secret of its grace from fundamental technical factors. Here, too, began his love of Greek. In the first place studied perhaps as a great source language for Bible and classics, it developed into a love of the language for its own sake, a love which remained with him to the end. His learning was great and always thorough, never overpowering nor ostentatious.

In 1903 Osmund Victor was ordained and went to his first curacy at S. Andrew's Church, Bethnal Green. Already his love of colour, music, celebration in things ecclesiastical shows itself. In a letter home, written on February 4th, 1904, he writes: 'We had a magnificent procession round Bethnal Green on Saturday night. A huge number of men and churchpeople generally. I daresay it was half a mile long, people walking four abreast, clergy robed, bishop in middle with C.L.B. bodyguard; any number of banners, and hundreds and hundreds of lights of all description, two bands. Needless to say, it held up the traffic and attracted huge crowds. I believe, and every one says it, that the Church is getting a tremendous power in Bethnal Green. . . . On Sunday a massed choir of 200 and three pianos and small organ led the singing, and the service went splendidly.'

But it was not long before he heard the call to join a Community. On July 11th, 1904, he writes home to say, 'I have arranged to go and spend a week at the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield,

with Symonds, an Ely man, who works there.' In 1909, on the Feast of S. James, he was professed. It was a day of great rejoicing and much fun. He writes to his parents:

'Well, everything has passed off very well, and it has been a very happy day. The Profession of course was all over by breakfast time. The service went very well. It is quite short and simple, and takes place at the Offertory. All the brethren go up to the altar steps in turn and renew their vows, handing the paper afterwards to the Superior, who is celebrant, who places it on the altar. Then they all form in a ring round the altar, and the new brother makes his first Profession. The Superior then comes down and, taking his right hand, kisses it and says the greeting, "The Lord be with you," to which the new Brother replies in the usual way. Then the Superior leads him by the other hand round the ring of brethren, each of whom kisses his right hand and gives the same salutation. Then he is conducted to his stall. They were all very nice too in greeting one after the service was over. . . .

' . . . Since then, thanks to you, we have marked the day with great feasting. I thought at first that it would not be possible to do anything in the way of dinner, as I was in Retreat and could not see about it. I was able however to see the housekeeper, who said that she would go into Huddersfield and see about things, as nothing can be obtained in Mirfield. She procured six fowls, and also exerted herself to make trifles instead of the ordinary puddings. I also thought I had better get two boxes of chocolates, one for the College. The cakes also appeared at tea. The result has been universal rejoicing, and a desire that I should be professed at frequent intervals.'

Shortly after his profession Osmund was sent by his Community to South Africa. He was particularly occupied with the College for African Ordinands and Catechists at 10 Sherwell Street, Johannesburg, but he also spent time preaching and teaching in retreats, conferences, mission churches, serving both European and African communities.

It was in 1911 that the Community of the Resurrection moved from the tumbledown buildings in Sherwell Street, Doornfontein, to the great Priory centre which was to become so famous at Rosettenville. Osmund Victor conducted the Quiet Day for the Brethren which preceded the great opening ceremonies. He concentrated thought upon all that was involved in a common life, common work, common worship.

Of his work for Africans, three particular interests may perhaps be touched upon. These were the city locations, trekking into the country, and consolidating the whole evangelistic work in the training college at the base.

On one of Johannesburg's most unattractive days of dust and wind and heat, I stood with Father Victor and Dorothy Maud on the rough kopje at the highest point of Sophiatown. From there we surveyed the tin shanties, the crowded tenements, the corrugated iron temples of various sects, the unmade boulder strewn passageways that passed as roads. And there and then those two visualized, planned out, the future Ekutuleni settlement. 'Here will be the house, here, on this very height, shall stand the great church, living centre of the work that is to be.' And so it came about. On February 10th, 1928, Ekutuleni, 'The Place of Peace,' was opened. Dorothy Maud and her helpers were living there and from that moment she started the great battle for light, for water, for social amenities for this black suburb of Johannesburg. In May 1933 the stone of the great church of Christ the King was laid by Mrs. James Smith, wife of the generous benefactor who made the church possible. In September 1935 with a triumphant service of praise it was opened. Thus was a city mission born.

Father Raynes, writing from Sophiatown on September 17th, 1935, says, 'Enclosed are some photos of the new church, which will doubtless interest you and the Brethren. It is really awfully good, better than I dared to hope and in every way "most sustaining." There is a very good sacristy as well which delights David's heart. . . . The consecration was a lovely festa—about two thousand people, all shapes, sizes and colours. All went smoothly and the bishop did everything with becoming pomp and dignity. He then sang High Mass with Rakale as deacon and Matthew as subdeacon. I was M.C. and David in charge of the singing. He preached at the Mass on the title of the church, commending it as being a glorious proclamation of faith and hope, and cheered the people no end. And what a joy it is to have it, with room to move and surrounded by space, dignity and beauty. The Bishop said in his sermon that he hoped it would be regarded as a pattern of worship for all native churches—so we have a heavy responsibility.'

Eighteen years later, Father Huddleston could write²: 'Sophiatown, how hard it is to capture and convey the magic of that name. . . . It is particularly important to me to try to paint the picture that I know and that is yet so elusive, for in a few years Sophiatown will cease to exist. It will be first of all a rubble heap. Destruction is spreading like some contagion through the streets (it has begun already) laying low the houses, good and bad alike, that I have known; emptying them of the life, the laughter, the tears of the children—till the place is a grey ruin lying in the sun. Then I suppose the factories will begin to grow up, gaunt, impersonal

² In *Naught for your Comfort*, Collins.

blocks of cement, characterless and chill, however bright the day. And, in a few years, men will have forgotten that this was a living community and a very unusual one. It will have slipped away into history and that a fragmentary history of a fraction of time.'

The first volume in this story of Sophiatown is closing, disastrously as many believe, with the removal of the Africans from the township and its declaration as a white area. Perhaps the Church of Christ the King will serve in some new way the thousands of African factory workers assembling day by day to work where once they were domiciled. A new evangelistic approach will doubtless develop. However it be, the dedicated service initiated on that day long ago and developed through the years has borne much fruit, and most surely is spreading its influence for God's glory, even as of old, 'they that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word.'

But Father Victor was not only concerned with city work. Here is a description of an average weekend at African work, written in May 1911: 'Saturday morning after breakfast you pack things on to a bicycle, vestments, cassock and books take up all the space, and there is no room for luxuries other than a pipe and a paper or book to read on the way in the train. If it seems likely to be wet I take a mackintosh as I have a great aversion to getting soaked, but it adds a good deal to weight and others prefer the soaking and frequently get it in the summer months. I also carry a toothbrush and Gillette razor, but no pyjamas as one has to sleep in one's clothes.

'Then off to the train which may take one anything up to fifty miles in any direction. Our district is a huge one when you take it from end to end. Cycling is so hard in this country that it is important to get as near to the place as possible by rail. I did six miles this afternoon against a head wind and it took me one and a half hours to do it. The roads are mere tracks across the veldt and after heavy rain are almost impassable especially in the hollows. To-day I should have had to cross a spruit up to my waist if the catechist had not possessed a cart and driven me across.

'At last the train arrives at one's destination—at best a little wayside place with one house or so but often a mere siding or halt without any pretence at a platform and there one gets dumped down while the train leisurely proceeds and one can see it crawling over the veldt for miles. The question then is to find the kraal for which one is bound. At first sight the country for endless miles seems uninhabited and then one sees little mud houses dotted about at long intervals and perhaps a few trees which betoken a farm.

One makes inquiries from a native boy looking after a mixed herd of goats, sheep and cattle and chooses what seems to be the most likely track.

'Probably one can see miles away on the top of a hill a clump of dwellings but it is not so easy to get there even when they are in sight. Tracks strike off in all directions and it is not the slightest use making a bee line across country. The grass land is all holes and lumps and it would take half a day even to wheel a cycle a few miles, and that does not take into account mealie patches, acres in extent which one could not get through at all, or spruits which one could not cross.

'Apart from ranges of hills and kopjes, the veldt is all ups and downs like the waves of the Atlantic, long slopes of almost exactly the same steepness everywhere about half a mile up and then half a mile down. The low lying parts called vleis (Dutch for valleys) often have a stream with reeds and perhaps a marshy tract some three hundred yards across.

'At last one arrives at the kraal, perhaps six mud houses, thatched and with courtyards adjoining surrounded by mud walls or reed fences. Also a church like the houses but a little larger and no courtyard. One asks for the catechist's house and is shown one's room, sometimes an adjoining building, occasionally an addition to the church, but usually one of his rooms is set apart. All the houses are built in the same way. Two mud partitions about seven feet high divide the house into three compartments. The two side ones are bedrooms and the middle a living room but the courtyard is the place where all the housework goes on and except at nights every one is out of doors as much as possible.

'It is very like what one reads of Irish cottages, dogs, fowls, cats, etc. roam about at will. Little holes in the walls covered with wooden shutters in wet weather form windows. Fireplaces do not exist or chimneys but a tin with coals in the courtyard does for cooking and is brought indoors if it is cold, making the atmosphere somewhat heavy. The thatch however has many holes and one can often see many stars lying in bed at night. The people sleep on the floor on blankets but they are getting to use bedsteads sometimes and one is almost always provided for the priest. They also keep sheets for him which are beautifully clean; the sort of mattress they cover one does not inquire into too closely.

'The floors are mud covered weekly with a wash of cowdung worked in patterns which is really very clean and keeps off insects. The walls are plastered with mud in various colours and often covered with patterns of their own devising made with different coloured earths. The churches are similarly treated.

'Outside a stone enclosure is built into which all the cattle are driven at night. The ground is thick with manure—this is gathered into heaps and formed into round cakes like large buns and dried. It is then used for fuel.

'Tea is brought on one's arrival and also bread and perhaps rather indifferent jam, of what fruit it is always impossible to say.

'Evensong comes about 6.30. The catechist takes hours to find places, read lessons, and find hymns which it never occurs to him to do beforehand, but time is no object and no one troubles. People stroll in at all stages in the service and squat down on the floor. Men on one side, women on the other.

'After service more food and then one gets to bed as a candle is the only light and there is nothing much else to be done. The nights are very cold now. Last night there was a heavy frost and the whole veldt was white till the sun was well up. Winter, however, has this advantage that insects are not. In the summer I hardly ever slept at all all night, and this was true in a measure even of Sherwell Street.

'Mass comes about 7.30 a.m. A bit of iron beaten serves for a bell. Miles away one can see figures on all sides converging from distant kraals. Water for the mixed Chalice is brought in a tea cup and is of a muddy hue. The saucer serves for a collection bag. Afterwards one settles down to receive church dues, a leisurely process. It never occurs to any to do anything at once. They sit down and wait in silence and would do so all day if allowed. When all have apparently paid, a lot more who have been there all the times solemnly produce their tickets for payment as if it had just occurred to them. Then there are cases of discipline to be heard and people to be seen. Then perhaps a little breakfast. Natives eat at all times and often go until the afternoon without food, so that it does not occur to them that we are accustomed to regular hours. Then Matins usually with baptism in the middle. It is one and a half hours or two before it is over. English hymn tunes with weird variations or a few extra notes put in to fit the native words are used and all sing in parts naturally and at the tops of their voices. Often two or three languages are sung at once. As there is usually only one train back in the day one has to hurry things on in order to leave early in the afternoon. Otherwise it would mean another night there. So one departs laden with much bullion, having solemnly shaken hands with all in the neighbourhood, accompanied by a profound reverence on the part of the women, a reverence by the way which is equalled by the men when they approach the altar or bring you their collection.'

Finally, to serve both city and country work, there arose the

fundamental necessity to lay the foundations for an indigenous ministry. The Community of the Resurrection founded the first Theological College for Africans in 1908, that which has already been described as the College of the Resurrection. More and more it was to this part of the work that Father Victor devoted the first years of his life in South Africa. Step by step, under his guidance, the great Training College developed. Round it grew also the secondary boys' school of S. Peter's, and S. Agnes' school for girls. The schools, alas, no longer exist—the Theological College stands as yet four-square to send out its African priests to serve their Christian fellows.

CHAPTER V

WAR INTERLUDE, 1917-19

Ypres. From the ramparts, August 1917

'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!
Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy
of the whole earth?'

Lamentations. From Osmund Victor's Diary.

As for so many others, there came for Osmund Victor a complete break from the ordinary routine of life in the War. He served as Chaplain to the Forces from 1917-19, and has left a moving and interesting diary of those years, illustrated with delightful original pen and ink sketches of buildings and scenes in the war area.

Early in August 1917 Father Victor left for France. 'There will be a transformation scene soon,' he wrote. 'Ye monk will become ye warrior!'

His first letter from France reported to his Community.

August 4th, 1917

'Now I am writing after mess on Saturday night in a dugout—rather a palatial one, with electric light, and in which I have a room all to myself. Outside, our batteries all round are hard at work—have been all day, and apparently will be all night; but down here one is conscious only of a succession of heavy thuds; very different and much less unpleasant than the ear-splitting noise on top. I don't know whether it was wise to send me straight away, just a week after putting on khaki, right into the thick of things, but that is how it has turned out.'

Something of his work is told in a letter six days later:

'Now, after a week, I have been once to practically all my batteries, and have met most of the officers and as many of the men as I could, or who were off duty at the moment. Services and classes will be quite impossible in most of them, I think. Artillery seems to be the one class of people who are always on duty and under shell fire. Infantry get a hard job when they are up in the trenches, but then they get periods of rest between-whiles. I hope though that on Sunday I shall be able to get a Mass here in our extensive dugouts and possibly a service in the evening. That side of the work will develop perhaps as I am able to get to know conditions and the men better. We are in a hot corner. It can be very hot at times, but I hope will grow less so if the push con-

tinues, but then of course we may move forward and be in the same relative position and in less comfortable quarters.'

It was later in that same August that he found his cock. 'Yesterday, walking with a Major of one of the batteries, we came across a fine, gilded weather-cock of copper, much battered and full of holes from shrapnel. I said it seemed a fine souvenir and he sent a man to fetch it and give it to me.' It remained a much prized possession. For twenty years it dignified the roof of the garden chapel of his father's house at Lewes. In 1954, after his final return to England, it was transported to Rhodesia and placed eventually upon the Hall of Remembrance in the cloisters of the cathedral at Salisbury.

In September he was moved. He described his new 'vicarage' thus: 'I really think I have got hold of the best possible place both as a centre for work and for comfort of living. It's in a small house in a struggling row of similar houses lying along a road leading out of "X." The front walls remain more or less intact on the ground floor and two iron and sandbag rooms have been made inside the two ground floor rooms. The rest of the house, in the usual manner, has fallen down on top of these to the depth of four feet or so of rubbish and brick dust. This means that it is as safe as any one can reasonably expect. It has in fact kept out one or two direct hits of medium shells in past days and that means it is quite secure from splinters and anything which might drop close but not directly on top.

'I had a fine notice board painted by a carpenter of one of my batteries and hung it up outside for the world to see:

CHAPLAIN

C. OF E.

H A O

This informs the passer-by and secures my possession. So my vicarage consists of an iron shelter room with a window—a great gain. No glass but a sacking cover to drop over at night.'

Even amid the transitory life at the Front, Father Victor sought to bring beauty wherever possible into chapel and chapel services. Talking of the making of a camp altar candlestick he describes the base made of a section of a tree trunk; a Red Cross ash tray inserted on top to catch the grease drips and to add grace. Into that was fitted a planed-down, painted broom handle; a brass socket from the Tanks' workshop completed this, into which the candle was inserted. Nothing was too much trouble that would make beautiful the House of God.

The Epitaph of a Curé which he found in Verchin churchyard and quotes, might well have applied to himself:

'Dans le ministère paroissial
S'est inspiré de deux grandes pensées
Un zèle ardent du salut des âmes
Un profond amour de la beauté
de la Maison de Dieu.'

In May 1918 he was transferred to hospital work. 'My last note was to say that I was changing my address. I should like to have stayed on the 33 C.C.S., but it was merely marking time and awaiting developments, with no fixed abode or separate work of one's own. So they sent me on here where the need was greater. In the ordinary way C.C.S. work lacks excitement, and has its drawbacks, e.g. the men are in and out, or die before one has time to turn round. Services, too, of any sort, even on Sunday, are impossible in times of stress like the present.

'One has plenty to do round the wards at intervals all day long and late into the evening, constant letter writing, and burials, sadly numerous, almost daily. We work in spurts, for we take in alternately with other C.C.S.s round about, and the flood rises for us every other day and falls with a corresponding evacuation. The more serious wards mean heart-breaking work for the Sisters these days; for there is often little enough to be done for the hopeless cases coming in; but the lighter ones make a contrast, for the thought of "Blighty" lightens pain and makes for high spirits.

'A little Church Tent gives me the chance of saying Mass every morning at 7.15 a.m. I reserve the Blessed Sacrament there, and I find that late in the evening, when the wards are quiet, is the best time for going round to give Communion to those who desire it. In the last C.C.S. our Church was also our overflow mortuary; and every morning there were some—perhaps as many as a dozen—poor bodies lying out on the floor before the altar; a strange congregation, for I don't think their souls were far away.'

Of the little chapel in his hut at Etaples in January 1919 he writes: 'It is lined with scenery canvas painted to represent a Gothic chapel—very well done and the altar is recessed in a square alcove. There is a movable partition by the curtains which divides it from the reading room and this is thrown open on Sundays. The chapel only holds about half a dozen and the whole place about forty. I can get about fifteen into my room beyond and there is a stove there which draws a crowd.'

A little of what this war service meant to him comes out much later in a letter from Johannesburg dated August 1927. 'I have been very interested in the illustrated papers with the accounts of the opening of the Menin Gate—the pictures of the rebuilt Ypres quite incredible after what one remembers just ten years back this

month. I still have a pen sketch of the Cloth Hall, etc., as viewed from my dugout in the ramparts—the whole thing a mass of ruin and desolation. I nearly got a shell on top of me, I remember, the first time I went through the Gate, or, rather, through the breach in the ramparts where the Gate had been and where the new one stands. After that I got into the way of crossing the moat over a plank bridge in another part. It was rather an experience to be plunged suddenly into the thick of perhaps the most intensive fighting in all history. I notice that *The Times* says that never in all the world and never even in any other theatre of the War was there anything to rival or even approximate the Ypres Salient—a triangle on a ten mile base and with the farthest point never more than six miles away. In the Paschaendale Push our front line was only three miles off, with ground so waterlogged that no dug-outs could be made and with the dry ridges on either side held by the enemy. I see, too, that one quarter of the total losses by land and sea, all over the world, took place within that triangle—one million put out of action, and a quarter of a million killed. So it was good to have had a little share in it and all those weeks stand out like nothing else in life. The whole account now is most moving, so much so, that I don't think I should really have cared to be present at the service.'

CHAPTER VI

AFRICA, 1919-35

'I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. . . . Thou hast set my feet in a large room.'

Psalm xxxi.

FATHER VICTOR's work in South Africa was tremendously expanded after these war years when, as Provincial of the Community from 1919-35, he was responsible for all its work from the Cape to the Zambesi. There were occasional visits for a few months to Britain, and in 1925 he made a tour of the United States of America, paying particular attention of course to the subject of race relations in that country.

His record of travelling in South Africa in those years gives some idea of the demands made upon him. The greater part of these journeyings were of course by rail. But along the Rand he was often to be seen on his bicycle. Of this the Reverend Ned Paterson writes: 'I knew him first about forty-five years ago when he used to pedal a boneshaker along the Johannesburg Reef, ministering to both European and African congregations; his trousers rolled half-mast; his bright eyes taking in and enjoying every detail about him, except the road his bicycle was on. He never acquired a mechanical sense; things died on him, his bicycle never oiled until some ear-sensitive stranger did it for him; his razor blunt and notched from the secondary uses he put it to; his hair mangled because he preferred to cut it for himself, using rusty clippers and a dog-stripping comb.' At a later date, to the anxiety of his many friends, he promoted himself to a motor-cycle, most precariously steered through the busy traffic of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand.

The work already mentioned in city settlement and country mission district and in training college and schools during 1910-16 was, during these later years, developed and increased. It was in November 1919 that he sailed again for South Africa. At the July Chapter he had been appointed Provincial of the Community, which office he held until 1935. Henceforth he must superintend all community interests in Africa; the stage upon which he worked was immensely extended.

Three main centres of C.R. activity were his special care. First, there was the Priory at Rosettenville, becoming ever more of a power house for African work, with many outstations along the great length of the Witwatersrand; secondly, on the other side of

Johannesburg, was S. John's College for European boys; the third was far away in the Umtali district of Southern Rhodesia. This was the S. Augustine Mission at Penhalonga, their most recently accepted responsibility.

The Priory, Rosettenville, its College and evangelization work had been the milieu of Osmund Victor's earlier years in South Africa, of which some account has already been given.

S. John's College was the first diocesan boys' school in the Pretoria diocese. It had been founded by the Reverend J. T. Darragh in 1898, but the Boer War had brought it practically to ruin. It was in 1906 that the Community of the Resurrection 'adopted' S. John's. This was a great act of faith for it was bankrupt, its buildings mere shanties, its pupils dwindling fast.

Under the dynamic leadership of Father Nash, C.R., the impossible was gradually achieved. The school was moved in 1907 to a magnificent site on the fine Houghton ridge of Johannesburg. The Union's famous architect, Herbert Baker, designed impressive buildings which, from that date, were erected section by section; pupils were attracted in ever increasing numbers. At the time that Father Victor became Provincial the critical years of establishment had been passed. Father Nash had left in 1917 to become Coadjutor Bishop of Capetown and, under Father Clement Thomson, C.R., the next stage of the way was being faced.

The next fifteen years saw immense expansion, making of S. John's College an outstanding independent school, noted not only for its education but for the unique beauty of its architecture and setting. More of this story is told later.

The history of Penhalonga was somewhat similar. It was in 1912 that Father Barnes, C.R., and Father Nash, C.R., went to prospect 'The Bishop's Farm,' which the Community had been asked to take over. This site had been chosen by Bishop Knight-Bruce in 1891 for a central mission station in Rhodesia. He left a European carpenter and an African bricklayer to prepare the way. In 1897 an industrial school was started and the Knight-Bruce Memorial College of S. Augustine came into being under Douglas Pelly and four members of the Evangelical Brotherhood from Lichfield. S. Monica's industrial school for girls followed in 1907. Many outstations developed. On January 3rd, 1915, the Community of the Resurrection took charge. Thenceforward, under Father Barnes, C.R., and Father Baker, C.R., another vital centre of African mission work was recreated and vastly expanded.

Father Victor had paid his first visit there in 1916. His trek letter given in an earlier chapter described the journey from Johannesburg. His imagination recreates the past vividly, dramati-

cally; his vision builds for the future. While at Penhalonga that year, he had written, 'I have found the place where Knight-Bruce pitched his tent when he first came up to prospect. It is quite of historic interest really though no one has the imagination to realize it and there is a bit of a brick kitchen left; it is the one thing which links us up to the very beginnings, so I am making up the bricks into an open-air altar—they are set against a huge granite boulder—and am building a stone enclosure around. That will mark the spot at any rate, and in days to come they will perhaps build a Founder Chapel there and it will be a place of pilgrimage. It is on a little rise quite close to the cemetery and the waterfall. The man who helped him—a carpenter and a worker with Livingstone—is the only white man so far buried in the cemetery.'

The following month he said, 'One very interesting thing is that under the Portuguese period there were Dominican Missions all over the country ministering to the Empire of Monomatapa, as it was then called, e.g. there was a monastery not far from here according to native legends. They all got wiped out by some Mohammedan invasions.

'Prospecting for gold is unusually difficult in these parts because the outcrops do not show well but the prehistoric people seem to have worked over the whole land in the most systematic way. The Sabi river and seventeen different hills all called Moshaba all seem to go back to the Sabæans and Sheba. And then the Maharanga all round here have the African lips but the Jewish nose and profile—most clearly Semitic, and I believe there are many Hebrew idioms in Zulu.

'I am building a hermitage sort of place about ten minutes' walk away with huts and a chapel in which Brethren can spend the quiet day we get once a month, and get away for reading from the noise of the mission at other times. . . . I had it in my mind for some weeks and wandered about until I found the ideal spot on a hill-top which lies in the very centre of the farm—the only place from which a clear view in all directions can be got. There is an easy path to it and only a few minutes' walk, but the view is quite magnificent.

'The first thing to do was to clear a space on the hill-top and build a wall round it. Now I have been laying out a winding path with steps at intervals to the summit. Father Symonds has been helping with much enthusiasm and suggested the addition of Stations of the Cross all the way up. So we are marking these with pillar-like piles of stones. It will make now a splendid objective for outdoor processions, e.g. at Rogationtide and in Lent. The chapel and huts I shall hardly be able to finish before I leave, but others can carry that out.'

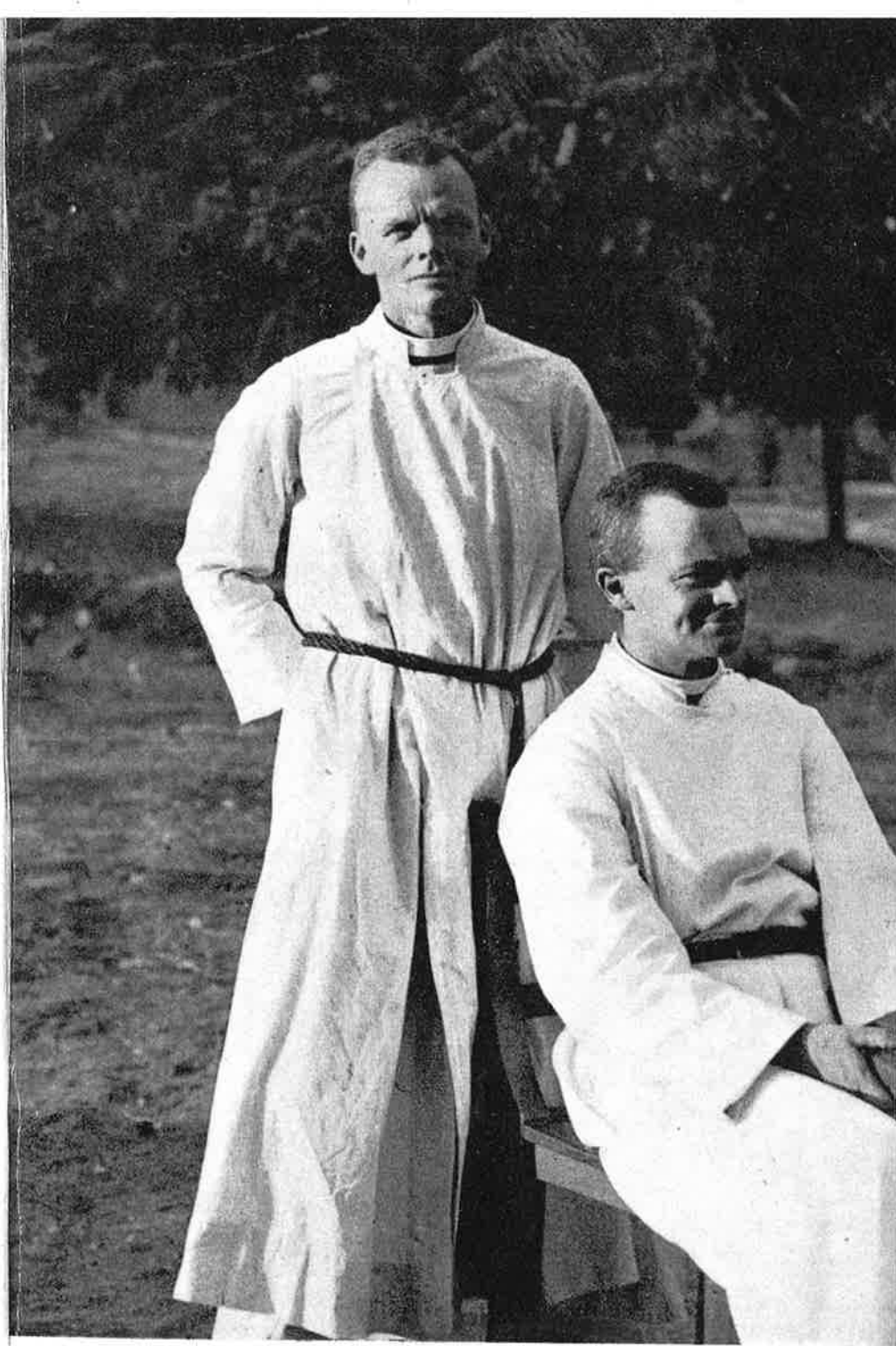
These three centres, each with immense potentiality, were therefore the first call on Osmund Victor's attention as Father Provincial. But his work was not confined to these. He took for his province the whole of Southern Africa—no less. The opening words of his booklet, *A Large Room*, published in 1925, on the subject of mission work, read: 'I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy . . . Thou hast set my feet in a LARGE ROOM . . .

' . . . Apply this verse to Africa as a whole and it stands most literally true. Africa is, indeed, a Large Room. That is perhaps the most outstanding fact about it; but most people forget how large a room it is. Take Europe, China, India, Australia and the British Isles and lay them side by side—it will be found that they fit very comfortably within the African coast line, and there will still remain enough odds and ends and jig-saw pieces to make up another India.

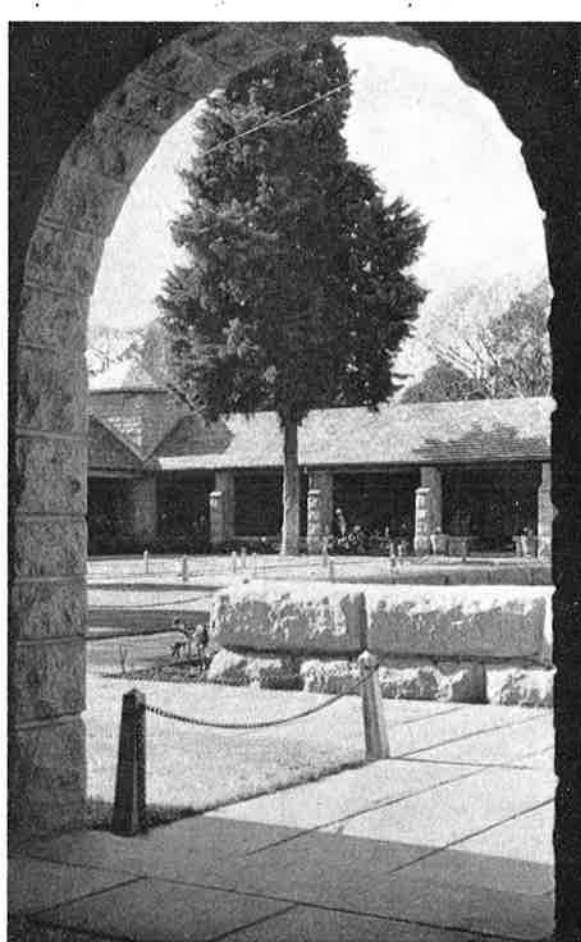
' The Union of South Africa at the foot of the continent is only a corner of the room, and on the map seems a small corner at that; but, leaving out of count the vast border lands of Bechuanaland, Southern Rhodesia and South-West Africa, and reckoning only the four provinces which at present make up the Union, one only has to travel day and night over the apparently endless extent of veldt within their borders to realize that the country before all things is a "Land of far distances." '

From 1919 onwards Father Victor's feet had been set indeed in a large room. He was in constant demand all over the country for Clergy and Sisters' Retreats, conferences, Quiet Days, preachings. As he travelled from point to point throughout the Union, the Father Provincial was quick to note strategical strongholds on the 'map' of South Africa's church work. His notebooks are filled with details. The history, the lay-out, the problems, immediate and portending, of each and every mission station he visited in the course of his unending itineraries, is carefully documented.

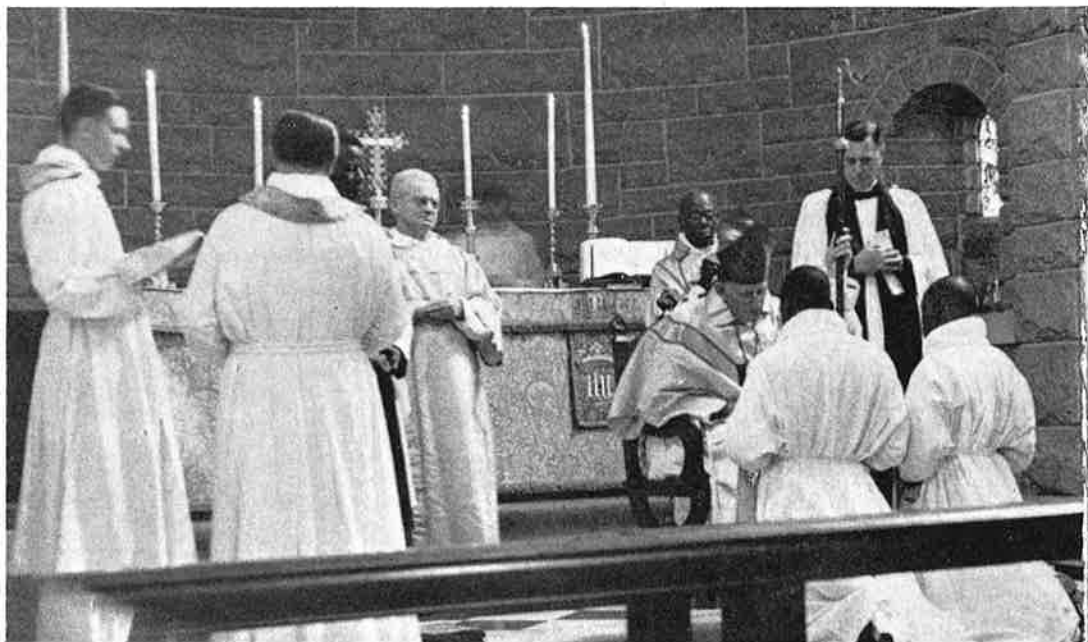
Industrial mission schools were considered by many to be the ideal type of education for Africans. Here, based on headings in his notebook, is the picture of one: Enhlonhlweni—the place of the training of warriors. This was the name given by Henry Thompson to one hundred acres of land on the high plateau in Natal, bordering the Orange Free State. Roughly the tableland forms an isosceles triangle, its apex the juncture of the Klip and Tugela Rivers; its base the Drakensberg Mountains. It is itself the source of the Onderbrook Spruit. Isolated it was, yet standing upon the old waggon road from Durban to the Orange Free State through the famed Van Reenen's Pass in the Drakensberg Mountains.



OSMUND VICTOR, ON A VISIT TO HIS BROTHER, DENNIS,
U.M.C.A. AT LIKOMA. JULY, 1922.



THE CLOISTERS,
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL,
SOUTHERN RHODESIA.



ORDINATION OF AFRICANS.
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL,
SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

Against that background he notes the milestones in the development of the mission. It was in 1891 that Henry Thompson came here from Zululand searching for an untouched area in which to start evangelization. He began work at Enhlonhlweni among ten native families; he built his own church and his mud and daub house, and there he died in 1895. After a short interval Miss Cooke, who had been helping with girls' work since 1897, took complete charge. There, from 1901 onwards, she developed the first African girls' boarding school in Natal and concentrated upon industrial training. In 1901 most of her girls were heathen, wearing blankets. None had reached beyond the sub-standards. With fear and uncertainty the first half-dozen boarders arrived and it took long to gain the confidence of parents.

By 1906, when she went on leave, she had gained thirty girls, but alas! on her return the number had dropped to eleven. Nevertheless in 1932 it had reached one hundred and eight, and a staff, which began with two, reached seven.

To-day a great African boarding school for girls has developed with three departments—Standards V-IX—taking a public examination at the end; an industrial department, comprising cooking, dressmaking, housecraft, laundry, poultry keeping, sewing and weaving; a primary school—sub-standards to Standard IV—under African teachers.

Here is a vivid account of *pastoral work in the country*. It is Holy Week at Penhalonga in 1921: 'On Palm Sunday, of course, the church became a waving forest of green with palm branches gathered on the mission farm, but the place did not begin to fill up until Maundy Thursday. At intervals during that afternoon little processions, laden with baskets of food and impedimenta of all sorts, emerged from various points of the compass, headed by banners and bursting into song as soon as they drew near the mission. These were the out-stations coming in for the Feast, headed by their catechists. Their singing was more enthusiastic than tuneful, beginning in the excitement of the moment on the highest note of which they were capable, and any further attempt at a rise in pitch only resulted in an increased volume of sound. And so with shrill shouts they lifted up their eyes to the hills and circled the walls of our local Sion before coming to a standstill.

'On Good Friday the fast was strictly kept by all until after three o'clock, and a constant succession of services filled up the hours; Veneration of the Cross, Stations of the Cross (held out of doors with the pictures hung on trees in an adjoining grove), Matins and Ante-Communion, and lastly the Three Hours. On Easter Day

the numbers to be gathered in and the inadequacy of the church meant that 'we had to have two Sung Masses in succession. I took the first at 6.30 a.m. and Robert¹ followed with the other at 8 a.m. After three hours in church I personally was glad of breakfast, but the native folk seemed to find sufficient sustenance in anticipations of the feast, the preparations for which dragged themselves out till the early afternoon. In the meantime the boys resorted to football with much enthusiasm.

'At the feast the *pièce de résistance* as usual was an ox. Roasting an ox whole, which seems to have been a favourite amusement in olden days, always has rather an opulent ring about it. Ours was boiled; and perhaps on that account the preliminaries seemed to me to be of rather a bloodthirsty character. I went out with Robert late on Saturday night, to find the beast, which had been slain earlier in the day, being solemnly hewn in pieces with axes and hammers which had been used for tree felling earlier in the week. The whole thing—horns and hooves and all as far as I could see, for they didn't seem to want to leave anything out—was stuffed into great iron pots set on a range of wood fires out in the open under the Paschal moon. It was the nearest approach to an "ox in a tea cup" that I had ever seen. The cooking went on all night, and when I woke in the morning a babble of conversation round the fires showed that it was still in progress.

'It was not until 2 p.m. that the feast began. With the meat went in a small mountain of native meal, and all was divided out into flat baskets. The scene was very gospel-like in its setting when, after grace, every one gathered round and sat down under the trees on the green grass, in number about six hundred. The baskets were filled and filled again, each group taking from its common stock, and leaving enough of the broken fragments that remained to serve as a prolongation of the Easter feast for our work boys for many days.

'After the feast came singing. A big circle was formed about six deep, and into its centre each outstation teacher in turn led the members of his flock to entertain the audience with songs which they had learnt in school. At the outset, on the part of the girls at least, there was all the smirking and the fiddling-with-the-corner-of-the-apron sort of shyness which is common to all the world; but by the time the song was over all shyness had vanished, and with a refreshing absence of false modesty, each party with great enthusiasm initiated the applause which greeted its own performance. And then when the sun began to go down, mindful of the long walk over the hills home, each party formed itself afresh and left, singing as it had come.

¹ Father Baker, C.R.

'It is only thirty years since these folk were living in squalid hovels among the rocks on the mountain tops for fear of Matabele and Gaza raids and massacres—their annual portion for as long as they could remember—barely having seen a white man and never a white woman and knowing nothing of Christ. One could not help remembering this when we kept the Feast of the Risen Life.'

Here is another picture, eleven years later: 'So you may think of me in khaki shorts and shirt with a sun helmet by my side . . .

' . . . And I am sitting on a rocky ledge under the shade of a limestone cliff. Fifty feet below me is the bed of the Molopo river—all sand and rock and as dry as a bone now as always, and half a mile away on the other side are more limestone cliffs all glaring and aching under a hot sun and blue sky. Behind me on top of the cliff are some twenty native huts and the new little mud church about 12 × 20 feet in size which the bishop dedicated yesterday and which on weekdays is to be used for a school.

'We had the first Mass there this morning, sung in Bechuana by the bishop. Mostly the people were heathen and they had to clear out half way through but there were about twenty communicants—and almost all of them came from seventy miles away across the desert, i.e. three days' journey through the wilderness—bringing their water with them of course, for there wasn't a drop on the way. This means their *one* chance of Communion in the whole course of the year, for it is only once a year that the bishop and the native priest who comes with him can manage to get so far. They all made their Confession the night before—and if the singing was rather painful I am sure it must have rejoiced the heavens. Certainly the old headman who had led them all the way, though he sang with the voice of a corncrake, sang also with the face of an angel. It was one of the great days of his life and he poured his whole soul out. Then they put up a collection—5/3 "for the food of the bishop"! Most moving this, for I can't think where they got the money from and in any case what is their own food anyway?—milk and meat (mostly from goats), roots and berries. This is all they have to live on in the desert—and never even see mealie meal, which is the staple food throughout South Africa.

'The Bishop asked me to preach and to choose a name for the church. So I chose Antony and told them the story of the father of all African saints of the desert. Whether they were any wiser—never having known of any other world than that of desert—I can't say. Anyway, there is the little Church of S. Antony set on the rock above the dry river bed.

'Here Livingstone came as a young man to be trained. Here he

married Mary Moffat and from this spot he set out on his long missionary journeys. Kuruman, therefore, was for eighty years the "farthest north" of all mission stations and will stand in African history as Iona and Lindisfarne do with us. The main current has swept elsewhere but there is the old, long, low thatched house, the school and the church and the gardens round—set just where a great spring pours out its four million gallons a day and has never been known to fail. The little river so born runs for four miles and then disappears as suddenly as it came. All this I hope to see more fully on the return journey.

'Then on to Bathlaros, thirteen miles off, which we reached at sunset. Total one hundred and sixty-seven miles—a good day's run in Africa where on their stony veldt tracks you average about fifteen miles an hour. Here at Bathlaros we have a small station with two deaconesses who somehow contrive to feed and clothe themselves and run their school and feed the starving on £170 per annum all told. There we spent the night in small huts and great heat. Next day on thirty miles farther north over a horrible road, and so to the beginnings of the desert. After that we dropped into the dry bed of the Kuruman river and kept in there all day—mile after mile, for about one hundred all told.

'But all this anticipates the story of how we got here yesterday. Well, I left Johannesburg on Sunday—travelled all night and found myself at Kimberley in the morning. There the Bishop met me and we set out in his "Dodge" car. First, forty miles due west to the Vaal river which we crossed by a pontoon.

'Then up over a great ridge and miles across a high plateau. About 2 p.m. we lunched under a grove of wild olive. I picked a few olive leaves for you—thinking that this would arrive in time for Holy Week and that you would like some book mark from an African Gethsemane. Then down to a remote little Dutch dorp of about a dozen houses—and beyond that the best part of one hundred miles running due north along the foot of a range of hills. Very like Sussex downs they were—all gloriously green after recent rains.

'So in the evening to Kuruman which I have wanted to see more than almost any other place in the country. For here over one hundred years ago into the very heart of the wilds came Robert Moffat and here he worked for nearly fifty years—the pioneer apostle of the Bechuana people.'

In the cities, pastoral work for Africans goes on side by side with that for Europeans. An experience in April 1922 illustrates this: 'I went down to the Cape and on the way broke my journey for a

weekend at Kimberley, partly by way of seeing the Bishop and partly by way of looking in upon Jerome (Father Dieterle) who was then getting to the end of a two months' stay at S. Matthew's.

'For weeks Jerome had been sweltering under a blazing sky with scattered clouds as white, and just about as dry, as cotton wool. His world—a wilderness of dust and corrugated iron, flat to the horizon and with a quality of ground-rock and diamond clay, which not only glares all day, but retains and radiates the heat at night. In such surroundings as these I found him—very happy and, as I thought, truly apostolic; living in a four-roomed mud cottage, and anon sallying forth to visit his flock in a grey cotton cassock, wearing a brown trilby hat of a battered and ancient description, and armed with a white umbrella lent to him by one of the Sisters.

'Fortunately I brought some rain with me, for which, seeing that they had been without it since November, I hope they were duly grateful. When Jerome swept round in the procession before Mass, it seemed to me that he wielded his Asperges brush rather vigorously, almost viciously in fact—but I later learned that his flock had complained that they sometimes missed the healing and cooling spray, the only assured supply perhaps in all that aching land. Then later, the service over, what water may have failed to give, words provided; for there came Notices (serving, from what I could gather, at once to inform and castigate his people) poured forth with equal vigour, in alternate torrents of English and Afrikaans: and all this to the great refreshment of the congregation, which shook and preened itself like ducks in a thunderstorm.

'I must say that I did not find it at all an easy matter that night to "plough the fields and scatter" when it came to preaching in the cathedral at a Harvest Festival service. If, for once, the church was not overloaded with pumpkins, it was probably because they had none to put there—poor dears. The few decorations that were there reminded me of the pathetic little present of David to the captain of his brothers' fifty—a few cheeses and a little parched corn, wasn't it? The corn anyway was there—very parched I thought—and leaning up against the pillars in little tired bundles. And what could one say from the pulpit, when the local "field" is represented by that great hole which marks the diamond mine then on the point of closing down—a hole on which all their bread and butter depends?

'South Africa was always proud to think that this and its companion away over at Premier Mine near Pretoria, are the largest man-made holes in the world. Now both mines have been closed through the failure of the diamond market, and many thousands of men, white and native, have been thrown out of work. Their

tragedy is being shared by incredible numbers throughout South Africa to-day—and the two great holes remain, the eyeless sockets of the country vacantly gaping out over a despairing world.'

Pastoral work along the Rand creates completely different problems. 'Well, I went to the Mine Compound this morning, the first time for about three years. It is really rather exciting—five thousand natives in a vast square of buildings, and most naked except for a loose blanket, and drawn from the Cape to the Zambesi. All Africa in a nutshell. The student with me could tell almost at once from their faces whether they were Shangaans or Basuto or Zulu or Bechuana. I suppose it's as plain to them as French and German, etc., are to us—but to me they are all alike. We didn't hold a service, but just went to see about a room for one which has been set apart. The Companies find it pays to provide for religion as it attracts labour.'

In *A Large Room* he writes: 'If the shepherding out on the veldt has much in common with the parable of the Lost Sheep, that in the towns has an equally close relation with the sister parable of the Lost Coin. For here are the people, stamped with the image of God, and yet degraded often enough in a way that was never the case in their old tribal state. Mother Church, therefore, like the housewife in the story, has her task clearly before her. In the first place there must be the lighting of a candle, and through press, pulpit and public meetings a throwing of light on these dark corners of the earth . . .

' . . . It is not, however, in locations only that native town dwellers are housed. Locations, in addition to their other drawbacks, are badly placed—in the centre of a sewage farm in more than one instance—and are too far from the places where their residents do their daily work. There emerges the problem of the "houseboy" and, still more serious, the "housegirl." Native servants are almost universally the rule in South African households, and they pour into the towns in their thousands. An iron hut in the backyard is the accommodation everywhere provided. Here they are in their own domain and here they congregate, passing in and out by night and day at will. It is physically and morally impossible for a girl to keep straight even when she wishes to. Respectable native parents, on this account, are all against their daughters entering service under its normal conditions, but parental discipline here, as elsewhere throughout the world, has largely broken down, and up to town the girls come.

'Here is the opportunity for the lady mission worker, and a little

band of them in the Transvaal are doing the best they can. Hostels in Pretoria and Johannesburg have been established, to which the girls can come when on the lookout for work, and where they can still lodge when they have found it. It is a splendid effort, but it represents a mere drop in the ocean.'

What of *educational work*? Always the necessity for building up an African ministry was an urgent call. In Advent, 1920, four native deacons were ordained in S. Cyprian's African church, adjoining the old Sherwell Street centre. Of this, Father Victor writes: 'It was just ten years, almost to the day, since the first native priest had been ordained in the diocese. Up to that time there had been ordinations to the diaconate, some ten in number; and one well remembers the native pressure exerted on the slow wisdom of the Bishop, and their fear lest the principle of the colour bar might be extended to the ministry; and then the growth of confidence as it was found that the door was open to those who could fulfil the requirements in the way of knowledge, character and experience, and had standing among their own people. And so it has come about that the priests have increased in number from one to sixteen, and the deacons from ten to twenty-six.'

Father Victor loved visiting the Grace Dieu College at Pietersburg where African teachers were being trained by the Church. 'The rail journey is most conveniently timed. You start out just after supper, catch the 9 p.m. train at the Johannesburg station, and after rumbling along all through the night, wake to find yourself two hundred miles north and the train snorting away up steep gradients through the bush covered hills of the Waterberg. Pietersburg lies out beyond the hills in open country, and in country which, somehow, at a distance and in retrospect, one always thinks of as pretty flat. It is anything but that, and the drive over to the mission farm is typical of the whole. The veldt here, which looks so flat from the hill-tops, in much the same way that the Weald looks flat from the Sussex Downs, is in reality as much a matter of ups and downs as the Weald is, only that in point of size it would be like comparing Atlantic rollers to the chops of the Channel.

'The distance is sixteen miles, and in that space there are just three big veldt waves, with a river to be crossed in the trough of each. One is reminded again and again, too, of the open sea by the great granite hills. They rise sheer out of the veldt with their vast piled boulders, like so many islands, and at distances of from five to a hundred miles, and one comes on them hour after hour in much the same way that one sights Teneriffe at dawn and makes it sometime in the afternoon.

'The College cart comes out to fetch the visitor, and after two hours of driving, and at the top of the last rise, one sees far away on the opposite slope a little cluster of huts and whitewashed buildings. It all looks so small and remote, and yet it is true to say that that little group of buildings is attracting natives from all over South Africa. It is difficult to understand how a reputation spreads—as it undoubtedly does spread—among these African folk, but there it is, and at Grace Dieu one can find natives from all over the country—from the Cape, from Basutoland, from Delagoa Bay, from the Free State, from Rhodesia; and it is only want of accommodation which prevents the College from taking far more students than it has.

'The mention of all these names may not convey very much idea of relative distance to the outsider, but it really means an area almost European in size. This is just one of those points—and there are many others—in which South African native colleges and even night schools seem to resemble the universities of the Middle Ages, when the fame of the individual teacher counted for so much more than it does now, and when the tide of student life flowed easily in one direction or another—to Paris, Oxford, Bologna, or whatever it might be.'

Alas, the College is closed. All teacher training under the Bantu Education Act of 1956 is in the hands of the State now. Another light has gone out. The College buildings are at present used as a boarding school for African boys and girls from Standard VI upwards. The Principal, Archdeacon Woodfield, and his staff go forward in hope that they may be allowed to continue this. The need is great.

Of the development of a University for Africans, Osmund Victor writes in 1921: 'After Christmas I was able to get away from Johannesburg. The Sisters' Retreat at Grahamstown, seven hundred miles away in the far south, was the ultimate objective, but it was possible and profitable to work in two or three other places en route. First, therefore, with Herbert (Father Bennett, C.R.) to Fort Hare, where the first university college for the higher education of the natives has been started. The need of this was foreseen forty years ago; and the Government has at last made a move, probably because there came to its notice the steady stream of natives passing over to the States to gain from negro institutions what could not be obtained here. The beginning was made in 1914 with a handful of students lectured to in back kitchens and under garden trees in a hired house or two; and what we went down to now was the open-

ing of the first block of permanent buildings, part of a scheme which may take one hundred years to complete.'

'*Summer School.* Following on the opening ceremony, and by way of a sort of house-warming for the new buildings, there came a Summer School for natives. This lasted for four days and was attended by one hundred men and women; teachers mostly, and drawn from all over the country, though the great majority naturally came from the south and from close at hand. They were quartered at Lovedale, the great Presbyterian centre, and perhaps the most widely known of all mission stations in South Africa. It is only a mile away from Fort Hare and proved therefore very convenient. The days were strenuous enough, for the programme was as full as that of our first Clergy School at Mirfield two years ago. There were six courses of lectures (five lectures in each, and every lecture lasting exactly an hour), and in addition two or three conferences and, on one evening, a concert. This involved an early start and a very close attention to the clock each day or things would never have been got through. But everything went with a great swing, and after a heavy day the natives turned up so fresh to the evening conference that on one occasion beginning it at 8 p.m. they kept up the argument, I was told, until 2 a.m. the following morning.'

Medical mission work is another great necessity especially in the country. The Jane Furse Memorial Hospital in Sekukuniland is typical. Of this hospital, Father Victor writes: 'It was the warring of the Dutch with the native Chief Sekukuni in the 'seventies which led to the occupation of the country in the first place by British troops under Sir Garnet Wolseley. The territory now is one of the big native reserves, and to reach it it is necessary to travel some hundred miles from the nearest station in the central Transvaal. Here, in a country given to malaria and many other forms of sickness, with a native population of eighty thousand, and a few scattered white settlers, is a hill ridge. On this ridge, near the summit, and with glorious views over the wide veldt, the hospital has been built.

'Mr. Fleming has been again to the fore, and his plans, on the lines of the College at Pietersburg, include a central block with its quarters for doctor and nurses, four wards, and operating theatre. Adjoining this are to be twelve round huts—eight of them wards—and a chapel. Accommodation has been provided in different parts for both white and native patients, all of whom are expected to pay some small sum for what is done for them.

'Apart from what the Medical Mission is doing to supply the immediate wants of a people sorely in need, hundreds having died in the last year or so from malaria alone—there are great hopes for the future in other directions. The Mission should become a training centre for native nurses, for this need is increasingly great, and their numbers in the Transvaal could be counted on the fingers of one hand.'

Since Osmund Victor penned those words, enormous developments have taken place. African nurses have been trained there for years; there is an African Sisterhood helping with evangelical work; the Community of the Resurrection has its own Priory of S. Francis of Assisi, from which many outstations are served. The Jane Furse Memorial Hospital is recognized by the Government and its name stands high in South African native life.

But what of those three Community centres in his charge? In journeyings often—5,557 miles in 1920, 8,693 in 1938, the Father Provincial could not possibly devote all the time and care he should and would to these. Developments in all of them were great during these years. Always there was building going on. Nevertheless, in spite of frequent absences and mounting calls upon his time, much of it was personally superintended by him.

The story of his building of S. Peter's Church, Rosettenville, has already been told. This was dedicated, with great thanksgiving, by Bishop Nash on November 10th, 1925. At the same time further College buildings were being planned. In 1923 Father Winter was clearing ground for the erection of a boys' hostel; in 1927 a recreation-cum-library room was built as well as more student rooms, these superintended by Father Gregory Evans, then Principal of the College.

In 1935 Father Victor embarked upon a library building for the priory. This was not only a first necessity in any monastery, but it was hoped that it would give opportunity to visiting clergy also. Moreover, a mass of records and books had been moved from S. John's College in 1934 and space must be found to house them.

Of this, Father Runge writes in 1936, 'The library building, designed and executed by Osmund last year, is indeed an acquisition to the house. It took my breath away when I first entered it. It is a most admirable building and greatly adds to the amenity and dignity of the Priory.'

Looking back on the history of S. John's College, Father Victor wrote, 'Shortly after the close of the First World War, and on his arrival in South Africa as Governor General, Lord Buxton paid his

first visit to the school and was shown round the buildings as they then were—his guide painfully aware that far more appeared on paper than had been reproduced in stone. The tour therefore resolved itself into a recital of future possibilities, and doubtfully entertained hopes. . . . "The plan shows the chapel here" . . . "Some day we hope to build the dining hall here" . . . "The quadrangle when completed will follow the line of this ridge" . . . and so on.

'When all was over, the Governor, rather tired and only half convinced, could only say, "Yes, this is all very nice, but you will agree with me that it leaves a good deal to the imagination." This is precisely what it did. S. John's was almost wholly a paper scheme, and passing visitors could hardly be blamed if they failed to be impressed. The fact of the matter was that when, at the outset of the War and when a whole order of things seemed to be going up in smoke, the Council suddenly decided to turn the old original buildings into a preparatory school, and to embark upon a huge new pile of buildings covering the adjoining ridge, there were many who shook their heads. Every one realized that Sir Herbert Baker had devised a great scheme, and that the Council, whatever else it lacked, had not lacked courage and vision. But neither Sir Herbert nor the Council or any one else in their wildest dreams ever imagined that their generation would see the scheme completed.

'Yet from the year 1924 the incredible began to happen, and went on happening over the next fifteen years or so. Every year saw its function: the laying of foundation stone after foundation stone, alternating with the dedication of some fresh portion of the building as it was completed. No longer was the imagination taxed, and even the dullest began to grasp the conception in its fullness. Those who visit S. John's to-day no longer walk by faith. They walk by sight, and the sight has drawn visitors in ever increasing numbers from far and near.'

On June 13th, 1925, came the opening of the Darragh Hall. Later, opposite the hall came the chapel; then cloisters and amphitheatre. It was a wondrous achievement. Eventually S. John's outstripped the capacity of the Community. After long deliberation it withdrew from the College, just a year before the close of Father Victor's term as Provincial. The reasons given were twofold:

- (a) From all over the world from various parts of the Anglican Communion requests come to the Community for their services and for the starting of branch houses. The problem of the distribution of their manpower is pressing.
- (b) S. John's College to-day has such a status in the educational world that the Community feel it will be to the advantage

of the school if, in the appointment of headmaster and other masters in Holy Orders, the choice is not, as at present, limited to the members of the Community, but covers a field of experienced schoolmasters as wide as the Anglican Communion itself.

The necessity of the situation was accepted with deepest regret on all sides.

In July 1932 the magnificent church at Penhalonga was completed, 'an Italian basilica with two western towers, a great nave one hundred and fifty feet long and thirty feet wide, very large side chapels and two other altars, all native built under Father Baker's direction.' Thus the Provincial reported to his Community. And writing on the eve of its dedication he said, 'So now at last after twelve years of waiting—the church of all our dreams! Beyond our wildest dreams in fact, for the result surpasses anything that we had hoped for. Truly it is a great glory and worth all the waiting. For my own part I know of no mission church—admitting the possibility of an exception here and there—throughout South Africa to rival it. Certainly our Rosettenville one has been far surpassed in scale and splendour, and has been quite put into the shade.

'To-morrow therefore will be a great day for Robert (Father Baker), for, though others may have had their fingers in the pie, they would be the first to admit that the work from beginning to end has been really and truly his: though this is not to leave out of account the amazing skill with which the native staff, carpenters and builders alike—able often enough to be left to their own devices—have carried on the work.

'When, later on, white visitors come pouring in, as no doubt they will, to see what has been achieved, this is what will strike them most—that a building of this scale, running to something like half a million bricks, should from floor to roof have been the work of native men and boys: and further, that it should have been completed at a total cost quite incredibly small, somewhere round about £4,000, I am told, though I find it hard to believe this, and the exact figures have not yet been gone into.

'Other things apart, the mere sight of a building like this should, if they have the wit to see what lies behind it, lead them to reorientate all their views about the future possibilities and policies of South Africa in general and of Southern Rhodesia in particular. The thing is a portent.'

One result of giving up S. John's College was that it freed men for other calls. In February 1935 Father Raynes took charge of

the work at Sophiatown and the Priory of Christ the King was opened. Of all that this meant to Sophiatown, a little has been written earlier. In July 1935 Father Victor writes of the great new church: 'The new church—to be consecrated in September—is a veritable triumph—much along the lines I have supported, but beating all expectations. The whole thing—framework in reinforced concrete—to hold one thousand people and only costing some £2,000. The High Altar well pitched up under a great arch—three other altars and fresh chapels can be added *ad lib.* without harm to the main structure—at small cost.'

In July 1935 the vast Orlando township on the eastern side of Johannesburg was added to their care. The settlement of Leseding had been opened as an extension of Ekutuleni work. The Fathers from the Sophiatown Priory visited it and the churches in the location. Later, the Priory of S. Mary of the Cross was built next to Leseding. At present this Priory is manned by African and English Fathers of the Community, an African, Father Rakale, C.R., being the Head of it. The churches throughout the township are all served by African priests of the Diocese. Good indeed that it should be so, but tragic that Leseding stands empty because all resident work by European lay people or Sisters has been closed down by Government orders. The immense streets and streets of Meadowlands, to which Africans are being transferred weekly from Sophiatown and elsewhere, adjoins Orlando—fields rich for a harvest, for which the labourers are all too few; opportunities constantly frustrated.

With meticulous care Father Victor kept records of all his extensive work. Maps, diagrams, sketches are scattered through his notebooks, each drawn with economy of line, exact in detail. Thus are the strategic centres of the Church's work pinpointed over the vast area of the dark continent.

His book, *The Salient of Africa*, published by S.P.G. in 1931, gave something of this to the world. After twenty-five years it still presents with stimulating force the main problems of South Africa's missionary efforts.

Here we have 'painted' for us the great challenge of isolation, of distance: 'It is this "scattered" business which offers the chief difficulty. In a country so huge, and for a people so widely spread, the English parochial system would not serve, and its place is taken by great mission districts; each one often as large as one or more English counties. Itinerating work of a far-flung order is therefore involved, and life for many missionaries becomes one unending trek.' And again, 'A whole volume might be written about the

"Romance of the Road" in South Africa—whether in terms of wagons, mule carts or cars—but no one bothers very much about romance when he is engaged in doing the job, and a bishop lying on his back in the road contending with engine trouble, or dealing with a burst tyre, fifty miles from anywhere, would probably prefer to do without it.'

Here we have, most dramatically stated, the problem of the relationship between white and black church leadership: 'It is the task of the European to organize, to guide and give backbone to the native church in early days, but he soon comes to realize his limitations; he cannot cover the ground and, whatever his knowledge of the language, he cannot get inside the native mind or appeal to native thought. He can neither win nor hold in the same way. White corks may help to hold the net up, but the great net itself must be a black one.'

Here is the segregation problem, explicitly stated: 'In dealing with the missionary work of the Church of the Province in general, it is important at the outset to distinguish between its *fundamental principle* and its practical *working policy*. The fundamental principle is the unity of all mankind in Christ; while the practical working policy is one of partial segregation. In other words there is a real differentiation which finds its expression in separate churches and congregations for black and white, in separate mission districts, and in separate administration, especially where finance is concerned. Self-support is everywhere aimed at, and all native Christians render their monthly dues, it being a matter of principle that the money so forthcoming is devoted to the support of native clergy and workers only, and not to that of European missionaries. Everywhere, too, native priests are arriving at positions of increasing independence, though under the supervision of their bishops and the directors of native missions.

'At the same time, the unity of the Church is secured by the one bishop and one synod in each diocesan area. Here, in synod, whether diocesan or provincial, the self-government of the Church finds expression; for synod is a legislative body. In synod, therefore, all native priests, together with representatives chosen by the native congregation, have their place side by side with white clergy and lay members. Any native, trained and experienced in church councils and native conferences, may find himself taking part in higher deliberations, and may have his share in the full government of the Church of the Province as a whole, as well as of the individual diocese.'

How better describe the problem created by the diametrically

opposing attitudes to race matters among the two European races than in: 'The roots of the trouble, however, lie far away back in the past, and have their origin in differing policies with regard to the native people. The English had traditions of their own; they had suffered less from isolation; their thought had been moulded alike by the French Revolution and by the humanitarian movement of the eighteenth century; and they were in consequence inclined to deal with the Bantu, not as "savages," but as organized people with whom treaties might be made. With the Dutch it was otherwise. On the native question to-day there is very little to choose between the views of the Dutch and South African born British. It is all to the good that men should dream in South Africa of a great "united nation"; but there are those who, loving the country, would render a more whole-hearted allegiance if within this great "united nation" the rights of citizenship were not forever to be denied to the African himself.'

CHAPTER VII

ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSARY AND HON. ARCHIVIST

'A Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven
Is like unto an Householder
Bringing out of his Treasure
Things New and Old.'

It would have seemed that Father Victor's life was fully occupied during these years as Provincial of his Community. Nevertheless, two other important duties devolved upon him, both necessitating research work throughout all dioceses.

It was in 1932 that he was given a mandate by Archbishop Phelps to become his Commissary, and as such to have authority to examine the state of the missionary and educational activities of the Church of the Province of South Africa and to report to the Archbishop. Further, he was asked to make suggestions for the improvement and extension of the work.

No man could have been better equipped for the task. He had had experience in running an African College himself; he had had direct dealings with teaching and evangelization work of all types in the seething industrial centre of the Witwatersrand. Moreover, since becoming Provincial he had travelled the whole extent of the country, his observant eye and constructive mind sizing up each situation as he halted here, there and everywhere upon the way.

The black 'thirties' were upon us. Economic depression was taking its toll—work handicapped, finances inadequate, business dead, the threat of poverty and ruin laying its frosty hand upon lay work and church work alike. The *Church Overseas* summed up the position in April 1932: 'Probably there never was, on the economic scene, a more critical and far-reaching situation than that which the world is now facing. It is clear that, beyond the immediate emergency there lie big questions concerning the future of missionary enterprise. There is a growing conviction that the present crisis demands a THOROUGH SURVEY OF MISSIONARY POLICY and METHOD. We are at the beginning of a new age in missionary work. . . . The crisis is a trumpet call to turn all eyes to God.'

And so, with the permission and goodwill of his Community, Father Victor turned his attention to these matters in addition to the many other responsibilities laid upon him. Succinctly he clarifies the main needs, spotlighting the weak links, constructively suggesting the cure.

The mission work of the Church of the Province was being supported by about £40,000 per annum in those years. Of that amount about half came from S.P.G. But the income of the S.P.G. was decreasing rapidly, side by side with a greatly increasing demand for its help from Africa and Asia. This projected three outstanding necessities. One was that there must be, from any one province, a clearly defined over-all programme of action, so that there could be more constructive partnership between the Home Base (S.P.G.) and individual dioceses; also a closer understanding of plans and policies; a second was the need for more self-dependence in overseas missions; a third was an urgent re-examination of expenditure and manpower to see where economies could be effected without loss of efficiency.

In South Africa there were two bodies concerned with missionary work. These were the Provincial Board of Missions and the Provincial Missionary Conference. The former was the advisory body to the Church of the Province whereas the latter was a gathering together of representatives from the mission field throughout the country for consultative purposes.

The Provincial Board of Missions had functioned since 1924. It consisted of the Bishops of the Province and the Standing Committee of the Provincial Missionary Conference. It met once a year for an afternoon only, before the Provincial Synod.

The Provincial Conference, on the other hand, had been in existence since 1887, meeting once in five years, twelve months in advance of Provincial Synod. Its value had been great, bringing missionaries, European and African, together from isolated parts of the land, giving opportunity for discussion and fellowship, and leading at times to fruitful progressive action. But it had deteriorated sadly in value and tended to become a mere 'talking machine,' an expensive one at that. Its debates lacked, on the whole, a constructive provincial outlook. Each diocese seemed preoccupied with its own local difficulties.

After a year's concentration upon these problems, Father Victor published an Interim Statement.¹ He always favoured the printed document. 'Get rid of this world of roneo and unreality and put the thing in print,' he would say. In this he suggested that the Provincial Board of Missions should be reorganized so as to become a really effective headquarters staff, thus fulfilling the dual function of directing policy (but not imposing it) for the whole mission work of the province, and becoming the provincial link with the Home Base. This would act as a Provincial Missionary Executive

¹ *With One Accord in South Africa*, by Osmund Victor, C.R., Provincial Commissary to His Grace the Archbishop of Capetown.

on whom the bishops could rely when they met together once a year. Furthermore, and most emphatically, there must be a Provincial Secretary of Missions, free to give his whole time to the work.

In some such way alone could a definite all-over programme of action be found and a close liaison kept with the Home Base.

On the necessity for more self-dependence, Osmund Victor pointed out that 'Devolution is right in principle and everywhere throughout the world it stands in the forefront of missionary policy.'² Nevertheless, haste must be made slowly. And it must ever be remembered that the Church of the Province is inter-racial in character. 'It brings black and white alike within the orbit of its operations and counsels; it faces the problem of how to harmonize the often varying aspirations of its distinctive racial groups in the concert of its legislative assemblies. It has entered upon the hardest, but, as it thinks, the right path. It has embarked upon an experimental venture of the greatest interest and importance. Already in the course of its ninety years of history it has amassed a store of experience, and as to what may lie ahead—who shall say? The path of wisdom, no doubt, lies in holding firmly to the ideal, and in not attempting to forecast the future or to legislate too far ahead.'²

This whole problem raised the question of an African ministry. Over the years the number of ordained African priests had increased steadily, but financial stringency had called a halt. Dioceses found it impossible to pay additional salaries and, in addition, to provide pensions for those growing too old for effective work. There was great need for a Conference of Heads of Theological Colleges to discuss the standard of education required, the scope and content of curricula, and financial requirements. Moreover, there was much to be said for reducing the number of theological colleges, replacing them with one or two only.

A move had been made in this direction by the Community of the Resurrection at Rosettenville in 1932, when the three dioceses of Pretoria, Kimberley and Kuruman, and Johannesburg decided to use their college to serve all three of them. Father Victor proposed that there should be one or two such regional divisions with a theological college to each, thus immensely economizing manpower and expenditure. The extent of the country, together with manifold tribal and linguistic variations, of course, complicated the situation and made for no easy solution.

There were other suggestions for encouraging self-dependence and economy in work and expenditure. There might be, perhaps,

² *With One Accord in South Africa*, pp. 22, 23.

more co-operation in parishes where the priest was responsible for both European and missionary work—a common Church Council, perhaps, with a sub-committee to act in an advisory capacity on mission work. Parishes not directly responsible for mission work might well adopt some definite mission, and schools could well be encouraged to link themselves with a special mission centre. This would also result in a widening of the interests of Europeans, educating them in evangelization, and emphasizing the need for financial support.

Further, he dealt with the question of surveying and centrally controlling the considerable amount of landed property possessed by the Province. There was obvious waste and much missed opportunity when individual mission bodies sold or bought land without reference to an all-over policy. It should be possible to evolve some plan by which such a survey and such central control could be effected without prejudice to the rights or sovereignty of individual dioceses.

Much, too, could be done, thought Father Victor, to develop Bantu crafts, both in the interests of the mission and of individual African families. Many centres, such as the famous weaving school of S. Cuthbert's, Tsolo, the woodwork and carving at Rosettenville and Grace Dieu, Pietersburg, the art and sculpture at Cyrene, near Bulawayo, were already making names for themselves. The economic value of all this might well be multiplied. Moreover, what a contribution to African interest in art and handwork and what an opportunity for character training! In October 1933 this Report was presented to the Provincial Missionary Conference, meeting at Port Elizabeth.

On the previous day Father Victor wrote: 'The hall where we are to meet to-morrow is quite close by and will, I think, meet our purpose well—so I have spent some time to-day getting it ready—and to-morrow we shall begin—basing the programme, I hope, upon that booklet I got out and of which I have now sent round four hundred copies to all sorts of people, by way of concentrating opinion on what appear to me as the main issues which we should be facing up to these days. The Bishop of Grahamstown will be in the Chair—as diocesan—with the archbishop by his side. Thursday there will be a mass meeting in the biggest hall—and it is expected that two thousand people will roll up. To-morrow night there will be a gathering for the Native delegates and on Friday the mayor will give an official Social.

The report was well received. Father Victor continued as Permanent Secretary of the Conference, and as Secretary of the Board. From year to year he pressed upon Provincial Synod the need for

more effective organization. The following resolution was passed in 1935 :

'This Synod thanks the Reverend Father Osmund Victor for the characteristic energy and ability with which he has worked as Secretary of the Provincial Board of Missions, and desires to identify itself as far as possible with his work in this capacity for the future.'

This did not amount to a great deal. Father Victor's own comments on that Synod were : 'I got my statement presented at once . . . The archbishop let me fire it off on the first Friday and I had one and a half hours for the purpose. I think it went down very well and the Secretary of Synod was good enough to say that he had been thirty years in the country and that this was the most important pronouncement he had ever heard in Synod. So, in effect, said several others to me.

'But it is one thing to talk in a general way and quite another thing to get concrete results. A number of the bishops were very suspicious of my proposal for an Executive and I feared this would not pass Synod. In the event, it *did* but I wonder whether much will result from it. The bother is that the bishops tend to fear any interference with Diocesan sovereignty, and are suspicious of any movement in the direction of concerted provincial action. So, as usual, the Board of Missions meeting was crowded in at the end this afternoon after all other business had been concluded and when every one was very tired. I am not sure yet how much we saved from the wreck but I think we have succeeded in making some forward steps. Certainly the Executive itself—all experienced missionaries—are of one mind and will back up what I have been out for.'

It was an uphill plod. Three years later, at the Provincial Board of Missions meeting in Bloemfontein, Father Victor gave a review of his six years' work since being appointed Archbishop's Commissary. It was decided that a reconstruction of the Board should be made on the lines recommended; that a select committee should report to the next Episcopal Synod on details regarding functions of the Board and of the secretary, also it should consider costs of such reorganization. A major step was the recognition of S. Peter's College, Rosettenville, as a Provincial College for Native Ordinands. It was noted that this would not preclude the development of S. Bede's College, Umtata, as another theological college.

The Select Committee duly reported in 1939 with the result that henceforth the activities of the Board would be grouped under four heads :

1. Standing Committee work connected with the Provincial Missionary Conference.
2. Information Bureau.
3. Propaganda.
4. Liaison work.

The Board itself, in future, was to consist of the archbishop and bishops of the province, together with an executive committee of ten members, and a secretary who would be elected by the Board. Father Victor was reappointed secretary for another year.

Much had been achieved. Many appreciated the masterly handling of these problems. But Father Victor's constructive provincial approach was distrusted by others who favoured diocesan autonomy in these matters. It seemed to Father Victor himself and to those who supported him that the only hope for implementing it all lay in his remaining Permanent Secretary. But this was not to be. He was called to Rhodesia and, with deep regret, resigned in 1940.

The Provincial Board of Missions still does most valuable work acting as an advisory body to the bishops on matters of public interest, such as the recent Bantu Education Act. But much that Father Victor hoped for has remained a dead letter. Times and conditions have, in any case, changed vastly in the last ten years. The tendency to-day is for the Government to expropriate mission land as and when it wills in the interest of its apartheid policies. This must inevitably cut across all freedom of development and puts all mission activity at the mercy of the Minister of Lands or Native Affairs. And alas! the schools are closed and closing. The Government has assumed responsibility for all Bantu teacher training and has made conditions for mission school work which are unacceptable. Much that is cultural and artistic has for the moment died.

The Province is now divided into two. While in the Union we hold on in faith, seeking new ways to reach the African peoples, in the Central African Province, much is moving. For instance, the work of Penhalonga in Mashonaland goes forward to new and great opportunity. Thus has it always been. Bursts of Christian evangelization followed by consolidation, stocktaking; and then, very often, frustration, lights going out one by one. But the foundations have been well and truly laid and we can be confident that He who inspired the beginning of the good work in Africa will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ

In the same year that he had become Archbishop's Commissary, Father Victor was appointed by Episcopal Synod to be Honorary Provincial Archivist. This position he held until 1949. He brought to this task all his enthusiasm, his vision, his untiring energy.

'The documents of to-day are the archives of to-morrow—the history of the past is the trust of the present.' So the Reverend C. T. Wood (Chaplain to Archbishop Phelps) summed up the purpose of the Record Library in a paper to the Capetown clergy in February 1938.

This 'creed' Father Victor urged on every possible occasion and he, as Archivist, with a few willing helpers, built up over the years a Record Library of immense value. A favourite quotation of his exactly expresses his ideals: 'A Library may either be a mausoleum of dead and long forgotten things, or it may be a fountain of information and a source of knowledge.' It was his intention that the Record Library should be the latter. He maintained that there are two main requirements; these are security (against damp, fire, theft) and accessibility. The student must know what material is available, and how to get at it. Therefore there must be not only a building in which to house it but also a librarian, to sort, catalogue, fill gaps, advise.

These last it is impossible for the Church to supply. The Church can build up local Record Libraries, but, in addition, there is necessary a central institution where the student can easily discover that which he requires. The main material which would find its way into a Record Library is threefold in nature:

1. Books, e.g. history, biography, travel.
2. Periodicals, magazines, reports of institutions, etc. Synodalia.
3. Files of loose material such as pages of diaries, MSS. of various sorts; photographs, newspaper cuttings.

A central Record Library should encourage the building up of local libraries. It was always Father Victor's advice that dioceses should keep their own records on the spot, sending duplicates wherever possible to the main institution. In any case, a catalogue of the local library should always be housed at the central library so that research students would know where to look without waste of time and effort.

Thus local record libraries have gradually been built up in other dioceses. In Bloemfontein, for instance, the Reverend C. T. Wood, following up his work of like nature in Capetown, reported in 1944: 'The archives of the Diocese of Bloemfontein have recently been sorted and rearranged during the course of which some very interesting historical documents have been brought to light. Of particular note are three letters from Major Warden, the founder of Bloemfontein, written between 1850 and 1852; and the original letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Bishop Twells, dated February 22nd, 1867, inviting the bishop to the first Lambeth Con-

ference and giving the grounds for the calling of such a conference. There are many other important and well-known signatures to be found, including those of Sir Harry Smith and President Brand.

'The diocesan magazines and Synodica have been carefully checked. . . . A complete set from the first Diocesan Synod in 1872 is now awaiting binding, and odd volumes of the Synodica of the Diocese have been sent to the Central Record Library.

'A complete list of the documents and bound volumes constituting the archives of the diocese has been sent to the Central Record Library and another list lodged with the Provincial Archivist of the Orange Free State. In this way it is hoped to make our material known to all who may wish to use it for research purposes.'³

It was in 1929 that Father Victor first became interested in Africana. In that year, he met Mr. J. G. Gubbins. All South Africa knows the name of John Gaspard Gubbins, scientist, lawyer, prospector, landowner, who, at his farm in the western Transvaal, built up from the year 1910 a great library of Africana. It was an education in itself to hear Mr. Gubbins explaining the origin of some precious document, emphasizing its immense importance in the history of South Africa. It was an inspiration to students at school and university to be allowed, for instance, to handle a letter of Napoleon's written on silk, smuggled out of S. Helena. And this particularly in a country so young in civilized history, abounding though it is with primitive. History, too often dead in the textbooks, became vibrant and alive in the faded diary page of some voortrekker.

It is hardly surprising that Father Victor, with his own love of history, his keen sense of the wholeness of knowledge, his vision of the purpose of the ages, should find much in common with John Gubbins. He writes: 'It must have been in 1929 that I went down to Mr. Gubbins' farm in the Western Transvaal, on which he had built a room for the storage of all his books and papers, and there filed and catalogued (ranging it under dioceses) all the material connected with the Church of the Province.'⁴

Later, this Africana library outgrew the potentialities of a farmhouse; in 1930, by agreement with the University of the Witwatersrand, it was moved there. Mr. Gubbins wrote to Father Victor: 'My agreement with the university specifically states that the Gubbins Library will be preserved as a separate entity, and will be open to *all* members of the community, i.e. including Natives. So it becomes a national thing, and it is fortunate that we have secured such a good home for it.'

³ See Record Library Report, October 1944.

⁴ Central Record Library Report and Catalogue, 1934.

That, too, was a matter in which the two men found fundamental agreement. Father Victor writes in 1939, when John Gubbins had been dead four years, 'It was ever in the forefront of his mind that *no one must be left out*; that every group, calling and individual must be brought in. In the development of the sub-continent all sections—black, white, brown, European, Asiatic, Bantu—had played their several parts. He could not but be aware of all the hot feelings, race prejudices and political rivalries which colour the South African scene—yet it was ever his deepest conviction that out of the turmoil of men and movements, a great united nation would arise. "In South Africa," he wrote, "we are one great entity. All the opposed economic, racial and social elements are really integral parts of one whole, and each has its part in the great scheme."

'In an age of world-wide and perverted nationalisms this rings out like the utterance of a prophet! And, indeed, it is as a prophet, far more than as a collector, that John Gubbins should be remembered.'

On Christmas Eve, 1931, a great fire gutted the building in which the Gubbins collection was housed. It was a disaster of the first magnitude. The Community of the Resurrection shared in the loss, for only a month previously the Fathers had sent to the university all their earlier mission records (covering many dioceses, and many of them collected in the first instance by Dr. Bousfield, the first Bishop of Pretoria). There was also a fine collection of eighteenth century folios; 'Acta Conciliorum,' Works of the Fathers, etc.

The greatness of the disaster was matched by the greatness of the man. 'The work still goes on,' said Mr. Gubbins, having just heard the news. The tragedy aroused interest and sympathy throughout the country. Archbishop Phelps issued an appeal on January 14th, 1932. In this he called upon clergy and all church people to make a careful search both for duplicates to replace lost originals, and for any records at all with which to restore and rebuild.

The Records of the Diocese of Capetown were brought to light at this time. A search for papers bearing upon the unfortunate lawsuits then being brought against the diocese was the immediate cause. The fire gave added incentive. It was then that the Reverend C. T. Wood unearthed from the crypt of the cathedral some most valuable documents. Among them was the original Deed of Constitution of the Church of the Province. There was also a very fine manuscript, entitled 'Records of the Diocese of Capetown,' written by Mrs. Gray and covering the years 1847-61; there was a file of papers telling the story of the birth and development of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, including the

order of ceremonial for the Consecration of the Missionary Bishop to the tribes dwelling in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyasa and the River Shire—in the Cathedral Church of S. George, Capetown, on the Feast of the Circumcision, 1861. This, Mr. Wood writes, 'was the first consecration of a missionary bishop in the English Church for a thousand years, and only the second consecration within the Anglican Communion to take place outside the British Isles since the Reformation.'

Mr. C. T. Wood in Capetown, Father Victor in Johannesburg, became the spearheads of this search for records. Mr. Wood writes, 'It was sometime during 1934 that I first met Father Victor. He had come to stay with Archbishop Phelps at Bishopscourt while I was domestic chaplain. He was supposed to be recuperating, but his restless energy had to find some outlet, so he plunged into the office and started examining the archives. We made many exciting discoveries, including some original letters from Dr. Livingstone to Bishop Gray. It was shortly after the disastrous fire that had destroyed the valuable collection of Africana which Dr. Gubbins had presented to the Witwatersrand University Library and Father Victor had set out to try to replace some of the valuable material that had been lost and was ardently collecting reports and magazines of every description. It was through his enthusiasm that the Church of the Province Record Library was created and eventually formed part of the new Gubbins collection.'

'One of my difficulties was to find any record of Archbishop Carter's closing years and I recall the excitement when Father Victor unearthed a corded box from the attic at Bishopscourt which we felt convinced contained the missing documents. Inside the box we found a sealed package which roused our hopes to fever pitch, but on opening it there was disclosed to our astonished eyes two-hundred-and-forty copies of the Old Etonian Boating Song!'

In June 1932 the new library building, of fireproof construction, was opened by His Royal Highness, Prince George, at the University of the Witwatersrand. The Gubbins Library and Central Records Library were rehoused there. In 1937 an agreement was drawn up between the archbishop (as representing the Provincial Trustees) and the university authorities setting out the terms on which the Collection was held, and securing its position as a separate entity.

So great had been the success of Father Victor's energetic work as Archivist that by 1939 the Central Record Library had to be housed in a room to itself, next door to the Gubbins Library. In 1943 he was exercised in his mind about the magazine and pamphlet side of it. That was the weakest part. Writing to the University Librarian, he says, 'The first thing to be done is to get a Provincial

Rule that copies of all magazines, papers, etc., published by dioceses parishes, missions, must be sent to the library as a matter of duty and not of courtesy, i.e. we need some such regulation as governments impose.'

This resulted ultimately in a resolution at the following Episcopal Synod: 'When a service book has received final sanction of Provincial Synod, a copy is to be sent by the Secretary of the Liturgical Committee, as a matter of courtesy, to the Witwatersrand University Library of Africana and to the African section of the Southern Rhodesian Library at Salisbury.'

There was a further recommendation that the possibility of contracting with publishers in Africa regarding a similar practice for other books and papers might well be pursued.

It was with very deep sorrow that Father Victor retired from this post in 1949. It was an interest dear to his heart. The Library will ever remain a permanent memorial to his foresight and enthusiasm. It is certainly one of the most valuable treasures of the Church in Southern Africa.

CHAPTER VIII

RHODESIA, 1939-54

'In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved him that made him.

'He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs.

'He beautified their feasts, and set in order the solemn times until the end, that they might praise his holy name, and that the temple might sound from morning.'

Ecclesiasticus xlvii.

At the conclusion of Father Victor's task as Provincial of the Community in South Africa, there followed a brief period in England when perhaps the most outstanding event was a Lent term spent in Oxford in 1937. There we find him once again getting into touch with the feelings, the thoughts, the ambitions, of the young people. He must know what was in their minds for the shaping of the England of the future. For 1937 presented a very different England from that of 1910. A new age had dawned. What was youth looking for in Christian leaders? What must Christian leaders look for in a youth that had grown up after the shattering disillusionment of the Great War and its aftermath?

But there came another call to Africa. This time it was wholly outside Community life. From 1939 till his retirement in 1954, at the age of 74, Father Victor was Dean of Salisbury Cathedral, Southern Rhodesia. He was by no means a stranger there. Particularly valuable perhaps had been his visit to the Salisbury Convention in September 1938, at the time of the Consecration of the Cathedral. Then he spent four days giving devotional addresses each night and visiting schools daily.

In January 1939 he was taking a Staff Retreat at Ruzawi School, Marandellas; in February he was at S. Peter's School, Bulawayo; then at Ruzawi School again a little later, taking a Rhodesian Clergy Retreat.

In the latter part of the year he paid a visit to his brother's diocese in Lebombo, returning to Salisbury just as war broke out.

It was not, therefore, surprising that the invitation came to him to take charge of the cathedral for a few months till a more permanent appointment to the deanery could be made. For this purpose he was 'lent' by his Community. But what they and he had expected to be but a temporary measure became, in fact, a fifteen year vocation.

Writing to his family at the end of November, he gives an account 'of this parish work which has come my way and which will occupy my time until Easter.'

Here is his picture of the cathedral as he found it: 'The cathedral, apart from one or two subsidiary chapels, is the only church in Salisbury, and the set out of the work can best be shown by three concentric circles. At the centre comes the cathedral itself, consecrated last September, and consisting at present of apse and sanctuary, flanked by chapels and ending off with two transepts, and one bay of the nave—all built with immense solidity in granite to the design of Sir Herbert Baker. Later there will come four or five more bays and a great campanile, but it is not in the least likely that the present generation will live to see these additions.'

Round the cathedral lay the parish: 'The town of Salisbury is not large and the Anglican congregation represents only a fraction—yet it has to try to raise £4,000 every year; a sum which would frighten far larger parochial congregations in England. . . . Someone told me when I came that the cathedral was as dead as mutton—but, taking the Sunday services alone, I see no reason for such a judgment. We start with Mass at 7 a.m. and get about two hundred communicants (one Sunday it rose to two hundred and seventy). Another Mass follows straight away at 8 a.m. with perhaps sixty to eighty communicants. Then at 9.30 a.m. there is a Sung Mass—the cathedral well filled and about fifty communicants; i.e. totalling between two and three hundred communicants every Sunday, apart from holiday times. Matins follows at 10.30 and Evensong comes at 8 p.m. During the Sung Mass the Cathedral Hall is filled for a children's service, with an altar set up, and the Sisters in charge.'

Beyond the parish came the outstations: 'Then there is the outside district stretching sixty miles in various directions, and this means that one priest is out on trek two or three Sundays in each month. I am now trying to make tours round all the suburbs, by cycle or car, with a view to getting in touch with all subscribers who often say that they never see any of the clergy, the only wonder being that they see as much of them as they do. It is rather like having a London parish and having monthly services in Brighton and Winchester with very indifferent roads and car for transport.'

Father Victor wasted no time in getting on with creative work. From the beginning he built. 'The building, so far completed last year, left various internal *desiderata* to be completed, and it was the bishop's wish that I should get down to these at once. There was some money left over from the building fund, so I outlined a programme at once to the congregation and already we have made very good headway.

'First came the vestries at the west end—temporary ones in wood and iron, but all in shocking condition. So these now have been completely renovated—ceiled and painted and everything in seemly order for the bishop, clergy, choir and servers and churchwardens. Then came the fitting up of two side chapels with granite altars, and very well they look—with the Blessed Sacrament Reserved in a Tabernacle built into the wall between them, and surmounted by a two-hundred years' old Russian Ikon of great splendour. These were consecrated last week—one dedicated to the Resurrection and the other to the Holy Cross, bearing in remembrance Bernard Mitzeki and all African martyrs. This frees an upper chapel in the organ loft above, and I am proposing there to house the Cathedral Library. Fifteen units of shelving will be called for and I am beginning on this as funds allow.

'Then the acoustics are bad, so I have hung curtains behind the choir and in two days' time plan to raise the pulpit by two steps and to surmount it with a large sounding board.'

There came a tremendous decision in April 1940. Salisbury still had no dean in view and great pressure was brought to bear upon Father Victor and upon his Community to get him to remain for the duration of the war. He himself was torn in twain. On the one hand, the Union called with all its stress, its opportunity. Above all, the work of the Provincial Board of Missions was very near his heart. Pressure was also exercised in this connection by certain members of the Provincial Board's Executive, who felt that the whole scheme might crumble if Father Victor were not there for at least the first year after the recent reorganization. Moreover, mission work in the Transvaal had been a central interest for him for many years. In a letter written on Easter Tuesday, 1940, he says: 'Next Sunday, the annual vestry meeting will be held. . . . When that is over my work here, according to plan, should come to an end. I propose, therefore, to leave for Johannesburg on April 2nd. Then on Friday week I am due to meet the Bishop of Kimberley at the priory for the transaction of Board and mission business. And throughout April I should be at the priory, *inter alia* spending some days in getting the Record Library into order in its new quarters in the University Library—a task I look forward to very much, for it represents the culmination towards which I have been working up for many years past. According to plan, I should then, in May and June, be setting out on my old rounds in connection with schools and provincial missions.

'But at the moment I am in as much of a fog as ever. No appointment has been made to the deanery and the bishop is in a great fix over the matter. This serves to increase the pressure

which had already been exerted for me to stay on in charge of the cathedral for the duration of the war.'

A letter from Bishop Paget in a Church paper of April 1940 told something of the impressive contribution Father Victor had made to Salisbury in a matter of only a few months: 'During his time with us, he has gone steadily ahead with our plans for the internal arrangements of the cathedral, bringing to this work his wide and varied experience as well as his knowledge of art, architecture and acoustics. He has done much to improve the order and system within the diocesan offices, filing diocesan correspondence and papers, and bringing the Diocesan Library into order. This library has now been moved from the diocesan offices into its own special quarters in the diocesan library in the organ loft of the cathedral. There is now a quiet reading room, from which books may be borrowed and in which books and Church papers may be read. He has also carried on his work on the diocesan archives in which he has been interested for some time.

'But outstanding amongst the contributions that he has made to the life of the Church in Salisbury, is his preaching and spiritual teaching and his personal contacts with individuals through patient and methodical visiting; and also his glowing comradeship and his unfailing sympathy and interest in individuals.'

At that time it seemed that the decision had gone to provincial work rather than diocesan, but eventually Salisbury Cathedral gained the day. A further moving tribute to the mark Osmund Victor had already made there was paid by the then Governor, Sir Herbert Stanley, who sent him a note containing the following two Latin verses, which, after the Eton tradition, he had written:

'Qui tuo ductu nitidae fugacem
Vidimus lucis speciem, precamur
Ne gregem linguas sine te vagantem,
Te duce rectum.

'Audias victos, redeas, diuque
Gratus intersis Saliburgiensi
Custos et vates populo, beatus
Nomine, Victor.'¹

In the meantime war news darkened. 'Clearly and certainly,' he wrote in May 1940, 'we are being wrecked back on God, as our race has not been for this thousand years.' Here is an account of

¹ Translation: Those of us who, following your lead, have gained a fleeting glimpse of shining light, pray that you may not leave a flock which without you would wander, but which under your lead will pursue the right path. Listen to those you have conquered, may you return and for long remain at Salisbury—a welcome guardian and prophet for the people—happily named Victor.

the great services of intercession that started then in Salisbury Cathedral and continued throughout the war, 'Sunday we had quite extraordinary services for the National Day of Prayer. We had realized that there would be great congregations, but in the event they exceeded all that we had planned for. Our numbers are, of course, small in this town of some ten thousand people, as compared with England. Yet there were four hundred and fifty communicants at the first service at 7 a.m. and one thousand all told during the day. Then the church was packed with one thousand for the morning service, and again with another thousand at night. All through, the Cathedral is open daily for prayer from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m. and twice daily there are short services of intercession.'

A corner of the cathedral was set aside as a War Shrine where memorial cards and photographs of those who made the supreme sacrifice could be seen, lovingly set out and always surrounded by flowers. From this great things would grow.

And so the work, greatly blessed by God, went on. One or two milestones on the way must suffice.

1947. Always during the Patronal Week held in November (for the cathedral is dedicated to S. Mary and All Saints), Father Victor held a great family gathering. In the parish magazine early in 1942 he wrote: 'THE PATRONAL FESTIVAL: This has in effect been hitherto limited to special services on the Sunday or Sundays which fall within the octave of All Saints' Day. It is now suggested that the celebrations should in future cover a whole week. This has met with the approval of the Council and other bodies and committees are already at work.' The programme of that year's festival was as follows:

October 29th. Annual Confirmation Service.

October 31st—All Saints' Eve, Sung Evensong.

November 1st—All Saints' Day. Usual services with full choir and a special setting at Sung Eucharist. Preacher at Evensong: the Bishop. At conclusion Organ and Piano recital of first movement of Bach's Concerto in B Minor.

November 2nd—All Souls' Day. Morning—Requiems, 6.15 and 6.45 a.m. Evening—8.15 p.m. in Cathedral Grounds: Madrigals, Glee and String Quartets.

November 4th. Two short Plays in Cathedral Hall: 'The Traveling Man.' Miracle Play. Songs and Records. 'Why the Chimes Rang': E. McFadden.

November 6th. 7 p.m., Parish Supper in Hall followed by Games and Massed Singing in the Grounds, led by boys and girls of various schools connected with the Cathedral. Conclusion in the Cathedral: 'Brother James' and Family Prayers.

November 7th. Day of Prayer and Gifts. Holy Communion, 6.15 and 6.45 a.m. 11.30 a.m., Preparation for those making first Communion. Midday service of Intercession and Thanksgiving. Clergy in Cathedral all day to receive thank-offerings. Chain of Prayer from 7.15 a.m. to Evensong.

November 8th. Octave of All Saints to be kept as Youth Sunday. Corporate Communion for whole parish, and first Communion for newly confirmed. 3.30 p.m., Youth Conference. 'What does Christ demand of Youth to-day?' Intercessions. Supper. 8 p.m., Thanksgiving Evensong with short sermon from Dean.

At this final Service of Thanksgiving each year thereafter, the dean welcomed all the daughter churches. To this he attached tremendous importance, both as a highlight of worship in the Church's year and as a means of combating parochialism of outlook. Moreover at this great service, European and African congregations met as one in the precincts of the mother church of the diocese.

On November 7th, 1947, he stood there, 'not to preach a sermon but to bid you all welcome in the Name of the Lord.' He had just participated in the Centenary Celebrations at the Cape. At these the work of Robert Gray, first Bishop in South Africa, had been remembered with thanksgiving. Just one hundred years ago Robert Gray had landed at the Cape to find himself bishop of a diocese stretching from the Cape indefinitely northwards. Twenty-five years later when he died, he had laid the foundations of the Church of the Province. 'Never in his wildest dreams could he have anticipated the growth of one hundred years—fifteen dioceses spread throughout southern Africa with all the parishes, colleges, schools, mission centres they each contain.' In Capetown, S. George's Cathedral had been filled from end to end time and again in seven great services.

'And here to-night we meet—a small and parochial edition of all this. Here, too, are signs of growth, expansion; here, too, is cause for great thanksgiving.'

And he proceeded to welcome in turn each of the daughter congregations meeting in S. Mary's Cathedral that night. There was S. Mary Magdalen of Avondale, the first daughter to be married, as he expressed it—the first of those attached chapels to launch forth upon an independent existence. Lomagundi, a huge mission district, which Osmund Victor compared to Palestine, had been combined with Avondale, making a parish in all twice the size of Wales. But why worry? Robert Gray had had to face all Southern Africa but one hundred years before. 'It's a long, long way to Lomagundi—but my heart's right there,' parodied Father Victor.

And then there was Rhodesville, a tiny chapel thirty years old. This parish was not merely unmarried but not even christened. A name had yet to be found. S. Martin's, Hatfield, had been built on one acre of land, as a hall and a church in memory of the fallen. A sanctuary, unusually beautiful, distinguished the Church of S. Francis, arising in Parktown. Here, with worship, with folk dance and drama, the Church aimed to become the vital centre of the life of the whole community.

Then there was S. Michael's, serving urban Africans. It was reckoned that there were forty-four thousand, five hundred men and women in employment and, of course, unemployed women and children in addition. The population had more than doubled in ten years. Such were the problems to be met.

But Harari Township for Africans was being developed too. Already the settlement of Runyararo—the Place of Peace—was built. Opened in 1947, Miss Tredgold was continuing there, with a few helpers, the social and evangelizing work she had pioneered since 1946.

In another direction, S. Peter's, Meyrick Park, as yet had not got beyond monthly services in private houses. Cranborne Chapel, opened in 1941 to serve the R.A.F., was now being developed to meet the needs of hundreds of immigrants.

What a tale of expansion in seven short years! To what had 'the one or two attached chapels' grown? A cause for family rejoicing indeed! It was, of course, the beginning of a great flood tide of expansion in the colony. Southern Rhodesia seemed to many thousands, after the war, to be the much desired Utopia—the attraction continues. It was fortunate, indeed, that the Church at the centre of this inrush was so vitally alive. It must ever be a cause for thanksgiving that Salisbury had then as her dean a man of vision and selfless zeal.

What Father Victor had not mentioned in his talk was the fact that he himself designed the churches of S. Martin's, Hatfield, and S. Francis', Parktown, both recognized as artistically and architecturally satisfying. Rhodesville Chapel remains, only large enough to hold fifteen people. But S. Luke's Church was soon built and came to serve the whole district of Salisbury East, as S. Martin's, S. Francis', and Cranborne Chapel serve the south. Runyararo settlement was greatly helped by the gift of a hall-cum-church by the Beit Trustees in 1950. And now, due to a munificent gift of £10,000, a real church of adequate size, and doubtless of great beauty, is being built for the vast African congregation.

1948. It was in April 1948 that Father Victor published in the

cathedral *Message* his first information about cloisters. 'Some nine years have now passed since, in the early years of the war, our "War Shrine" was set up in the cathedral in a form which has met with—so far as can be gathered—universal approval and gratitude both on the part of the relatives most closely concerned, and of many visitors from overseas. . . .

'It is obvious however that our War Shrine, in its present form, cannot remain for ever and a day—if only because when, in years to come, the cathedral is completed, the aisle at present so occupied will become a passage way. Our thoughts have therefore long been given to the consideration of what might come to take its place in a more permanent form. In 1947 it was decided by the Standing Committee of the Diocese (which represents the Synod in miniature) and with the cordial approvement of the bishop, that the permanent memorial should take the form of a MEMORIAL CLOISTER. Such a cloister is not a recently devised addition to the cathedral, for there is in our possession a plan drawn out by Mr. F. L. H. Fleming, who was for many years a partner with Sir Herbert Baker. This, however, was merely a ground plan and did not show elevations or details. Taking this as a basis, Major Roberts, the Diocesan Architect, as long ago as 1942, made drawings which have been framed and for some years past hung in the cathedral. It is on these lines that the building will in course of time come to be erected. . . .

'Such then is the proposal. We are reminded of the various references made in the New Testament to that part of the temple in Jerusalem known as "Solomon's Porch." This "Porch" was not an entrance gateway, but a huge roofed colonnade built along the eastern side of the vast temple enclosure. It was under these archways that Christ gathered His disciples and carried on His teaching, and it was here that the Apostles assembled their followers after the Ascension. At right angles to this, and enclosing the southern side of the temple enclosure, was an even larger colonnade, with four rows of lofty pillars carrying the roof: the whole rivalling York Minster in size. It was in surroundings of such architectural splendour and magnificence—sheltered from the sun and rain, but nevertheless in the open air—that the public teaching of our Lord and of His first followers was carried on.

'On a far more modest scale were the cloisters, or arched passage ways, which came to be an almost indispensable adjunct to churches of the cathedral type. Surrounding and enclosing an area of lawn—the "Cloister Garth"—they offered that sense of peace, quietness and aloofness from the busy world outside which should characterize a great house of God.

'On a more modest scale still will be our proposed cloister, though the area enclosed—100 × 100 feet—corresponds closely to those of English cathedrals.'

At the Patronal Festival the following November, after his welcome to various congregations and his survey of developments, Father Victor was able to conclude: 'So much for figures, statistics, buildings, plots, sites; externals all, yet indicative of life, of spiritual vitality.

'And so, back to the mother church whose cloisters were now taking shape. Two chapels had been built and three entraves. The Cenotaph was there in the centre—an empty tomb but not an empty memorial—memorial to the dead, but alive with inspiration if the cloisters could come to mean all that was hoped for from them. They would make possible the dream of a great open air church, so suitable in such a sunny climate. They would also be used as theatre, meeting place, classroom, conference chamber. They would enable the church to combine great music and drama with great worship. They would serve in the chapels to focus, to vitalize the spiritual needs of many groups of people.'

1949. On his return from leave in England in 1949, the dean found S. George's Chapel at length completely furnished. With justifiable pride, he wrote: 'I also found, to my delight, that the long delayed stalls for S. George's Chapel had at last been completed, and are now in use by priests and Sisters for the daily Offices.

'Years ago, on my annual visits to Salisbury from the south, over twenty or more years, I remember wondering what on earth could ever be done with that chapel with its bare granite walls and wretched pill-box of an altar? Yet here it was on this very spot that the pioneers in 1890 pitched their laager on the bare veldt. The site was historic as Rhodesia counts history.

'But now, during the past ten years, through the generosity of benefactors and the skill of architect and craftsmen a great transformation has been brought about . . . the altar standing well out on its granite steps, its reredos set loftily between two windows on the wall behind, the renaissance screens with gilded grilles filling three arches, the panelling and stall work in that lovely "mukwa" wood, the grain of which sings and dances to you when the sun shines upon it, the memorial tablets and the great array of flags hung thirty feet up below the windows—the last accession being the Royal Standard flown over Government House during the King's visit—all this stands for something of which we may well be proud—a triumph of design and craftsmanship and a glory of colour.'

1950. On S. George's Day, 1950, His Excellency, Major-General Sir John Kennedy, K.C.V.O., K.B.E., C.B., M.C., presented a Royal Bible to the cathedral on behalf of Their Majesties, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. It came as an unexpected result of a chance conversation with Their Majesties three years before at the War Shrine. The King had remarked that the photograph there of his brother, the Duke of Kent, was not a good one. There was promise of a better; the outcome was, in addition, this most magnificent Lectern Bible; henceforth a much-prized possession.

1952. Always Father Victor saw the church and its worship of God, not in isolation but as part of the whole of life. And hence the cathedral at Salisbury was not to him merely the mother church of the diocese but an instrument to be used by God in working out His Purpose for the whole of Rhodesia.

It was on October 26th, 1952, on the eve of another Patronal Festival that he preached his great sermon, 'Annus Mirabilis.' Annus Mirabilis was for Rhodesia the year 1953 which lay ahead. 1953 with its referendum regarding Federation would be for Rhodesia a great year of destiny. The decision then made would affect the whole future. Prayer, deep continuous prayer, must be made that God's Will might be done. There were enemies, disturbances, threats from north and south, propaganda of all sorts among Europeans and non-Europeans.

Moreover, 1953 was the year which was to see for Britain and the Commonwealth the crowning of the young Queen; for Rhodesia, the visit of the Queen Mother to open the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition at Bulawayo. Also, in February of that year, the Centenary of Alfred Beit was to be celebrated. His wealth in the form of the Beit Trust had, by generous grants, contributed to the advancement of schools and communications throughout the land. Also, for the Church, it was to mean the division of the diocese into two, the possible setting up of a Central African Province and the choosing of an archbishop. Salisbury Cathedral would be the central point of all that activity; the great inaugural service would be held in it.

On that night the dean took as his text Jeremiah i, 11-15. Jeremiah saw (verses 13-15) a seething pot; an evil out of the north, breaking forth upon the land. For 'Palestine lay between two great world powers, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Trouble might come from either end, normally from the south, but now from the north—the ominous north seething and bubbling like a cauldron.'

So, in Rhodesia, with Kenya and Mau Mau trouble, the restless Copper Belt, all in the north; in the south the Witwatersrand (a

cauldron, indeed, of national and industrial aspirations) and all the unrest caused by repressive policies, crystallized at that moment in the New Brighton riots at Port Elizabeth.

But Jeremiah saw also a vision of an almond tree (verses 11, 12), the first of all fruit trees to show signs of life in spring. Which is it to be in Rhodesia? The cauldron or the almond tree? 'Let us pray that through light and dark in this Annus Mirabilis which lies ahead, this great year of destiny for Rhodesia, we may learn to say with the Psalmist, "God is my defence. The God of my mercy will prevent me."'

Prophet, preacher, teacher; what wonder that Salisbury people responded to his inspiration!

1953. The following is part of a contributed account, published in *The Message* of August 1953. It describes the moving service of the dedication of the cloisters at which Her Majesty, the Queen Mother, and Princess Margaret were present: 'As the Royal Party came into the church they were greeted with a fanfare of trumpets from the organ loft—a thrilling prelude to the whole-hearted singing of the National Anthem. Thenceforward, conscious as we all were of the grace of the presence of Her Majesty, we enjoyed the simple and time honoured "Order of Morning Prayer."

'H.E. the Governor read the first lesson from the Wisdom of Solomon, and Canon Finch the second from Romans xv. The choir gave us the anthem, composed by Dr. John Blow for the Coronation of James II, the words of which are a prayer of loyalty that must have found its echo in every heart:

"Let Thy hand be strengthened,
And Thy right hand be exalted.
Let justice and judgment be the habitation of Thy seat.
Let mercy and truth go before Thy face.
Hallelujah."

'The sermon was given by the Bishop of Mashonaland.

'The service over, a procession led by the choir and followed by the clergy, the bishop, H.E. the Governor and the Royal Party moved out of the cathedral through the south door into the sunlight of the Cloister Garth, where more than a thousand people were waiting to witness the dedication of this lovely pool of quiet that with its granite walls and slate roof shuts out the busy city around it, and stands as a memorial to those who gave their lives in the Second World War and to those whose lives and work have been witness to the Glory of God in Church or State.

'It must have been a moving moment for our beloved dean, whose concept it was, and whose constant care it has been over five long years, to see his dream fulfilled and come to life—a dream

that should live for centuries and bring solace and quiet and peace to generations to come. He must have rejoiced, as did we all, that this short but solemn dedication service should have been witnessed by so well loved a person as Her Majesty, whose gift of a Royal Bible—a remembrance of Their Majesties' visit in 1947—is one of the cathedral's most treasured possessions.

'In opening the service of dedication the dean said: "The late Sir Herbert Baker, architect of this cathedral and designer of some of the greatest war memorials in the Mother Country, in the last of his published works writes as follows: 'When war memorials are in question my own thoughts have always turned to the beauty associated with the churchyard and cloister—a sacred place, a "temenos" or sacred enclosure. It was also my belief that war and other memorials lose much of their spiritual value and appeal if they are not placed in sites already hallowed by past associations, in peaceful places, where attention is arrested and where emotions are heightened by their surroundings.'

"We are met here together this morning to dedicate to Almighty God these cloisters—our temenos or sacred enclosure—wherein are enshrined, without distinction of race, class or creed, the names of those who made the Great Sacrifice in the Second World War—as also of those who in the short history of this Colony have done outstanding service in Church and State."

'Then followed the prayers for those who have fallen and for those who mourn their loss. And the choir took up the prayer, singing in the open air the beautiful anthem "I heard a voice from Heaven." The solemn moment of dedication had come and the bishop came forward and invoked the Blessing of Almighty God upon this work that had been erected to His Greater Glory.

'Representatives of all the bodies that had undertaken the erection each of a separate bay stood in their appointed places in the cloister, and at the close of the service Her Majesty made a circuit of the cloister, speaking to many and delighting all with her gracious presence and her lively interest.'

Two other matters, of much joy to Father Victor, made highlights in this year. One was the inauguration of the Cathedral Choir School in December 1952. The school is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music in England and to the Rhodesian College of Music. It is non-residential, aiming to give the boys a sound musical education both vocally and in the playing of instruments. It should provide the cathedral with a boys' choir of a high standard with an understanding of church services and a knowledge of the Christian faith. This marked a real milestone in the Cathedral's life and was a very special joy to the dean.

Even before this choir school materialized, Father Victor had arranged through the B.B.C. to have a joint broadcast service of song and praise with Salisbury Cathedral in England. This had taken place on September 28th, 1947. Unfortunately, the reception in Rhodesia on that night had been disappointing, but it was heard well in Britain, and the idea of a mutual service at six thousand miles distance was a happy one. The Dean of Salisbury, Wiltshire, wrote later: 'It was a great joy to listen in to the Joint Broadcast which is being repeated on the West of England service on October 12th. I thought it went very well indeed, and both cathedrals were very good. It was a special pleasure to hear your voice and that of your bishop. I hope that, having established this link, we may continue to keep in touch. Please give my warmest greetings to your choir and congregation and tell them how much we appreciated their singing.'

Sir James Marchant in the English *Daily Mail*, wrote: 'The B.B.C. recently arranged a broadcast of song and spiritual messages between the choirs of Salisbury Cathedral, England, and Salisbury Cathedral, Rhodesia. It was an inspired exchange of spiritual exports by which each strove to give more than it received, and the gains of each were multiplied by the spirit of unity in well doing. Could not the B.B.C. arrange to extend these admirable exchanges, not only between namesake cities but, say, once a week, between leading cultural organizations in all European lands, including Russia, to promote the widening and deepening of mutual understandings and kindred interests by words and deeds? To forge such links of association in the things of the spirit would make for more enduring peaceful intentions, and help to check the rebuilding of national barriers weakened in war, but now being feverishly rebuilt in the struggle to survive.'

The other matter of moment was the presentation of a Centenary Book of Remembrance in 1953. The presentation happened to coincide with the Rhodes Centenary Celebrations of that year, but, in fact, the book had been begun five years previously. It is an illuminated memorial book, made and handwritten in penscript by Miss Marjorie Button. She first conceived the idea while sitting at the War Shrine in the cathedral. Words of Alfred Noyes, 'The Victorious Dead,' came to her mind. The following is an extract from an appreciation written at the time of the presentation: 'Wherever she has found words to her purpose—from the Bible, from Shakespeare, from many other great and not so great poets, from letters and from speeches—Miss Button has written them in her book and enriched them exquisitely with gold leaf illuminations and miniatures.

'There are words that have come thundering down the ages;

there are the moving words that Winston Churchill spoke on the death of a beloved king; and there is the simple tribute of a Rhodesian girl to her pioneer father.

'The poems and extracts are written on ivory-tinted, hand-pressed parchment paper, treated finally with linseed oil. The edges are gilded and the pages are bound together in heavy natural leather, hand-tooled, embossed with a design of S. George and the dragon and set with cornelians, garnets, amethysts, lapis lazuli, moonstones, turquoise and white opals in pewter.

'A delightful feature of the work is the free and imaginative use of Rhodesian flowers, birds, animals and scenes as well as those of the older countries from which the Colony has drawn its people.

'The underlying purpose of Miss Button's book is, in her own words, to express "faith in the deathless and glorious destiny of the soul or spirit of mankind, and the eternal love of God for His creatures." . . .

'Acknowledging her debt to his work, Miss Button wrote to Mr. Noyes asking him to write a dedication to her book in his own handwriting. He has replied with the first stanza of a hitherto unpublished poem.

'It is suggested that the book should be kept in a glass case and a page turned daily. This seems the best idea for displaying it in the cathedral.'

1954. In mid-Lent, March 28th, 1954, the first annual Cloister Service was held. Father Victor preached from the lesson of the day, Zechariah viii. 3.

'An open air service in the hot sun is neither the time nor place for a sermon or even an address. I prefer to call it "A dream come true." I take my cue from the lesson. Zechariah expresses the feelings and hope of pioneers—all young or middle-aged men, but dreaming of the day when family life begins, when in due time there shall be old men and children.

'So these cloisters represent a fulfilment of a dream. First, in a corner of the cathedral came the War Shrine, where over the last fourteen years a Roll of Honour has been drawn up. Thus eight hundred and fifty Europeans and one hundred and fifty Africans are commemorated. And this corner has served as a focussing point of many poignant memories; it has called forth the grateful tribute of many relations; it has never lacked its tribute of flowers all through the years.

'This shrine has paved the way for a more permanent form of memorial and in these cloisters the dream has taken further shape. There were two fundamental principles to be observed in building these. First, it must be a living memorial—one in which practical

utility should be wedded to beauty of design. Secondly, there must be no distinction of class, creed, race or colour. And this could be more easily achieved in the open air than in any building.

'The whole scheme reached its climax last July when the cloisters were dedicated in the presence of Royalty in a service of real splendour.'

And here are some of the purposes for which Father Victor hoped the cloisters would be used. During the lunch-hour those who worked in offices and shops should be able to eat sandwiches and rest in the cloisters, occasionally listening to musical records. It was one of his most cherished hopes that certain rich elements in the cultural life of the city should find expression here. These things were being achieved in 1954. Services were being held, plays acted, lunch-hour recitals had taken place, it had become a meeting place for lectures and garden clubs. Sanctified and standing apart were the All Souls' Chapel and the Hall of Remembrance, fittingly screened off.

Father Victor concluded his dream story by quoting the words carved under the dome of S. Paul's, London, 'Si Monumentum requiris, circumspice.' These were inscribed in honour of one man, Sir Christopher Wren, but they were quoted by Father Victor as appropriate in Salisbury not for any individual, but for all those who, commemorated there, whether through death in battle or through civic service, deserved well of their country.

Each bay in the cloister has been subscribed to by special bodies of people and thus has become, for each, a specially sacred corner. The ten bay holders are: the Pioneers of Southern Rhodesia; the B.S.A. Police; the Royal Rhodesian Regiment; the R.A.A.C.; the Navy League; the British Empire Service League; the Royal Air Force; the British Red Cross; the Doctors of Southern Rhodesia; the Nurses of Rhodesia. The porch was 'adopted' by the British South Africa Company.

'So, look around you—at cloister, garth, lawns and flowers, surrounded by prescribed walks. While the Hall holds the Book of Remembrance and a great array of tablets and in the chapels, week by week, the souls of the departed are remembered before Almighty God.

'What the future may hold, I know not. But I greatly hope the precedent has been set to-day of an annual service here which will at once remember the fallen and link together in one common fellowship those still alive.

'May God grant it.'

On Friday, April 9th, 1954, came the Cathedral's farewell to himself. Here, once more, he emphasized a cardinal principle of his

teaching. 'The diocese and not the parish is the true unit of organization. The parish represents a particular neighbourhood only; the diocese represents the complete household. The quickening of church life as a whole depends upon the quickening of the diocese. If diocesan life is to be quickened, it needs some instrument for its expression, some symbol of its brotherhood. That is where a cathedral comes in. It is the place of the bishop's seat, the home of families, the power station of the spiritual.'

With a brief survey of the past, he said that practically all diocesan institutions in Salisbury had been started since 1925. At the Salisbury Convention in 1938, which began his own close association with it, there had been an attendance of but sixty or so people at the back of the nave. Compare that with the packed services of 1954, the mighty Patronal gatherings of mother and daughters each October. His last admonition, 'Hats off to the past—coats off to the future.'

Moving, overwhelming, were the farewells from individuals, groups and congregations as the day drew near for his departure. Tired and greatly overdone, he at length laid down the work to which he had given all his powers of mind, body and spirit over fifteen years. Feeling indeed that he was leaving the greater part of himself in the Africa he loved, he at length sailed for England on May 7th, 1954.

The feelings of those he left could not perhaps be better summed up than in the 'Farewell to the Master Builder' which appeared after the editorial tribute in the May issue of the diocesan magazine:

'Farewell to the Master Builder'

'He wrought nobly, with stone and wood, with colour and harmony, with form and ceremony, in balanced proportions and fine symmetry. Inspiration came from those deep sources of history and literature that he knew so well. Beauty was created, traditions were forged, traditions that are Christian and British, forged through the wisdom and the culture of a great gentleman.

'He wrought nobly. No pebble was too small for his loving care, no cornerstone too massive. For his genius lay in his deep humanity, his power to shape and use the ten talents or the one.

'He wrought nobly. The foundations are well and truly laid, foundations of this fortress of Christian values against the surging materialism of the city streets, the ignorance, the superstition, the writhing evil that lies beyond.

'In the calm of the cloisters, let us pay tribute to the master builder, let us thank God for the gift of his genius, let us pray for the power to build surely in the future.

'For the future is dark and challenging, and the fortress must be held.'

CHAPTER IX

SERMONS. (A) CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS

I. THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN—BROADCAST ADDRESS

SEPTEMBER 14TH, 1947

At 4 p.m. on Tuesday August 20th, 1940, Mr. Churchill rose to his feet in a crowded House of Commons and, in an atmosphere tense with anxiety, spoke about the opening phase of the Battle of Britain as follows: 'The gratitude of every home in our island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world—save in the abodes of the guilty—goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of war by their prowess and devotion. *Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.*' These are immortal words, comparable to those spoken by Abraham Lincoln on the field of Gettysburg, but I would have you remember that they were spoken when the great battle—apart from previous armed reconnaissance raids—was only ten days old, and had yet seventy days to run. So sure was he, even then, of the ultimate issue.

So now to-day, seven years later, our minds travel back in the first place to THE LIGHTNING WAR which preceded the battle we now commemorate. I will read, in a modern version, part of the tenth chapter of Isaiah—one of the most dramatic passages in the whole of the Bible—in which the prophet vividly describes the lightning invasion of Assyria.

'The enemy has arrived at *Ai* . . . now he is marching through *Migron* . . . at the *Pass of Michmash* he gathers his war material . . . now he is through the Pass, and is saying "Our next stopping place will be *Geba*" . . . *Rama* is terror struck . . . *Gibeah of Saul* is fled . . . the women of *Gallim* are shrieking . . . listen to them *Laishah* . . . answer them *O Anathoth* . . . *Madmenah* is already in flight . . . the people of *Gebim* are gathering their household goods to flee . . . this very day the enemy has halted at *Nob* . . . and now he is shaking his fist at the *Mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.*'

All these places are unknown to us, but all lie within Jewish territory, and it was that very Jewish territory which the prophet saw to be in danger of invasion. The northern outposts—Damascus, Arpad, Hamath—had been overrun, but there still remained Samaria as the last bulwark between Judah and the Assyrian hordes.

Then Samaria fell—all Israel is an Assyrian Province and, for the first time, Judah stands face to face with the enemy, shaking his fist at the Holy City.

So we recall the collapse of country after country, and of town after town, during those fateful weeks of May and June and may substitute for old, long forgotten Hebrew names, other names of countries and towns, all known to us stringing out: Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Oslo, Brussels, Amsterdam, Laon, Rouen, Rheims, Paris!

Then it was that we, in common with our fellow-Christians throughout the world, held our first National Day of Prayer. Following close upon it and surely in answer came the marvel of a great deliverance: the Nine Days' Wonder of Dunkirk, and 'Operation Dynamo' (May 26th—June 3rd) when the annihilation of our Expeditionary Force had seemed inevitable, and when here in far-off Salisbury trenches were being dug in Cecil Square. Yet still the menace remained.

So King Hall wrote on May 17th: 'Historical events are rushing forward like a succession of heavy breakers, thundering upon the shore. Our minds, our resolutions, our courage must be of the quality of a granite coast.'

Such was the sombre background of THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN: the first great air battle in history. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. Aircraft had frequently met in combat in the First World War, but then in size and number very small. But here were thousands of aircraft, flying at speeds often over three hundred miles an hour, fighting three, four, five and even six miles above the surface of the earth. Nothing like it had ever been seen before, and yet in truth there was very little to be seen. Here was a battle, not shrouded in the majestic smoke of a land bombardment, with its roar of guns, flash of shells and fountains of erupting earth, such as many here can vividly remember in the First World War. All that folk in the English country-side were aware of was, high up against the background of the summer sky, the shift and play of aircraft engaged in fierce and prolonged combat. No sound of fury—only a pattern of white vapour trails, leisurely changing form and shape, traced by a number of tiny specks scintillating like diamonds on the splendid sunlight. And, far away aloft, the chatter of machine-gun fire—for all the world like a boy trailing his stick against iron railings—heard against the duller sound of engines, the faint roar swelling to a fiercer note as some crippled enemy plane crashed. Here was a duel, with its swift parries and thrusts, fought with rapiers by masters in the art of fence.

The German High Command had planned a 'knock out': putting aerodromes out of action, destroying ports, paralysing alike military forces and civilian morale—and this with the avowed intention of obtaining a quick decision, and so to end the war before the coming of winter.

So the battle passed through its four clearly delineated stages: beginning with an attack when, with seven hundred aircraft lost, Goering found the pace too hot to last and ordered a five days' respite, and so working through to the final phase in the last days of October when the fight gradually faded out and a shattered and disordered Armada staggered back to its bases, or turned from day to night attack. In the midst of all this, the crux of the battle, came those fateful days when red glows over Dockland in the gathering dusk showed that the enemy had succeeded in penetrating our defences and in smashing his way through to London. The Battle of Britain had become the Battle of Britain's Heart. In view of this, while we remember, in the first place to-day, the men in the air, we should never forget the civilian population on the ground: men and women going about their work as usual, feeling their way at night through darkened streets, packed by thousands in air raid shelters, served with gallantry by doctors, nurses and social workers, and proving that—whatever Germany could send—they could 'take it.'

These were indeed *great days*, reminiscent of the words of our Lord, more than once repeated to His disciples, 'Blessed are they, yes, which see the things ye see, for many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them': as who should say 'I would have you realize that the days in which you are living are *great days*.' So Churchill, never tired of reminding people that, 'spite the horrors of war, they should be proud to live in days like these, again addressed the House of Commons on the morrow of September 15th, the greatest day of all.

'Yesterday eclipsed all previous records of the Fighter Command, when it cut to rags and tatters three separate waves of assault on the civilian population. Hurricanes and Spitfires took them all on indifferently, drove through the middle of the formation and scattered them to the winds. Never in the history of war has such a victory been won in the air.'

So from the thought of the sombre background of the battle, and of the highlights of the battle itself, we come lastly to THE FEW who brought about salvation and victory, and again I repeat the ringing words, 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.' The hearts of men have ever gone out to those who, facing fearful odds, have dared their lives to the death,

and our minds go ranging down the centuries—to Horatius, holding the bridge, to Marathon and Thermopylae, to Henry V.

'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For whosoever sheds his blood with me shall be my brother: be he ne'er so vile this day shall gentle his condition. And gentlemen in England, now abed, will think themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhood cheap while other speaks who fought with us upon S. Crispin's Day.'

Once again Churchill sums up the great story. 'The Knights of the Round Table and Crusaders all fall back into a prosaic past—not only distant but prosaic—before these young men going forth every morn to guard their native land, and all that we stand for, holding in their hands those instruments of colossal and shattering power, of whom may be said that, "Every morn brought forth a noble chance, and every chance brought forth a noble deed."'

There is ever a danger that annual commemorations of this sort should degenerate into lip service of a national god. That was the fatal error, not indeed of Germany, but of Hitler's Germany. But over against the Swastika and all that it stands for there is set the Cross, and it should not be forgotten that September 14th—the day on which we now meet—is in the Kalendar of the Church, HOLY CROSS DAY: a day given not so much to thoughts of the passion and death of our Lord—for this is done in Holy Week—but a day when we venerate the very instrument by which that death was brought about: that Cross which is not only the symbol of suffering and sacrifice but which, in retrospect, is found to be symbol of glory.

The purpose, therefore, of our gathering here this morning is not only to recall great days and noble deeds, but to remember before God the souls of those who died that we might live, and who, in however a dimly realized way, laid down their lives for the values which the Cross enshrines. And we shall pray that, purified in the fire, they may be found without fault before the Throne of God.

'Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them.'

II. AFRICA TO-DAY. SERMON PREACHED IN SALISBURY CATHEDRAL AFTER THE FEDERATION PLEBISCITE

There come *decisive moments* in the life of men and of nations. 'Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.' Thus wrote James Russell Lowell, about one hundred years ago. He became Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard in succession to Longfellow. The Anti-Slavery Campaign was the burning ques-

tion of his day. But that which he wrote stands good for other issues and for all generations.

There come times alike in the life of the individual and of the nation when life forces us to make decisions. These decisions are bound to be more or less in the dark. We can't know all the facts nor can we foresee the future. We can't always rely upon advisers nor be one hundred per cent sure.

It is always possible to come to a wrong decision, but that is preferable to avoiding the issue, sitting on the fence and coming to no decision at all. For instance, the first business of a government is to govern; it may govern badly but it is better so than holding the reins of government in nerveless hands.

'Do your best and leave the rest.' So Wesley is reputed to have said when required to preach an unprepared sermon. So, the golden rule for making a decision is: make it a matter of thought, of prayer, and then leave the issue in God's hands, who can rectify mistakes.

Such a fateful decision was made in Southern Rhodesia on Referendum Day, May 1953. Next to that on Self-Government, it was the most important decision in the whole history of the Colony.

Africa can be summed up in various phrases:

A Great World Island. This points to the immensity of its area: twelve million square miles, that is, the whole of Europe, China, Australia and twice India could fit into this massive continent. And, in contrast, a sparcity of population. There are only five dense areas. These are the Lower Nile, the West Coast, the African Lakes, Johannesburg and the Rand, the western Cape—one hundred and sixty million Africans, only three million Europeans.

The Dark Continent. This results from its inaccessibility. It has the contour of an upturned saucer; rising mountains obstructing the great inland plateaux, so that all that navigators knew was a series of headlands, an uninviting interior.

The Salient. Africa pushes its great bulk, almost in triangular form, as far south as latitude 34. It juts far out into the southern seas. South Africa has become the 'salient of the missionary world' precisely because the Cape juts out a hundred miles into the area of the winter rains; so providing a doormat, a green doormat, on which white men might secure their footing. There were impacts from the East, along the coast of East Africa where Arab dhows found their way in ancient days; from the West, where Portuguese, Dutch, English pioneers found a footing.

There are three great natural belts in Africa. In the north is the Mediterranean coast line stretching southward to the Sahara

desert. Here can be found Egypt, Abyssinia, the Sudan. In the south is the Union of South Africa, formed in 1910 by the amalgamation of the four provinces—the Cape, Natal, the Free State and the Transvaal. Between these two lies the great central belt, comprising the Rhodesias, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Mozambique, Angola.

Great men have dreamt dreams of uniting this vast land into one. Cecil Rhodes dreamt of a great Cape to Cairo 'all red' route, no longer thinking of a political unity so much as an economic one. General Smuts dreamt of 'a great backbone for European settlement'; Germany dreamt of a 'Mittel Afrika' and set herself to get footholds on the continent at S. Lucia Bay, Delagoa Bay and elsewhere.

The development of this vast continent has been immense. One hundred years ago, or say at the Great Exhibition of 1851, East and Central Africa were totally unknown to the outside world. The sources of the Nile were as yet unidentified; the country between Abyssinia and the Zambesi river; between the Indian Ocean and the Great Lakes was a vast blank on the map. The only inhabitants save slave traders were African tribes, outside the main stream of human history. They had no alphabet, no calendar. They had not any knowledge of wheel or plough or of any sort of mechanics. Their tools were confined to knives, axes, hoes.

Contrast this with the position at the time of the Centenary Exhibition at Bulawayo in 1954. The smoke of a thousand kraals (native villages) had become the belching chimneys of mine and factory. Geographically, economically, the whole of Central Africa had been opened up.

In 1924 there had been one secondary school for Africans at Lovedale in the Cape. In 1954 there were seventy-one, and four hundred secondary and primary schools planned for. In the Union the government vote for African education had risen from £340,000 to eight millions. Fort Hare, the African University at the Cape, had opened with one graduate and ninety-two students in 1914. Now in 1954, there were two thousand African graduates in all, from Fort Hare, Witwatersrand and Capetown universities. There were African teachers, doctors, lawyers; at least ten known directors of companies, at least forty doctors. Moreover, there is an immense development in the form of the rise of an African middle class which will make its influence felt economically and politically with ever increasing force.

All this means that great changes have been brought about. How to deal with them? Christ taught us that we cannot patch an old garment with new material nor should we put new wine into

old wineskins. Amidst the ferment of new ideas and rising aspirations in Africa this is particularly applicable. The situation can be applied to that among the Jewish people of our Lord's day; their traditional ways of thinking had to be drastically altered; new wine called for new wineskins, otherwise the skins would burst and the wine be lost.

So, in Africa, there will have to be new behaviour patterns evolved to meet new situations. A whole set of social rules, distinctions, customs, ways of doing things, relationships with those of another race, class, religion have become fixed for generations, and now are rigid, tradition bound. So it was with Jewish observances, taboos, things not done in our Lord's day. There must be no work on the Sabbath day; so the complaint of the disciples eating corn; fingers must be washed before a meal, etc. Each country gets its own code over the generations: English, Dutch, American. But there must be readiness to work out new behaviour patterns to meet changing worlds, new thoughts, developing ideas. Our Blessed Lord warned us that 'patchwork is no use.' Compromise leads nowhere; you can't sew a new patch on an old garment.

And so, South Africa is busy working out new policies to meet modern needs. There are two divergent plans:

Apartheid. This is the policy of a government inspired by the outlook of the Voortrekkers. It is not necessarily a wrong policy, if carried out honestly. In one sense it could be claimed as a British invention of one hundred years ago, when on the eastern frontier a policy of 'screening off' was implemented, with the idea of protecting large native areas from white occupation, and economic exploitation. The question to-day is not whether the policy is right or wrong, but whether it is practicable. The whole situation has changed as the native population has become industrialized, urbanized and politically conscious.

Integration. This is a policy of co-operation; of partnership. This has never been better expressed than by the negro leader, Booker Washington in his famous Self-Help speech at Atlanta in 1895: 'A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal. "Water, water, we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon river.'

'To those of my own race who depend on bettering their condition, or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the white man who is their next-door neighbour, I would say "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Never should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

'To the white race, were I permitted, I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight million of black men whose habits you know. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, builded your railroads and cities, tilled your fields, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth. Help and encourage them to education of head, hand and heart, and you will find that they make blossom the waste spaces. So doing, you may be sure that you will be surrounded by the most patient, law abiding, faithful and unresentful people that the world has seen. In all things that are purely social, we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.'

This is the policy to which the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland are committed.

III. OUTLINE OF THE SERMON PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL AT EVENSONG ON SYNOD SUNDAY—JANUARY 10TH, 1954

It is inevitable that our thoughts to-night should take their colour from the Feast. Therefore I start with

The Collect for the Day (The First Sunday after Epiphany)

The function of a Collect is to gather up the prayers of the congregation: it focuses on one objective, it contains one dominant idea, one is 'stung with the splendour of a sudden thought.'

Here we are dealing with a short prayer, polished by the use of fifteen hundred years, representing a perfect bit of literary craftsmanship, and which has in consequence not only come to mean much to many generations, but which is well known to all of us to-day.

I like to call it the 'Agenda Collect' for that is the word used in the Latin original. The characteristic of a Latin prayer is its terseness: no word is superfluous, a wide range of thought is compressed into the fewest possible words. It follows that the ideas contained in a single Collect can be expanded almost indefinitely, and can form a very good basis for meditation.

Here in the Latin original we pray for two things: That we may

see the *Agenda* (i.e. things which ought to be done, items of business to be dealt with), and also that we may have power to *implement* what we see (i.e. carry it into execution).

The English translation expands this in words which we all know: 'That we may both perceive and know the things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to perform the same.'

Behind this lies:

The Epiphany, and our Synod Meetings

From Christmas onwards the Crib here beside the pulpit has held the Holy Family, the shepherds, the cave, the manger, an ox and an ass. But now, all of a sudden, the scene has changed. The shepherds have gone and their place has been taken by the Wise Men, the Three Kings with their servants, their offerings and a camel.

Those who were present in the Cathedral Hall last week will have seen a very lovely and moving variant of this in the Nativity Play staged by the Moral Re-Armament team when three American cowboys took the place of the Biblical Kings.

Here we see certain things symbolized.

(1) *An Inter-Racial Gathering*

In the sub-continent where we are always confronted with the problems of race and colour, and in a colony where (in sharp contrast to the apartheid policy of the south) we are at least increasingly trying to bring about inter-racial gatherings whether for worship or work, it is well to remember that the first Inter-Racial Christian meeting took place at Bethlehem. The three Wise Men stand for the three great races of mankind: the Asiatic, the African and the European.

If Bethlehem had lain in the Africa of our day we can well imagine what questions would have been asked, and what answers given. 'Who is this man, offering gold?' 'Oh, he is a European!' 'And who is this other, who looks as if he might have come from India?' 'Oh, he is a Non-European!' 'And this third, obviously from Africa?' 'Well, he is a Non-European too.' There is something, is there not, ever so slightly negative about this 'Non-European' business? But that is how we are apt to talk, with a careless gesture, lumping together certain rich strains of humanity under the label of 'Non-European.' Africa can hardly be held yet to have found its soul when the sharp dividing line lies, not between African and Non-African, but between European and Non-European. But some day our bluff will be called, for it cannot be seriously supposed that for all time, and down the ages, three-quarters

of the population of the world will be content to be labelled and classified merely as Non-European!

In this connection, I suggest that it makes the task of missionary work in the early church, and the prejudices encountered by the first evangelists, come home to us to-day more vividly if we substitute the term 'Non-European' for 'Gentile' in S. Paul's Epistles, e.g. in that for the Feast of the Epiphany or in Romans xv. 7-16.

However this may be it is well, with the racial problems now confronting us in Rhodesia consequent upon Federation, that we should use our Collect with this intention—asking that 'we may perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.'

(2) *The Contributions* made in the fullness of Christianity and for the forwarding of Christ's Kingdom—whether by individuals or by races—symbolized by the Offerings brought to the cradle.

Gold: the lure of which has drawn men from afar to Rhodesia from remote ages and right up to our own time: standing for work and service offered to Christ as King.

Incense: the recipe for making which from fragrant gums can be found in the Book of Exodus, and constantly used alike in temple and Christian worship: standing for prayer.

Myrrh: used in the embalming of dead bodies, a symbol at once of suffering—such as Africa has undergone down the ages—as also, in particular, of mortification and self-discipline.

Here then in picture form we have given the three-fold duties and obligations laid upon all Christian folk, whether priest or lay, of prayer, service and self-discipline.

Clergy and lay folk should have a personal Rule of Life, covering these three obligations, and adapted to their calling. And Rules need to be reset at the beginning of the year. So we come back once more to our Collect, using it with another and more personal intention, 'That we may know what this coming year we ought to do, and be given power to carry out.'

And now one last lesson from the Wise Men

'Warned by God in a dream—they returned to their own country another way.' 'Warned in a dream' is a favourite expression of S. Matthew, who has given us the story of the Epiphany, and he uses it three times in his opening chapters. It stands for something psychologically and practically sound . . . when some decision has to be made, not to hurry over it, but to sleep over it: to give the sub-conscious a chance. We should remind ourselves that the sub-conscious mind—which controls bodily functions, is the storehouse

of memory, the source of inspiration and so on—does not *originate* thought (that is done by the conscious waking mind) but it *develops* and *elaborates* thought. So it often happens that problems are solved in sleep which had baffled us in the waking hours.

'They returned to their own country another way'

Synod over, we shall be returning to our respective homes and parishes. But is it to return to the same old way of doing things? Or is there some other alternative? Is it not to be hoped that—whether as individuals, or as representatives of parishes and missions—we may, from what we have discussed and learnt here, decide to find and follow some new and possibly better way?

This in substance is our Synod message from Epiphany: 'Warned by God in a dream—they returned to their own country another way.'

SERMONS. (B) INSTRUCTION

I. On Lessons of Adversity (Philippians iv. 10-19)

Paul, the Traveller, had become Paul, the Prisoner. A life of constant movement had become one of close confinement. Wherever there had been an open door, Paul had been the first to step in. But now the days of open doors are over; all doors are bolted and barred. Calls for help may come which he cannot answer: new fields may open up which he cannot enter.

The New Testament gives illustrations of two forms of distress:

(1) Pressure of work—'In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches' (2 Corinthians xi. 27, 28). Here is the strain of too much to do, demands tumbling one on top of the other.

(2) Limitations—here is the opposite—facing up to frustration through want of opportunity—'My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places' (Philippians i. 13).

There are two methods of meeting these frustrations. There is the method of the stoic—the fatalist who knows how to stand in days of distress, but lacks the spirit of joy—compare the advice of a doctor in hospital: 'The first thing is to accept it.' What must be, I accept—it is Kismet, Fate. It is the spirit of resignation before the inscrutable will of God. But Paul shows us the Christian way. He was one of those rare men who make light of their misfortunes. He sums up all his difficulties in great phrases:

The things which have happened to me, have turned out to the

furtherance of the Gospel. The only people he had had to talk to were the guards, wanting to know why he was in prison. The outcome was the opportunity to deal with each man in turn, till he had preached to the whole Prætorian Guard—and many of the dispirited Christians outside 'waxing confident' by his words took fresh courage; see Philippians i. 12-14. Compare also the Letters of the Captivity—remembering always that there is such a thing as a Ministry of Letters.

'I have learnt in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' The Greek word 'MEMUEMAI,' meaning 'I have been initiated'—I have learnt the secret—the secret of self-sufficiency—the finding of sources of supply within myself—to be master of my soul.

Here in Paul we have an example to all those who, for a longer or shorter period, after a life of activity find themselves laid aside—possibly in pain, but with a sense of wasted opportunities—unable to do what they would like for themselves or others. A feeling of abasement threatens to overwhelm. Many think that personal problems would at once be solved if only they could get right away into different surroundings, if they could live with a different set of people. But the old Roman writer knew better than this: 'Quie trans mare currunt coelum non animam mutant'—'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings.' We need to learn the great lesson of adaptation to circumstances—to learn serenity.

Those who have not mastered the secret of adjusting themselves to new surroundings and fresh conditions are liable to suffer terribly in spirit and temper, even in faith and character—such irritation denotes some defect in one's life. Socrates knew this, 'Who is the wealthiest?' to which he replied, 'He that is content with the least.'

Let us then seek the fruits of adversity—learning to adapt ourselves to circumstances, to accept limitations thrust upon us, to buy up the opportunities of the moment. 'I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'

II. On Self-Examination

The first task of the Christian is to know God—the second to know self. Aim to make this effort at knowing oneself a daily practice. Without this no correction of faults is possible.

The results of such daily self-examination are threefold: It produces humility, which virtue is the very foundation of Christian perfection. It prevents a conflagration of passion in sudden temptation. It wrecks us back on God, teaching utter dependence.

There are difficulties, of course. In general there is a real effort

involved, it is so much easier to expand outwardly than to turn inwardly upon oneself. We also find ourselves frustrated by the complexity of the task—we don't know how to set about it; moreover, we are so blind to our own faults, enigmas to ourselves.

In particular, it is a fact of general experience that the most advanced souls often give up self-examination most easily. They find it sterile and wearisome where prayer is so much easier.

What must be the objects of examination? These too can be considered under general and particular aspects. The general examination belongs to the field of moral theology. One considers the evil produced by sin, the awfulness of deliberate sin, in mortal and venial. The particular examination belongs to the field of ascetic theology and is concerned with the discovering of small faults and imperfections, attitudes of mind creating barriers between the soul and God.

The Ignatian method of self-examination has spread through all monasteries and through faithful clergy to the whole church. It consists of five points:

Giving thanks to God for benefits received.

Prayer to obtain grace.

Examination.

Contrition.

Act of Amendment; resolve for to-morrow.

At first sight it seems a long and complicated exercise, but so does any method describing a system of thought. With practise it becomes simple and easy. It takes about fifteen minutes daily.

The first part of self-examination should be that of prevision. This should take about four or five minutes, in the morning first thing or at bedtime. Decide on the subject of examination and take one point only—some dominant fault. All have one, some have many. The root cause in one case may be temperament, in another habit, in another an hereditary taint. Don't attack several faults at once; concentrate on one at a time. Many passions need to be exterminated but some can be controlled, sanctified, redirected.

It is essential to know what to aim at and how to aim well. Self-examination is an instrument capable of striking decisive blows.

Having decided on the fault to be attacked, bear it in mind all day long; foresee occasions of temptation which may arise—to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Make generous resolutions to triumph over the points decided upon and, above all, pray for grace to do it.

In seeking for the dominant fault to be attacked several plans are possible.

1. Very often one's main fault is found to be an excess of some good quality. Inquire of yourself then what are the good qualities with which you are generally credited. Practise then the opposite virtues, e.g. the over-industrious may well practise the virtue of relaxation—this can often prove an excellent way of attacking a dominant fault.
2. Review from time to time the fundamental virtues, or habits of the Christian life to see if they are being daily practised. For instance, purity of intention, practise of the Presence of God, perfection in ordinary actions, fidelity to devotional exercises.

If this seems too vast—then divide and analyse. Concentrate on one small part of one virtue. For instance, if conscious of failure in charity, then determine never to speak ill of a neighbour; determine in conversation never to interrupt; avoid all useless contradictions. Not only never speak ill of a neighbour but make a point of speaking well whenever possible. Aim to see Christ somewhere, somehow in others.

Having decided the particular matter to be fought, a review should be made at the end of each day. Try also to make a midday examination if only of three or four minutes. This is the rule of all communities.

In resolutions be generous but also be precise. When conscious of a failure make some gesture such as striking the heart. These things can be done quite unobtrusively, they act as reminders, remedies.

This method of self-examination has worked marvels for centuries in correcting faults and making for rapid advance. When all efforts are concentrated on one single point there is methodical progress. Results and final victory are assured. Busy people in the world may find a quarter of an hour impossible. If so, give but four minutes. Omit the thanksgiving but adhere to the rest. Never omit to place oneself in the Presence of God, praying to obtain grace. Then follow this with a rapid examination, contrition and act of amendment with thought for to-morrow's attack. In due time, all this will become instinctive and a watchful, humble attitude of mind will open the door to a deeper knowledge of God.

III. On Isaiah liii. 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' (Acts viii. 30-3)

The Meeting on the Desert Road. Philip was the typical prophet evangelist, acting on guidance, travelling hither and thither; there was no knowing where he would be found next. On this occasion he was told to go to Gaza, the south-west frontier fortress of

Damascus; he was told to take the desert road, not the usual main one. Why? As it turned out, it was to preach to one solitary man, the Ethiopian: 'Join thyself to this chariot.' The eunuch was reading Isaiah liii and was entirely baffled.

Isaiah liii. This is the crown and climax of Isaiah's prophesying; all the rest, as compared with this, is 'down hill.' It is one of the greatest poems in all Hebrew literature, having all the marks of artistic elaboration. The structure is in five strophes of three verses each. Each strophe begins with a word which forms the title and sums up the meaning of the three following verses. The rhythm is sobbing, recurring, very different from the flowing verses which precede it. It is suited to the tragic nature of the subject. The varying length of the strophes: nine lines in first; ten in second; then, eleven, thirteen, fourteen—gives a solemn impression of truth sweeping forward.

The Suffering Servant. He is alluded to in four passages of Isaiah, viz. xlii. 1-4; xlix. 1-16; l. 4-9; lii. 13 to end of liii. To whom did it refer? No one is sure. It might refer to the nation. No one dreamt that it referred to the coming Messiah; the idea of Messianic *suffering* never crossed men's minds. Always they thought of the coming of the Messiah in terms of glory and triumph. Jesus was Himself profoundly influenced by this chapter, and interpreted His sufferings and death in the light of it. To the early Christians it came as a staggering revelation. See the men on the way to Emmaus and Christ's 'Ought not Christ to have suffered?' Notice too the transfiguring power of this new interpretation to Paul in Arabia.

The Strophes

1. God speaks. Isaiah lii. 13-15. All through history suffering has been a scandal and stumbling block to humanity. We talk of the 'Scandal of the Cross.' Now suddenly:

- (a) Christ as the Suffering Servant vindicated and exalted. The world is startled and amazed, realizing the truth, dumb with awe. Fulfilment of the prophecy was found in the Resurrection and Ascension.
- (b) Revelation of the truth that *Suffering is fruitful*. N.B. verse 13, 'Deal prudently.' There have been various attempts to translate this adequately. No one English word can do it. In the Hebrew it means a mental process somewhat akin to insight, far-seeingness.

2. Israel speaks as a penitent. Isaiah liii. 1-3. Here is an expression of the usual unbelief when something comes from an unexpected quarter or from unpromising soil. 'Can any good thing

come out of Galilee?' said Nathaniel of Cana. So S. Paul sums up the questionings of the early Church in 1 Corinthians: not only was the claim unlikely because of place but also because of personality. He had 'no form or comeliness' that we should desire Him. He was not what we expected; hence our excuses for callousness to His sufferings. He was despised and rejected of men who could not recognize Him as the 'Corner Stone' of God's Plan for mankind.

3. Vicarious Suffering. Isaiah liii. 4-6. At the outset men regarded all suffering as penal, i.e. as punishment for sin. Note the story of Job. Here Isaiah points to the redemptive value of vicarious suffering. 'With his stripes we are healed.' There is such a thing as reparation. The Cross is supremely God's Act of Reparation.

4. Silence under Suffering. Isaiah liii. 7-9. Whereas Israel has been speaking in the last two strophes, she now ceases and God again speaks. No one in the Old Testament remained dumb under pain but gave expression to guilt, doubt, protest. Here was a wholly new thing, unique and solitary. Christ had no guilt to own, no doubts about God. Miscarriage of justice and premature sickness were to Orientals the outstanding misfortunes. These classic forms of individual suffering are typified here.

5. Expiation for Sin. Isaiah liii. 10-12. It was a sin offering. Deus vult—God willed it. 'It pleased the Lord'; yet, without any sense of the pleasure of enjoyment; only an expression of purpose.

The prophecy fulfilled. Five hundred and fifty years later the prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. There is striking correspondence between the details of Christ's life and the words of Isaiah, though one must not try to press identity too far. Not every detail was borne out but all the more striking is the moral and spiritual correspondence, the essential likeness. So compare S. Peter in 1 Peter ii. 21-5. Here is presented Christ, our pattern. What Isaiah wrote about, I have myself seen, S. Peter seems to say. He portrays Christ here as Example, Mediator, Healer, Shepherd, Overseer. And in so doing, he echoes Isaiah.

CHAPTER X

THE GIRLS' DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION AND THE FORMATION OF COMPANIES

'It is the misfortune of many never to have collided with a life that depended wholly on prayer. But once you have met with a spiritual force which makes the first hour with God the central act of the day, you do not forget it—and you are dissatisfied with yourself until it takes the same place with you.'

THERE was yet another facet to Father Victor's work, less spectacular perhaps, but deeply impressive and lasting. This was his care for individual souls and his building up of dynamic spiritual 'cells.'

His affectionate link with members of the Girls' Diocesan Association from 1915 onwards gave opportunity for the exercise of those very special pastoral gifts, but any group of people, especially young ones, brought them quickly into play.

In January 1915 Lady Phyllis Buxton (afterwards Lady Phyllis Ponsonby) was hostess to the first South African Girls' Diocesan Association Week at Government House, Pretoria. To this Father Victor was invited as Chaplain.

The Girls' Diocesan Association, founded under the inspired leadership of Miss Creighton and Miss Talbot, had been in existence in England since 1900. Weeks for study and worship had been a feature of its life since its inception. Its appeal in those days was to girls of the leisured classes; it had spread rapidly from London to the provinces during the first ten years of the century.

It was a very uncertain, nervous crowd of girls who turned up at Government House, Pretoria, that January. Father Victor wrote of it to one of his sisters: 'Well, the Week has been just glorious. The last vehicle rolled down the drive about midday Monday with much waving of handkerchiefs and many regrets, a world of difference to the Monday before when they rolled staidly up and wondered what it was all going to be like. Now letters are beginning to come in most grateful and touching. Several Confessions, several Vocations, I hope, and all of us with new ideas. It is only the beginning, I hope, as we have started a G.D.A. similar to those at home in about twenty dioceses—a sort of C.E.M.S. for girls of leisure and education—weekly study circles are to begin straight away and a corporate service once a month in Johannesburg and Pretoria. And another Week next year, all being well, in the same place. It has made me see much more clearly how your Retreat idea could work out splendidly some day.'

In the *Girls' Diocesan Leaflet* of September 1915, M.A. writes: 'Some of us had prayers in the chapel for two nights before the Week began. . . . "You don't know what a brave thing you are doing," said our Chaplain the day before. Nothing like it had ever happened in South Africa; our elders couldn't make out what it really meant, and so a great deal of nonsense had been invented and repeated broadcast, which frightened many of those who had been asked to come to the Week. . . .

' . . . After supper Father Victor began. How entirely hopeless it is to try to write anything about the part that matters most. That lay with him; and we who knew him already had no fears as to what would happen. He went far; and somehow, slow and blind though we were, he carried us along with him from that evening onwards, and left us breathless and fearful, realizing how adventurous and reckless is that Way, and yet, in spite of it all, singing out for the happiness we felt inside as we never sang before. To tell of the impression made by one who knew something of the Road, the joy and laughter as well as the pain and tears—it can't be done. But we who were there know, and love to remember. . . .

' . . . We had good talks and discussions in the hall every evening. Father Victor talked about native missions, and showed us the vision of the church that is one day going to stand above Johannesburg, domes and pillars and campanile, all the handiwork of natives. . . .

' . . . That afternoon, the G.D.A. began in South Africa—a tentative and experimental G.D.A. feeling its way and working out its own course—but started in the spirit and as the outcome of our Week; given godspeed by Father Victor, and a tremendous welcome by all those present, for we were badly feeling the need of some continuation to our new fellowship.'

Regular prayer meetings followed, led by Father Victor and for the most part conducted in S. Mary's Church, Johannesburg, precursor to the cathedral. In a letter to the Secretary of G.D.A., he wrote, 'These Prayer Meetings must be *particular* and not *general* and we *must* get all to take part. And we *must* get some feeling of power about it all. At present, it is, or seems to me at any rate, hopelessly dull and cold.

'And my talks—must have them, I suppose, but too much like sermons—standing up there and aloof and not real talks. S. Mary's is much to blame; a great barn with a tiny sprinkling of people. Is it the only place? . . . At present, I don't think we are making the girls feel the reality of the business or causing much stir in the world of spirit. . . .'

From 1915 onwards these annual Weeks, held alternately in

Johannesburg and Pretoria, became a first claim (one of very many) upon Father Victor's programme. Out of this close association with G.D.A. in South Africa there came other developments.

Almost immediately after his discharge from the army in 1919 he was Chaplain at the Week-end Central Council meeting of G.D.A. at Downe House, Kent. Here the Presidents and Secretaries of every Diocesan Association in Great Britain met together for worship and discussion. It was his first introduction to G.D.A. in England though he had met some of the G.D.A. members of the Edinburgh branch in 1917. Indeed, he had been instrumental in helping them to form the first Scottish G.D.A. Branch.

'Do I remember Father Victor, C.R.?' writes one of those who was present at that Central Council Week-end. 'The letters after his name were rather mysterious and alarming to us in those days. But a new star appeared in the G.D.A. sky—in 1919, at the Central Council meeting at Downe House in Kent, where there was a heavy fall of snow during an April week-end, if I remember right. He had been, I think, with the troops in France, or elsewhere, and at some boys' camp; anyhow he appeared, before he donned the cassock, in a quaint mixture of "khaki" and mufti which did not suggest either the Army Chaplain or the holy Father. He must have regarded the assembled Presidents and Secretaries of the G.D.A. in England with some interest after his experience in Johannesburg, but it was not until later that we heard anything of that. The meeting at Downe was one of the early Central Council meetings to be held as a week-end gathering. In the chapel there he helped to lay foundations for our hopes and plans for G.D.A. in the dioceses and all the business of the Council that year. There was something new and thrilling in the air. As he said of the Sunday morning Eucharist we were "kneeling on the shores of heaven."

'Later that year came the Weeks at Abbots Bromley and Abingdon to which he was invited as Chaplain and to which he gave lasting treasure. Although so much of his life was spent in Africa, the link with G.D.A. in England was maintained through many individuals.'

A report of the Week-end in the *Girls' Diocesan Leaflet* of July 1919, reads: 'But by far the deepest memory for all who were at Downe will be of the services in the beautiful little chapel, the daily Eucharist, and the three addresses from Father Victor, who came to us fresh from the Army in France and full of infectious faith and enthusiasm for the future. His message was personal con-

secration for a great cause: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." As of old Christ is calling to-day to us, the children of so many privileges, to help Him feed a starving world. We know something of its needs and something of His love and power, and now at last it dawns upon us that He needs us for His plan. Either through earthquake, fire, or still small voice He calls each one of us; vision brings vocation and to see must be to act.

'How, then, can we be fitted for His Service? "For their sakes I sanctify myself." And sanctification means first detachment, both inward and outward, not from life as a whole, but from every element in it which is clearly hostile or even indifferent to His claims and His Cause. This is to be in the world and yet not of the world, natural, human and most happy, because our aim in life is simply to find out and do His will.

'But sanctification does not mean mere unworldliness or devotion to duty; it also means a real positive attachment to our Lord, a reaching out and striving year by year to know Him better. At first we can only know Him as the disciples did in the earliest days, as Lord and Master to be followed and obeyed with unquestioning trust. Then, if we persevere in prayer and meditation, we may come to something of that mutual intercourse which He is always offering to those who truly seek His friendship.

'And yet beyond is a further stage attained perhaps only by those who, like Mary Magdalene, have poured out all the treasure of their life for Him; and through sacrifice to the uttermost have reached that deep intimacy which is perfect union through love.'

The Mother Company. Shortly after these events in 1919, a group of eight members met and bound themselves into a closer fellowship in response to a call each felt to offer herself for more consecrated Christian living. The idea of such a Company had first presented itself at the 1915 South African Week. It was talked about privately in the next year or two and Father Victor had certain prayers printed in the Mission Press at the Priory, Rosettenville, which were later incorporated in a Company Book. At length, in 1919, the idea materialized. Thus began the first of several Companies or 'cells' of people who, while living in the world and pursuing ordinary social duties and occupations, yet were being moulded in their spiritual lives by discipline in prayer and service.

There was something of greater vision here than the mere formation of another guild or church group. To begin with, it was non-parochial; the members of the first Company came from dioceses all over England, though individual members knew each other well. It was not bound by a list of rules regarding church attendance,

almsgiving, Communion, and so on, which can so often degenerate into restricting petty obligation. Rather was emphasis laid upon ideals of service and character to be striven after by faithful observance of these 'necessary things.'

Father Victor had thought much on this matter of 'living by rule.' He perceived in those post-war years the emergence of a Call felt by many for some deeper Christian living. This from his notebook: 'There are many different forms of the Religious Life, but it is in its essence one. It aims at union with God in Christ by means of certain bonds and detachments which are not those of ordinary Christian life. It can, of course, be seen in varying types of religious community but that form is by no means the only one. Again, in most Communities there are outer rings of men and women, Oblates, Associates and others, likewise bound by specific rules and seeking a deeper Christian experience.'

This Company which he founded, and others which developed later, were but another form of such a religious life and had the same two basic characteristics of a Call and a Rule. The Rule would act as a mould gradually remaking and 'forming' the person who had felt the Call to live a closer life of union with God.

Thus, each member of the Company bound herself to a certain minimum rule of prayer each day; to attendance at Communion at such frequent intervals as the circumstances of life shall make possible and desirable; and to service of some sort for the Kingdom of God.

Moreover, one of the Marks of the Company was to be its hiddenness. Companions would not 'chatter' about God's dealings with them individually or as a group. Expansion in numbers was not a matter of any consequence, and would come only after some expressed desire indicating a vocation. For the rest, it was left to the annual Conference and Retreat to work out the 'common mind' on all future development. Confident that, under God's guidance, such common mind would find the right decision on future obligations or developments, the original little group 'launched forth into the deep.'

Father Victor could not himself remain their Chaplain since his Community sent him back to Africa. He sailed very shortly after the first admission service. The Company was exceptionally fortunate in having for the next thirty years Father Keble Talbot as Chaplain. Father Victor, though far removed, watched over its developments with paternal solicitude. Over the years, he wrote hundreds of letters to individuals. By his attendance at annual Retreats and Conferences when on leave, he kept the bonds close. Eventually he came to be known affectionately as Father Founder,

and it was one of the joyous sides of his return to England that he could link up again more closely with these spiritual daughters of his.

Something of all that it meant to him was expressed after his return to England in 1954 when he was reunited with the Mother Company at their annual Conference. He preached to them from Philippians i. 2-11. S. Paul, piling up clause upon clause, speaks under the stress of intense feeling, profoundly moved by his remembrance of experiences with his converts of Philippi. S. Paul looked back over the crowded memories of ten years. In Acts xvi. the story is given of his treks with Timothy, Silas and Luke—the mysterious checks, the obstacles, until eventually came the dream and the clear call to cross over into Macedonia. Finally they reached Philippi for the first Christian service in Europe. Thus could the hand of God be seen. No wonder that, looking back, he was filled with thanksgiving.

So we, in our lesser degree, look back with thanksgiving 'upon every remembrance' of these past thirty-five years. Not only with thanksgiving, but with confidence. Verse 6: 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' God is faithful who would not have called us to these blessings unless He intended to complete the work begun. It is natural to have doubts sometimes about a vocation, a job, but the ground of assurance is in God. It is not our fidelity to God (can I stick it out?) but God's fidelity to us that is the ground of our assurance.

Further, S. Paul talks of the enrichment that has come and that will come from this fellowship in the Gospel, 'from the first day until now.' And continues (verse 9), 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.'

'In knowledge,' to be interpreted perhaps in the sense of experience—an inward conviction and grasp of the Christian revelation that comes with time and faithful service. 'In all judgment,' for the testimony of Christ has been confirmed in them, creating a striking contrast in life and conversation between them and the heathen all around them.

So, too, the little Company had been given all things richly to enjoy.

S. Paul speaks of his deep affection for his converts, and of their co-operation with him for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel. 'So, through conference comes discernment of principles, perception of their practical application—fruit of the "common mind." So, resulting from this sticking together through the years,

has come for us, too, deep affection. Looking to the future, we, together with S. Paul, may pray for continued, sincere and faithful pilgrimage, "that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

From this original Company, daughter Companies have grown—in Britain, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, India. With all, except those in India, Father Victor had close association. For some he was able to be Chaplain and personal Director for periods of time when he was on the spot; for others, his advice had to be by letter and his visits occasional. But they were 'his' in a very real sense and the spiritual bonds thus created span both the years and the continents.

Pretoria and Capetown. In 1931 a Company was formed at Irene, near Pretoria. The main interest of these members was in the mission field, though not all were missionaries. Regular meetings, retreats, discussions took place at Irene with Father Victor as Chaplain till, in the course of time, calls to other service scattered Companions and the group dissolved. A considerable number of these people heard a further call to a vocation within a Religious Community.

By 1929 Father Victor had been in touch with a completely different kind of group, for a week-end at Fauré in the Cape. It was followed four years later by a Conference Week-end at S. Cyprian's School in Capetown, of which he wrote: 'There we spent the week-end in a sort of Conference such as we had at Fauré, near here, four years back—which means that I gave three lectures on which Group discussions and Findings followed. In other words, something like a G.D.A. Week and yet very different for here were thirty-five of all religions or none—Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Baptist, Presbyterian, Church of England, etc., and even so, for the most part not knowing really where they were. The great thing on these occasions is to assume that all are frankly pagan, and at the same time that they really want to get somewhere.

'So we had a very interesting time, everybody shaking down together almost at once and warming up to tremendous discussions, and even to Bible readings. And the results are very marked. Four years ago at Fauré, I remember, we had great searchings of heart as to whether we could possibly touch on the native question or on work among native and half-caste people; and now, four years later, with much the same crowd of people, almost all doing something, and eleven out of the thirty-five giving up one or more

evenings every week to work in native locations and getting mad keen upon it.

'Fauré, in fact, led to the starting of a Club which they call the Octopus—as it sends out its tentacles in all directions—which has gathered up about one hundred young men and women (no one over thirty-five) and fired them to serve in every sort of way, and this, despite anonymous letters and protests from parents at the outset. I am to talk on Wednesday in Easter Week at their annual meeting.'

A nucleus of these young people, all Anglicans, eventually formed themselves into the Company of the Vine in Capetown. The pattern was similar to that of the Mother Company in England but, as usual, detailed requirements of the Rule evolved to suit particular circumstances. Carefully he tended the little group in its early years until it appointed its own Chaplain on the spot, ever looking to Osmund Victor as Father Founder. Writing to this group on New Year's Day, 1956, shortly before his death, he says: 'Well, here I am writing on New Year's Day, partly to carry to you every sort of good wish for the year which has just begun—but partly also in fulfilment of a promise I made "X" the other day.

'But how to begin? Well, first of all, perhaps, a little about *The Mother Company*, from which your Company took its origin, and for which it came my way to set the ball rolling in 1919, i.e. thirty-seven years back (though, in point of fact, the Company idea had been revolving in some of our minds for five years behind that).

'The development of the Mother Company, its deepening and strong and abiding fellowship has, I think, under God, been made possible by two things:

1. Permanent leadership (here he refers to the thirty years' chaplaincy of Father Talbot and many years' work of a particular scribe (or secretary) to this company).
2. The annual Conference, gathering from far and wide. To draw a map would mean covering England with about thirty lines all converging on —. And, indeed, other lines ranging from India and South Africa.

'And how different from the first days! The Company no longer young women of the G.D.A. type, but now nearly forty years later, well into the "fifties" and "sixties," but held together, and deepened by the keeping of the Rule—some of them for thirty-five years past. And when the time comes for "Experiences," it amazes me to find how vital every one is, and at how many points the Company touches life.

'There have been one or two problems to solve, e.g. that of the

size of the Company, and how many members a Company can rightly contain if the intimate fellowship is to be maintained, and the body not to grow too unwieldy. But the solution here has been arrived at by giving birth to daughter Companies in England, Wales, Africa and India. . . .

'But these daughter Companies, though owing much to the Mother Company, will not be so many pale copies of it, for each will adapt its Rule and Customs to meet its own needs. And so, I am sure, you in your group will be doing the same—working things out by experiment, by trial and error, until you arrive at what seems to suit the special circumstances at the Cape, e.g. in view of the fact that, unlike other Companies, you have not got a widely scattered membership, but are all pretty close together with monthly meetings, and therefore (I imagine) being able to do something in the way of corporate study and discussion, as well as in the way of corporate prayers and Communion. . . .

'And this gives me one point on which to enlarge a little—the matter of *Devotional Reading*. No Rule of Life can be considered complete unless it makes provision for such reading. So, by way of example, during a number of Retreats I have taken during the past year, I have started off by reading the introduction to *Behind that Wall* (6/3, S.C.M. Press), a series of broadcast talks on some classics of the Interior Life, by Allison Peers, whose name at least you should know. And then from that I have worked off on to other books, just shortly and by way of introducing the Retreatants to what they might not know, and especially to modern translations—making live and vital those classics which in their original dress might well be held just archaic and often boring. For example:

The Confessions of S. Augustine, newly translated by F. J. Sheed.

The Imitation of Christ, translated into modern English by Edgar Daplyn.

But then there was given me at Christmas a book which you might like to know and which I found very good reading in the Women's Retreat: *Gift from the Sea*, by Ann Lindbergh (Chatto and Windus). . . .

Portway. Portway was chosen as the name of another daughter Company founded in 1936. After a preliminary 'trial run' of a simple Rule, ten members were formally admitted in February 1937. The name was the more appropriate since the members of the Company were, for the most part, linked in some way with work in the Docks and at the settlement of S. Mildred's, Isle of Dogs.

The following are extracts from Father Victor's notes at the time:

'Port as we thought (Latin "porta"—gate or door; "portus"—harbour) happily links the thoughts of Door—Harbour—Road.

'The Door. Where sheepfolds are in question, the Door (in its simplest form) is the Shepherd Himself—standing at the entrance, and swaying His body to and fro to allow the sheep to pass one by one, that so passing they may come—possibly faint or wounded—under His daily inspection. As a South African farmer once said to me with a smile, "To be in perfect health a sheep must see a white face every day—and that the face of his master!"

'In this new Company they will dwell upon "Ego sum Porta."

I am the Door: by Me, if any man enter he shall be saved, go in and out, and find pasture.

'The Door therefore standing for three things:

- (i) security . . . within the fold.
- (ii) perfect liberty . . . to go out or to come in.
- (iii) fullness of life in the outside world . . . with a moving from place to place as need requires.

'Then from the Door, in this sense, and in its simplest form our thoughts naturally went on, e.g.

- (i) to the Porter, whose business it is to watch—what is allowed to enter or go out. "The Peace of God shall stand sentinel over your hearts."
- (ii) to what the love, energy and craftsmanship of men have made of entrances, e.g. the West Fronts of Peterborough, Rouen, Chartres, Amiens, etc.—many of them history books and Bibles in stone.
- (iii) to "Mora Janua Vitae." Death as the gate of life.
- (iv) to the New Jerusalem: with its twelve gates—each several one a pearl.

'Harbour, too, took us far afield—ranging the world—from Tyre (cf. that vivid description in Ezekiel, xxvii. and xxviii., of the docks and merchandise of the ancient world) and so on to the Cinque Ports, and things nearer home.

'And always with the thought of venture in setting out, the joy of homecoming. "So he bringeth them into the haven where they would be."

The Rule of this Company covered the usual three headings of Prayer, Service, Self-Discipline. Also, as usual, there was special emphasis, under Service, upon a compulsory study period each week. When, in 1938, Father Victor returned to South Africa, several Fathers of his Community in turn became Chaplain to this little group. In 1943 the Portway Company was incorporated into

the membership of the Fraternity of the Resurrection, though still keeping its own identity. It continued in being until 1956 but then relinquished its individual existence and became merged with the Fraternity.

India and Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Further developments came with the formation of the first India Company by one of the original Companions of the Mother Company. Also, on June 15th, 1948, the Sarum Company of Rhodesia was born in the Chapel of the Five Wounds, Runyararo. This is the Chapel in the Settlement House in Harari African Township, Salisbury. Two members of the Mother Company were present, thus forging yet another link in this great fellowship. It so happened that the work of certain members of the Irene Company brought them together again in Salisbury, and certain other of Father Victor's 'daughters' linked up with them. One day Retreats are a feature here; the Rule is identical with that of the Mother Company. Writing to the Sarum Company in 1954, shortly after reaching England, the Father Founder said: '*On going away!* There is a constant repetition of these words in the Gospel leading up to Ascension Day, when I landed up in England. . . . This is what Archbishop Temple, in his Commentary on S. John's Gospel, says about them: "The disciples were devastated at the thought of their Lord's departure. They were not thinking of what it meant for Him. Their thoughts were all concerned with what it meant for them. But even from the standpoint of their own interests they should rejoice rather than feel sorrow, for He said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' This hard saying states in its most signal instance the fundamental principle of true education. The task of the teacher is to prepare the pupil for the time of separation, which must come, so that the pupil may find within himself such resources as enable him to follow the direction on which the teacher has started him, without further aid" . . . and how true this is for all of us, for those who go, and for those left behind!

'But when personal contacts are no longer possible there remains what might be called *The Ministry of Correspondence*. The New Testament, for instance, would be only half its size if it lacked the Epistles, i.e. the letters, e.g. those which Paul began to write when tied up in prison, far away and no longer able to talk to his old friends and companions. But all Christian history is full of such examples. So, for my part, I find I have written over two hundred letters since I left.'

Throughout all these years links with the Girls' Diocesan Associa-

tion continued. A member from Edinburgh writes: 'It was in February 1937 that the Scottish Branch of G.D.A. was revived at a week-end in Edinburgh. I think for all of us concerned it would be true to say that the real foundations were laid, and how solidly laid, at our first big week-end in October 1937, when Father Victor was the Chaplain. There were, I think, eighteen of us at it, and for most of those it was a never-to-be-forgotten milestone—the starting out place not only for G.D.A. but also for our own individual pilgrimages along the Way.

'When he went back to Africa soon afterwards he took with him the names of all those who were at the week-end, and "remembered them before the altar" every Thursday for the rest of his life. He kept in touch by correspondence with one or two of the members, and I well remember the astonishment and gratitude of one with whom he came in contact shortly before he died on learning that not only had she never been forgotten, but her husband and four children had since been added to the Thursday list! Some members of the group never saw Father Victor again; many of us did, after a gap of almost eighteen years. But his constant thought and prayer for us made it seem like yesterday. He himself wrote of this, "It is only no doubt to be expected that after many years of prayer remembrances, sympathetic currents are set going, and contacts invisibly made, which make it very easy to bridge the gap of time, and to talk freely when at last the opportunity of meeting comes along."

'He had certain rules about prayer which he felt so deeply that he often repeated them, both in talking to us and in letters: "Learn the whole business of relaxation—to be quite still, not to fuss, and to breathe deeply." "Use your Bible—it is the means to the end of prayer." "We must keep a unity of topic with a variety of considerations." "Pray by the clock—both beginning and ending—no ragged edges." "Worship is essentially rhythmical, all of a sort and easy flowing. It is both a gift and an art which must be cultivated. It is a social act, the highest activity of which the human being is capable."

'To those who asked he wrote about Confession, but he said that he never preached about it. "Of its value as a means of spiritual growth I myself have no doubt," he wrote, but he always urged that advice on the subject must be sought "from a person better qualified to give it than yourself." How clearly I can still hear him say, "Don't try to take your own spiritual temperature."

'The war came so very soon after that week-end that the new and flourishing Scottish Branch of G.D.A. was once more broken up, and meetings were necessarily stopped. But letters still came and

went between Edinburgh and Rhodesia, and so strongly had the link been forged that contacts in the flesh seemed (and seem) no longer important and necessary.'

The Ruzawi Fellowship. Maurice Carver, late Headmaster and Co-Founder of Ruzawi School, Marandellas, Southern Rhodesia, writes of the Ruzawi Fellowship:

'Egypt's might is tumbled down
Down-a-down the deeps of thought:
Greece is fallen, and Troy town
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown
Venice pride is nought.
But the dreams their children dreamed
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as the shadows seemed
Airy nothings, as they deemed.
These remain.'

Quoting these words of Mary Coleridge, he says: 'Father Victor opened with these words the Quiet Time for our school at S. Augustine's, Penhalonga, in 1934. They seem to me to indicate part of the essence of Osmund Victor's work, melting of dreams and ideals into a rock-like and permanent solidity strong enough to withstand the wind and waves of ordinary living. Another quotation that he relished was this: "It is the misfortune of many never to have collided with a life that depended wholly on prayer."

Robert Grinham and Maurice Carver, Co-Founders of Ruzawi, 'collided' with Father Victor early in 1926. At that time they were dreaming of founding a Church Preparatory School in which each member of the staff would feel he or she had a part; a school, as Maurice puts it, 'which would in its own life somehow represent the Spirit of Christ so that Christian love and generosity and courage would beat daily on growing boys as the sun beats on their bodies and turns them gradually to a healthy brown. And we wanted somehow as the result of our school's work to help in fostering a Christian attitude of European to African.'

Talking all this over, these two decided that the secret of it all must be some sort of Rule of Life. 'And then, going round to S. John's College, Johannesburg (we were both at a school nearby) we "collided" with Father Victor. It was an epoch, and R.G.'s "Victor's our man," coming from a man temperamentally thorough and hesitant to form judgments, was impressive. Victor remained our man thenceforward. Or it would be truer to say that we remained his "men" in that allegiance which is deeper and more lasting than friendship. . . .

'It may seem odd to some that a Society with a name like The Girls' Diocesan Association should have meant to many girls not only love and peace but joy, gaiety and laughter in comradeship. But so it was and when one of its leaders joined the team, now destined for Rhodesia, the link with Osmund Victor became deeper and stronger.'

Maurice Carver goes on to tell of the determined, forceful, yet unhurried and gentle way in which the staff of the school were drawn into this Fellowship.

'At the end of a day of walks and talks there would be very often a sort of conference with most of the small staff present and Victor, kneeling in front of the fire playing with the poker and very gently leading us to the idea of some sort of Rule of Life. Victor was a great builder and this was the most important part of his building. We were not very promising material to build with. To most of us we were just doing a job in a rather potty little prep. school, through which many like ourselves would be passing in the course of years if the venture survived at all. But it was not so to Victor. With great patience and persistence he was trying to establish the first deep dug courses of a little part of the city with fixed foundations whose designer and builder is God. None of us will ever know whether he succeeded. No end result can be pointed to which can be used to prove that in those evenings by the fire he established something against which time and change cannot prevail. What he did do was to make a number of ordinary people aware of God's call and life's possibilities, and to show them that our little school and its peace and harmony were very precious in the sight of God and worthy of effort and sacrifice. During these visits there were services in chapel and, of course, he gave us a celebration, but I think I am right in giving priority to the talks round the drawing-room fire when all were free to voice their doubts, difficulties and reluctances.

'On all he urged the practice of meditation. "A Chapter of the Bible every day," he would say in a rather irritated way. "That's very good in its way but you'll find you get tired and your thoughts will wander." And he began to unfold to us that other way described in the favourite and much-loved quotation from Mrs. Herman, which he often used in Retreats. "Meditation is essential to all Christian life: and the great reason why the Bible has lost its hold on the average religious person—as distinct from the man-in-the-street—is to be sought in the impatience and lack of self-control which have made meditation a lost art. A great book yields its true spirit, its interior sweetness only to long and patient brooding: and no amount of modern Bible study, however intelligent and

up-to-date, can take the place of that slow, deep, pondering which at one time was the joy of every pious farm labourer who could, by any means, spell out the sacred page."

'Some who tried the experiment and came to chapel at dawn feeling a bit odd would find already there Osmund Victor's small cloaked figure bowed in prayer. God knows in what grey hour long before dawn he had come there!

'The little paragraph on self-discipline in the final Rule can hardly be bettered as a guide to people living in a small community, "In this regard each companion will strive so to learn of Christ as to *overcome those faults* which stand to ruin fellowship in life and work (e.g. selfishness, forgetfulness of the needs and claims of others, criticism and ill-natured gossip) and to *win those virtues* upon the maintenance of which such fellowship depends (e.g. patience, courtesy, openness, cheerfulness and love)."

Robert Grinham (now Canon Grinham, O.B.E., Founder of both Ruzawi and Springvale Schools) writes of two things which Father Victor constantly emphasized in speaking of or to members of the group. One was the danger of the 'Inner Circle' in a community like a school; the other was the necessity for simplicity and minimum demands in any Rule evolved. 'Yet, curiously enough, in re-reading his letters the *need* for an Inner Circle is emphasized,' writes R.G. It was in the gradual development of the Fellowship that he realized increasingly its dangers. It would have been so easy to get a group of the so-called pious, the elect and righteous, as against the rest of the staff. This was mainly safeguarded by periodic talks to the whole staff, so that no one was prevented from joining in if attracted. On the need for such an Inner Group, Father Victor would quote Bishop Gore, in his Commentary on Romans ix. 27: 'The great prophet (Isaiah) clearly perceived that most striking law of human history that progress comes mostly not through the majority of a nation but through a faithful remnant. It is the best through whom alone God can work freely.'

'Go all out for the prayer side,' said Father Victor, in an early letter to R.G. 'Look for further advance once that position has been consolidated. "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be *added*.'" Summing it all up, Robert Grinham says, 'The thing that shone through all his letters and talks was the way he kept his vision and his ideals and never lost his sense of realism. I think that is why he could help individuals—that, added of course to his deep love of human beings. He had a real love of material things—their beauty, their smooth functioning and usefulness—because they were the means given us to use in working

for that which, surely, he never failed to "seek first." It was that realism and that sympathy which made him *know* that a rule of life *must* be simple, and within the compass of those undertaking it, as well as great enough to be demanding.

'And the other thing I personally found such an inspiration in Osmund was his own tremendous belief in one's work—in the plan that God was working out through and in spite of our poor efforts. I remember his saying to Maurice and me once, almost hotly because we seemed blind to it, "I don't think you have any conception of what you are starting. This is the start of a group of 'Woodard' Schools throughout Central Africa! . . .'"

'The second chapter of what he so much inspired is opening. We *must* find the way in our schools *now* to maintaining what O.V. called "the prayer side." It established Ruzawi on firm foundations. All the difficulties O.V. visualized are on us now and we *must* find the solution.'

And so the seeds were sown, the fruits of which are immeasurable; to be found in countless lives whose privilege it was to have 'collided with a life that depended wholly upon prayer.' How can it better be expressed than in the Company Hymn, beloved of the Father Founder :

'As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.'

CHAPTER XI

EXCERPTS

Caritas Christi Urget Nos—motto of Girls' Diocesan Association

Here two wholly different meanings, each one permissible :

- (i) Greek—Christ's love for us *constrains* us (subjective), i.e. controlling, confining, holding back, often to a perplexing degree, yet all in view of some glorious end as yet hidden.
- (ii) Latin—Our love of Christ *urges* us on (objective), i.e. love for Christ the supreme motive power of Christian life, urging, pressing, stimulating, making us obey in a way we would never do without such felt pressure.

From O.V.'s Notebook, January 1915, Government House, Pretoria.

Mass on a Mountain, 1915

'This morning it was fine enough to do what we had wanted to do before—had a Mass up on one of the mountain valleys. "X" and his fiancée came and made their Communion together so it was a perfect way of ending up our holiday. I wish you could have been with us. Our altar was a huge boulder with a great tree growing behind and over it, making a sort of canopy of green. Below us gurgled a mountain stream and on the far side a rocky cliff and behind us great crags. The sun was just rising and came glowing through the branches and on to the rocks. On one side the rocky valley ran up the mountain slopes and on the other it widened out over orange groves and a jumbled mass of mountain ranges into the far distance beyond. The Gospel for the seventh Sunday after Trinity just suited. "Can a man provide bread here in the wilderness?"'

The Mitzeke Shrine

On June 21st, 1938, Father Victor wrote home from Ruzawi School. 'Saturday was a great day—the consecration of the Shrine to Bernard Mitzeke, who was martyred forty-two years back on June 18th. The place is within twenty miles of here. . . . The road follows the rail and watershed for some ten miles and then dives into a broad valley.

'There, on the slope of the hill, is the shrine—set over the hut in which Bernard lived and in which he was killed. The shrine takes the form of a circular thatched building open on one side—

a sort of aisled hut of great size, flanked by walls on either side, and set in a fenced garden. In the centre of this building comes a circular concrete platform raised on low pillars and covering the actual site of Bernard's hut. On the platform is a big altar with six massive wooden pillars, and with a flight of semi-circular steps in front.

'There I found about one thousand African people and about one hundred Europeans gathered. All lined up for the Governor—Sir Herbert Stanley. There followed the consecration service and High Mass with African ministers. The whole thing lasted over two hours and there must have been five hundred communicants. I preached and H.E. ended up with a short speech.

'Then I managed to find two Africans—now old men—who had been present at the martyrdom; one, then a boy, who did cooking for Bernard, and the other, one of the three catechumens whom he had begun to teach. . . . I had a long talk with them through an interpreter and took down all that they could remember including the dazzling light which they affirm that very many saw and which frightened the murderers away.

'After that I was motored up to the present mission some five miles off. There we lunched and afterwards went to the top of a hill which held the head kraal of the chief who ordered the murder, forty years back.

'It was one of the finest views I have seen in Africa—the path ending in a great crag on which the Chief's Citadel had been placed—though all has long since been deserted. There a huge Cross has been placed which towers all over the country-side. All round were the foundations of the old huts, and three hundred feet below was spread out the valley, with its little river—and away on the farther side the shrine very visible among the trees.

'In brightly coloured clothes the Africans were still streaming away in long lines and in all directions. While we sat we heard some quiet singing and then in a cleft of the rock below the great Cross we saw three African women, as it might have been in the Wailing Place at Jerusalem, crooning away and prostrate before the Cross.'

From O.V.'s Notebook

'Herein lies the special glory of our Rhodesian martyr; while attaining the highest, he yet comes within the comprehension of the lowest. He is not as saints and martyrs often seem to be—a being of a different order. He brings the crown of martyrdom within the compass of his people's understanding, he is bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, his experiences are their experiences.

The life of the heathen kraal, the rites of the Circumcision school, the counter of the trader's store, the servants "kaya" in the back yard, the kitchen of the "white missus," the night school, the catechumen's class—all these he had known as they, from long experience, have known. Long before he was called to join the white-robed army of martyrs he had filled a place in the white-robed army of house boys. He stands for modern Africa. He stands true to type. In all the happenings of his life—save in the manner of his death—he recapitulates the story of countless thousands of his African brothers.'

Here is a brief summary of the story: Born of heathen parents, of the Bagagwambe tribe, in Portuguese territory, Bernard Mitzeke's first meeting with a white man was with a trader. He was later employed by him. Being intelligent and ambitious he learnt quickly. Wanting to see more of life, he persuaded a hunter to let him sail with him from Lourenço Marques to Capetown. Here he found himself a domestic servant in a Capetown suburb, the usual occupation of Africans in the city at that time.

Seeking companionship, he found his way to S. Philip's Night School, run by the Cowley Fathers in the town. Here he not only found friends but learnt the rudiments of education. More important, he came in contact with Christian life and teaching for the first time. Finding him an apt pupil the Fathers at length introduced him to the Catechumen's class. It was while he was studying (all after work hours) in this way, and helping in Sunday School and pastoral work on Sundays, that Bishop Knight Bruce of Southern Rhodesia came, seeking volunteers to help him evangelize Mashonaland.

Bernard offered his services and returned with the Bishop on a long, perilous journey inland after leaving the boat at Beira. He was left eventually at Manguendi's kraal to labour as Christian catechist and evangelist. Refusing to leave his post, whether offered more lucrative work by Rhodesian Pioneers or threatened by the pagan subjects of the chief, he faithfully fulfilled his trust for four years.

At length, on the night of June 18th, 1896, there came a knock at the door; his faithful wife opened; an indaba¹ followed and Bernard was struck down by the sons of the chief, Manguendi. His wife, carried off by the murderers, managed to escape the next night and found Bernard still alive. She tended him for several nights but was discovered and the foul deed was completed. It was then that the dazzling light spoken of by the onlookers is said to have shone out.

¹ Indaba—African word for 'discussion.'

The shrine is now a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Christian Africans each year. S. Mary's Cathedral, Salisbury, has a window dedicated to Bernard's memory, the altar standing below it being enriched with carved work from the School of African Art at Cyrene, near Bulawayo.

Retreats

A feature of all Father Victor's work with groups and individuals was his taking of Retreats. In this connection one writes: 'Like a householder he would bring out of his storehouse things old and new. Behind his words there were three things which helped to give them both ease and force. The first was his methodical arrangement. He never let good things go but stored them in his loose-leaf notebooks and found, as time went on, the thing he wanted most cogently said in some beautifully phrased quotation. And this leads to the second things—his underlining. He read enormously with keen zest but also with a certain intensity. If he could help it the writer's words would not fall to the ground. On the contrary, he garlanded them with a firm line in red ink, or with a rectangular box. He savoured and delighted in a telling phrase or paragraph. . . .

'But there can be little doubt that the deepest secret of his power in Retreats, as in all his devotional addresses, was his meditation. He used to quote Townsend's *Asia in Europe*, on "the most marked distinction between the Asiatic and western man; the European only *thinks*, the oriental *reflects* and, the idea turned over and over endlessly in the mind, hardens into the consistency of steel." In a world of drifters and potterers, Osmund Victor had the "consistency of steel." He was so gay and whimsical and devoid of pomposity that a stranger might for an hour think him a butterfly, a light weight. But before long he would become aware of the steel, shining, flexible, adaptable, but penetrating and utterly unbreakable. No one I have ever met was so dependable, so consistent in the steel-like quality of his faith and love in God.'

A Meditation (telegraphic in form). At a time of anxiety concerning an individual

The Crown of Thorns. Ever a symbol of difficulties, troubles, temptations, wonderings, etc. which affect the *mind*. Taking the form, e.g.:

1. *Of Irritation, worries, etc.* So, S. Paul, 'Let not the sun go down upon your *wrath*.' N.B.—The word standing not for anger but for annoyance, i.e. let each day see the clearing up of its own annoyances.

2. *Of doubts*. Small, personal ones, e.g. about oneself, one's vocation, job, etc. . . . about others . . . even those much loved, for to love is not necessarily to trust. Ponderous big standard ones, re foundation dogmas, or about God Himself, His very existence, His providence, e.g. problem of evil, sickness, answers to prayer, etc. To some people Faith comes easily; for others it involves agony.

Prayer for an individual. Sometimes right to *concentrate* in this way for a time. N.B.—In the Gospels are twenty-two references to our Lord's prayers—nine with the words recorded—thirteen with words unrecorded. *Outstanding example of the latter in S. Luke xxii. 31-2*.

'Simon, Simon (the repetition of the name evidence of great affection and concern), Satan has desired to have *you* that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee* that *thy* faith fail not, . . . and do *thou*, once *thou* hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.'

N.B.—The 'you' twice repeated is plural: Christ refers to the apostles as a whole, i.e. fully aware of what was going on behind the scenes—an attempt on the part of the personal powers of evil to test, and indeed to disintegrate, the group.

But then He applies Himself to Peter in particular (as one has to sometimes with 'key' people) and reveals how He has been praying for him, as leader, personally and individually; asking that his faith may not 'suffer an eclipse'. . . and that when he has won through he may be in a position to 'stablish' (this is a technical term in primitive pastoralia) the whole group.

In other words there is a warning—a prayer—and a charge.

Letter to one facing a most serious operation, 1955

'There are times, are there not, dear, when "Standing by the Cross" holds good in a very personal and comforting way. That little intimate group on Good Friday, unable to do very much, even in the way of relieving pain or drawing nails, but at least prepared to "stand by."

'And so, you will think of all those who know you and love you, as "standing by" your bedside, and this Cross on which you are stretched. . . . God bless you "X" with a wholeness and strength in body, mind and spirit. And this little scrap with my love to you, now as always, in our Lord.' O.V.

To one in great anger, 1950

'Of course I understand very well how a brain storm can work up when one suddenly finds oneself in a hole—but equally of course *you* know how this represents just the moment when you are

wrecked back upon God. This is where the *remote* preparation of all your prayer times should bear fruit *plus* a special and immediate going aside to lay it all out and hand over the difficulties—so recover poise and balance. Bless you!’ O.V.

Wandering Thoughts

‘After silence and worship, bring all the thoughts and anxieties first and offer them, think about them, then leave them.’ O.V.

Confession

‘His instruction to me was mainly verbal, quietly dropping a seed about confession when it was something new and alarming, never forcing it, but letting the thought simmer in one’s mind. Then a warmth of welcome when the decision was made. . . . My chief memory is of his wonderful kindness, rejoicing over the step taken, and after gentle but firm counsel, the loving gesture of taking the paper out of one’s hands and tearing it up himself. “You will not need that again”—a kind of outward sign of putting away the sin.’ ‘X.’

A Parishioner

‘It was my late wife who first introduced me to Father Victor, a meeting which had a lasting and beneficial effect on me. Her seven years of suffering brought us into close touch with Father Victor, and during that time he was the support of our religious life. I shall always remember how apt was his saying that one could not run away from oneself and that the way one met one’s troubles was really, after all, all that mattered.

‘Many times the Sacrament was carried into our home in his humble hands. His life was hinged entirely on his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. With that as his support, he was always fearless, vital, and full of compassion. . . . The cloisters remain as a physical memorial to Father Victor, while his spiritual memorial lives in the minds and hearts of all who knew and loved him.’

Another Parishioner

‘I first met Father Victor when I called on him to make arrangements for our marriage, my husband being away on active service . . . We went along together, at Father’s request, on my husband’s arrival and he gave us what I now assume was his customary pre-marriage talk. In the quiet of the cathedral, which he loved, he pointed out to us the importance and finality of the vows we were about to make and asserted that if we were entering upon married life with “one eye on the divorce court,” then, even at that late

stage, he was not prepared to carry on with the ceremony. We well remember his words: “Young man, if you consider getting married is like buying a dog licence, you had better arrange a civil marriage!” This talk has had a profound influence on our lives and is typical of his uncompromising attitude towards religion. . . .

‘. . . He was intensely interested in everything and his knowledge on all subjects was amazing, but perhaps the most remarkable thing about him was his ability to put himself on the level of the person he was talking to at the time. We have heard him having the most erudite discussion on, say, world affairs, to be followed almost at once by a wild romp with our, then, small daughter who adored him as did all children. Then, as she grew older, he would help her with her stamp collection or give her advice on training for the sack race for the school sports.

‘I cannot recall Father ever “talking religion” in all the time we knew him, although he would often call and ask us to pray for someone who was ill or troubled, and yet just knowing him had an abiding effect on our spiritual lives and strengthened our faith. If, as sometimes happened, a parishioner turned away from God and lost the ability to pray after trouble or tragedy, Father was saddened and felt that he himself was in some way lacking and had failed in his ministry. . . . I am sure that it is true, and as he would have wished, that, even more than the cloisters and all he did to beautify the cathedral, the mark he made on countless lives through his life and example is Father Victor’s true memorial.’

A member of his Staff

‘To me the highlight of five years at the deanery was the Monday Club, a group of twenty or thirty people, largely lonely ones, who came along on Monday evenings from 8 to 10—“not a minute later, and put everything straight before you go.” We had discussion groups, lectures, play readings, games; it was Father Victor’s club with no rules, where his kindness and welcoming hospitality and ingenuity had full course. When he gave talks himself he went to immense trouble to produce duplicated sheets giving a synopsis, with underlinings in red and black. . . .

‘As Dean, Father Victor was senior priest of the diocese, and his long experience and intimate knowledge of the Province of South Africa made him the trusted councillor of many within and outside Southern Rhodesia. But he never had the influence he should have had in Synod and Standing Committee. The long meetings bored him and he spoke as seldom as possible. Once, however, when Synod met in Salisbury and had reached a complete stalemate over finance on the Saturday, Father Victor’s sermon on

Sunday evening was the deciding factor in bringing about a new approach on the Monday which resolved our difficulties. He felt at home in the pulpit, but not on the floor of Synod. . . .

A Parish Councillor

'Like most big men he was intolerant, and had the courage to let it be known; for his intolerances were for the mean and the petty, for the lukewarm and insincere, for the cruel and the callous. He could thunder gloriously at these!

'One little episode of his life in Salisbury had its humorous side and was typical of his selflessness. I only learnt it by chance. He was run down and his doctor ordered him to rest and do nothing. The next day at two o'clock in the morning in a passage of the General Hospital he came face to face with his doctor as he was taking the Blessed Sacrament to a dying man!

'We, the church-folk of Salisbury, and indeed of the diocese, have been highly privileged. For fifteen years we have had among us a great man of God.'

From a Religious, writing to one of her Sisters in Southern Rhodesia

'I also felt Father Victor's death very much, but it was rather like the earthly loss of a loved brother, whom one had not seen for a long time. He was ever so good to me when I lived in Rhodesia, so understanding in an unexpected way, and so wise . . . in his advice. May he rest in a very lovely place in Paradise. Though I rather think our Lord may have gathered him into Heaven already.'

On Saying Farewell

'In many of S. Paul's Epistles there comes a moment when he bids farewell to those to whom he was writing. He lived in a world in which the government was Roman, but the culture Greek. And both these nations had their own way of saying good-bye.

'The Roman, with the tramp of his legions shaking the earth, said, "Vale," be strong; or, as S. Paul would add, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

'The Greek, with his love of all that was beautiful in nature and art, given to music, song and dance, said, "Kaire," rejoice, be happy, go on your way singing and dancing. So, S. Paul, "Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice."

'So, with Holy Week just over, we shall remember how our Lord, when He came to say good-bye to the inmost circle of His friends and disciples, wove it up in symbolic form in that Communion meal, which was to last down the ages, and form the abiding

link between Him and those whom He loved. "Lo, I am with you all the days, and all day long." That meal in which we receive "*Wine* that makes glad the heart of man, and *Bread* to make men strong."

'I could not wish you a more lovely farewell than that. God bless you!'

O.V. at his own farewell, March 1954. Salisbury.

CHAPTER XII

PERSONALITY

'In the volume of the book it is written of me that I should fulfil thy Will, O God. I am content to do it. Yea, thy law is within my heart.'

OF all the many qualities which made up the personality of that great little man whom we knew as Father Victor, that of faithfulness stands out supreme. With singleness of purpose he pursued his vocation. To the vision of the City of God into which must be gathered all His children he dedicated himself. Here lay the secret of his hold upon all the many lives he touched as friend, director, priest. Pertinacity in prayer, in self-discipline, in service, was the virtue he most preached as it was most surely the one he daily practised. To the end of his life he was up at early dawn engaged in worship, meditation, intercession.

He was a man, small in stature, great in vision, abundant in vitality. The iron streak in him showed itself in the determined mouth, the jutting lower jaw, speaking not only of firmness but of obstinacy. But that was by no means all. The penetrating, twinkling eyes revealed a sense of fun together with a warmth of love, a sensitivity which quickly established understanding and confidence. The deep voice surprised and attracted. He had a keen appreciation of all things beautiful and a sure judgment in matters of seemliness and taste. The artist in him revealed itself in the building and furnishing of churches as also in his own black and white sketches illustrating notebooks and letters.

He was humble, yet arrogant; patient, tireless in helping real distress; impatient, brusque with trifling interrupters; quick in summing up a situation, irritated at detailed analysis; clear in his own mind as to policy and purpose, he found the minutiae of committee and staff work a tiresome handicap. Provocative often, oversensitive to opposition and criticism, yet showing amazing fortitude and generous silence in all matters of personal difficulty. Owing all his strength to the disciplined life of Community, valuing that life more dearly than anything else, yet he did his greatest work outside that Community. There, perhaps, he found more freedom for his creative spirit. Certainly it would seem that his Community recognized this factor in that it released him so much for activities outside its own institutions.

But what words can describe his many-sided personality? Quick-

silver? Yes—that quick mind, darting here and there, never still, was like quicksilver. But there was none of the aimlessness of quicksilver. Underneath the restless searchings there was always stern self-control, fruit of the years of disciplined Community life.

Firebrand? That, too, partly symbolized the man in whose presence it was impossible to be apathetic. The flame of his burning zeal would catch one out somewhere, somehow. A harmless, seemingly most ordinary suggestion made—but startlingly—'You've got something there!' and off he would go, building on such slim foundations, a vision of constructive vitality. And, at once—he could brook no delay—we must go search the source of this, of that. All else must be laid aside to thrash out some knotty problem. His fiery enthusiasm inflamed his hearers—or left them breathless behind him. And yet, how tempered was that enthusiasm by sound common sense!

A visionary? Yes. But a visionary with his feet very firmly set upon the earth. For no man was more methodical, more indefatigable at getting to the roots of things, more careful. He always had an eye for the essentials of any situation, and could distinguish quicker than most men between the fundamentals and the non-essentials of a proposition.

His preaching was always vivid, dramatic, disjointed sometimes, but the whole admirably drawn together in the end to drive home some lesson. Often he linked the problems of to-day with Psalm or Old Testament drama and prophecy; always with startling effect.

It was fatal to let him speak from floor or platform; for if the impulse took him, he would stride to and fro like a Napoleon thrashing out his thoughts, apparently forgetful of his audience. At a certain recent annual meeting in London, the Chairman rocked the hall with his exasperated intervention, 'Must you proceed with this peripatetic activity? Are you training for a marathon or what?'

On one occasion he had been preaching to his native congregation out in the open. So realistically did he mime the story of Joseph and the sheaves of corn that they sat entranced, seeing it all before them. 'Father is such a busy teacher,' was the apt description of a little picannin.

In planning, as he loved to do, some great church for God, he could see it all, the practical difficulties, the way to circumvent them, the wisest plan for the particular situation, and would there and then present to the mind's eye the completed edifice.

In a letter from South Africa in 1926 Father Talbot writes: 'Last week I spent from Thursday to Monday with Osmund, down at Cyrene and the neighbouring "dorp" of Lichtenburg. O.V. was

very anxious to show me the famous farm, which, as you know, was originally acquired, though not paid for, by Fred Sharman, and which has now been paid for through the heroic efforts of O.V. and the bishop. The idea, you will remember, is that it should become a kind of industrial or agricultural mission. There are to be a hundred native families, each of which is to have a permanently secured lease of one of the small-holdings into which the farm is divided. In the centre of the farm there is to be a mission station with church, school, store, etc. The families are to be carefully selected, and a few holdings are to be available for retired native clergy. Well, all this at present has its *hypostasis* only in O.V.'s ardent faith and imagination. But as we walked over the bare veldt, flat as your table, broken only at infrequent intervals by low bush, I am sure he saw, substantial and ordered, the village campanile, the converging roads, the clustered mission buildings, the scattered homestead, the water windmill, the cattle drinking-pool, the tapes-tried crops, the happy peasantry, skilled in agriculture and walking in the ways of Catholic holiness. What I saw was a very dry plain stretching unbroken to the distant skies, arresting only by its sheer spaciousness and emptiness, unfertile in aspect, untenanted save by four families who have squatted in shanties in one corner, and by the white ex-farmer (and his wife) who has been put in as manager of the estate, and who lives in a solid but mildewed house in another corner of the farm. But faith creates its own object; and doubtless Ely once only had existence in the soaring mind of an eleventh century Osmund.'

Many are the churches, school chapels, houses planned and inspired by Osmund Victor: S. Peter's Native Church, Rosettenville, and Kingsmead School Chapel in Johannesburg; S. Martin's, Hatfield, and S. Francis', Parktown, in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. S. Francis' Church is particularly interesting in having a communion wall instead of a rail. Greatest of all memorials to this part of his work are surely the Salisbury Cathedral Cloisters, Southern Rhodesia. Fitting indeed is the plaque now set in one of its walls commemorating Father Victor:

'In whose mind these cloisters were conceived
And by whose energies they were built.'

And yet I think he would have us remember him most as the simple shepherd of souls. 'To get a *real* picture of Father Victor,' writes a friend, 'you would need to talk to the little people—his parishioners and penitents—who loved him for his kindness, selflessness, interest and friendliness.'

How simple, how humble he was! Undoubtedly one of his greatest gifts was his unaffected approach to all and sundry whom he

met. Breaking off in the middle of some deep discussion to greet the African houseboy, 'Well, well, Solomon, and how are you?'—the warm handshake, the thump on the back. And a beaming Solomon for ever thereafter inquiring, 'Has Madam heard of Father Victor? When is he coming again?' That unostentatious dropping behind to have a word with the gravedigger or the bus conductor or the charwoman. He had the great gift of making each one feel that he mattered.

There were some, particularly perhaps in the latter years, who were constrained, uncertain and perhaps even a bit afraid of this impulsive, often impatient, puckish little priest who would greet even the merest stranger with familiarity and fun. It was disconcerting, to say the least of it, on being introduced for the first time, to be confronted by, 'And how are you? How soon are you taking your ticket to heaven?'

But it was impossible to spend any time with him without being won by his deep sincerity and love of souls. And often, so often, a joke, a funny story relieved some difficult moment. He could keep a room laughing for an hour or more as he reeled off funny tales. For always he was quick to see the ridiculous side of things: 'There is a good lady next door who delights in using long words and always gets them wrong; she found the drains weren't quite right—"There was nothing for it but to pour bucolic down them."'

'My deacon this morning was an old Zulu of immense proportion—he who signs himself when he writes: "I am your little child." (Every stitch on the dalmatic does its duty.)'

'You couldn't be with Victor very long,' writes one, 'without realizing that in gaiety and a sense of the ridiculous he was always bounding far in front. He would greet the absurd with a great whoop of joy: "A very nice old lady used to say, "I cross myself, compose myself and *jump* into bed." At the word "jump" a vigorous gesture with the arm and then a delighted chuckle or his favourite ejaculation, "Oh, my hat!" But the jokes read tamely without his inimitable way of telling them—his brilliant mimicry of gesture and accent.'

And with it all, wholly foremost and always, he was the consecrated priest, prophet, padre. Prophet in his inspiring leadership, raising his people by preaching and teaching to see the vision of a world won for Christ. At the same time, he served each individual with sensitive, unerring sympathy. There must be many thousands of young people in Britain and in Africa, who owe their faith and happiness to the inspiration of having sat at the feet of Father Victor.

Who that was ever privileged to hear him at a Retreat or a Study

Group week of one sort or another, but will remember those times of quiet prayer and meditation under his direction. With his great gifts of dramatizing a situation he would bring some Bible story to life till we saw it all enacted before us. With the instinct of a born teacher he made startling application of the tale to present conditions, and then in the silence left us for the spirit of God to complete the work he, under that same spirit, had so effectively directed.

Or at the celebration of Mass—be it the simplest little service in an African village—a converted drawing-room in a farmhouse, or at some great high ritual in his cathedral—there he was—the man completely surrendered to the high service of God to whom he had, in very truth, consigned his whole life.

CHAPTER XIII

HOMECOMING

‘Very good to be home anyway . . . yes, very good! This old house, next door to the Close, very lovely, Morna and Caroline and also Florence Ridley, very welcoming . . . the furniture and everything holding for me the memories of a lifetime. . . . So to bed in my old room, looking out over the garden, and beyond to Dinedor Hill, and a glimpse of the Black Mountains bordering Wales. Reminded me of Bunyan, “They laid Pilgrim to rest in a room which looked towards the sun rising. The name of the chamber was Peace. There he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang.” Felt rather like that!’

O.V. from Hereford. Rogation Sunday, 1954.

At length, in 1954, Father Victor retired, visiting his own home at Hereford first for a few days and then going on to the Mother House at Mirfield. He was a tired and overstrained man. Many of his friends had been deeply concerned in these last years to see the toll that they had taken. He was taut, tensed up, living on his nerves. This had reacted upon his health; he was troubled with sleeplessness and ulcer conditions. He was edgy, rather obstinate, very distraught. Such was the price paid for years and years of absolute drive. The wrench from Africa when it came was a particularly hard one. Nevertheless, he was coming home, and home meant for him Mirfield as much as Hereford. The return to Community life and to the comparative peace (though bitter cold) of North England brought healing quicker than many had dared hope. He slipped back into the ordered life and, almost imperceptibly, there came a content greater than had been thought possible.

The Community would have been happy for him to settle down in the Mother House. Father Talbot doubtless voiced the wish of all when he wrote in January 1948: ‘Why not when the time comes for you to leave Salisbury come and refresh us by your presence in the Mother House—I mean permanently! You owe us something, I think. We must help one another in the later stages of our lives. And you will have had your fling. Though indeed I should understand if you were reluctant to leave Southern Rhodesia where you have lived and wrought so much.’

This would have been the more to be desired since it was soon obvious that he was an ill man; heart attacks developed periodically, handicapping his activities. But his restless being would not relax.

We still find him rushing hither and thither over Britain, right to the end, linking up with old friends, preaching, taking Retreats, Quiet Days, speaking at meetings, talking of his beloved Africa, undaunted by difficulties.

One of his last letters, written in February 1956 sums it all up: 'Apart from all else that I have had to do, I see that I put well over one thousand things into the post box last year—sixty-eight in January, and about thirty so far in February. So now (and when typing is in question I try to make it telegraphic in shortness—making for clarity and crispness if not for good epistolary style!) what have I been doing? *September* to Scotland and a priests' Retreat at Cumbræ. *October*—Round Table meeting in Huddersfield Town Hall, to raise money for a Chair in the inter-racial University in Salisbury; S.P.G. sermons at North Walsham; then a Retreat at King's College, Birmingham. *November*—Talks re Africa at Shipley and Batley—Wantage—Lunch party meeting for our C.R. Oblates, of whom I am warden, in London—another Retreat in Birmingham. *December*—to our Priory in Cardiff, and home for Christmas. *January*—our Chapter here—and then two Retreats at our house in Hemingford Grey, near Cambridge—my first visit, but such a good house, centrally heated, perfectly appointed, lovely chapel, and in constant demand. Now I am here for most of Lent. *March*—Halifax Round Table on Africa—S.P.G. Africa Committee in London on the 15th—Holy Week at Chester.'

Alas, he could not go to Chester for Holy Week. In the first days of March he had severe pains for two nights, whereupon the doctors ordered six weeks of complete rest either at Mirfield or at home. He reached home on March 8th, very happy to be there and apparently his usual cheerful self. But he began at once to go downhill. On March 11th, Refreshment Sunday, he was just able to say Mass in the little Oratory in his own home—this was indeed his last Communion. Two days later, on the strong recommendation of his doctors, he was moved to hospital, still able to rejoice in the fact that the window of his room there overlooked his beloved Wye river. On March 14th, 1956, unexpectedly and most peacefully, he died.

The first part of the funeral service was held in the Lady Chapel of Hereford Cathedral. Thence his body was taken by road home to Mirfield. It was first laid before the altar of S. Vincent de Paul in the Retreat House Oratory. By strange and happy coincidence this was the very altar before which he had made his first profession forty-seven years before. At the time of the building of the new great church this altar had been transferred here. Into that Church

of the Resurrection the coffin was brought next day. What a building! How the Brethren all love it! And what wonder! The towering grey pillars of runcorn sandstone surrounding the High Altar, their engrained warm pinkness enhanced by the deep rose hangings in the far distant Chapel of the Resurrection. Upwards the eyes are drawn by the grace, the 'lifting grace' of those massive pillars, the lightness of the arches above. A sense of distance and height is created by perfect proportion, by round pillars, rounded arches—four such in procession yet not concentric. Thus depth as well as height is given to the whole happy building. Light comes in from high windows playing upon pale, grey roofing, all making for rest, absolute simplicity, complete satisfaction. No wonder that Osmund Victor, who ever revelled in the beauty of great architecture, found his peace here!

In the choir, before the High Altar, the coffin was laid, covered with a black and gold pall, six unbleached yellow candles burning round it, black and gold Rood hanging above. His Brethren in procession chanted the lovely medieval antiphon, 'May Holy Angels bear thee away to Paradise,' while the great words, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life' were read from sanctuary step.

And then came the silent vigil of the night as the Fathers took it in turn to watch and pray till, in the early morning, at every altar the Holy Sacrifice was offered for his soul. There followed the great High Mass of Requiem to which all else had been but preparation. How he must have loved it! Its orderliness, its ancient ceremonial, the age-old offering of the central Mysteries of our Redemption; the grandeur of exquisite plainchant reverberating from men's voices throughout the building. And so, in a triumphal act of worship, thanksgiving and praise his soul was commended to God.

Then came the final absolutions round the bier before the coffin was borne out and down the new made grass path to its last resting place. 'I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, "Write: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours."'

Quite simply the last rites were said. The Superior first, brethren after, came up to the grave and sprinkled holy water. Then they left him there. His body lies next to that of Robert Baker, the great master builder of Penhalonga. Co-workers in Africa these had been, giving the best years of their lives to her—a happy association in life and in death.

Osmund Victor loved this Calvary Garden. Below it, beyond a precipitous cliff-like boundary, lies the great valley of which he often spoke. Bustling with two railway lines, a canal, a river, it

is one of the centres of industrial England, linking city to city. Above, behind, peaceful and dignified, stands the Mother Church. Symbolical this of his life and indeed of the life of his whole Community. Work and vocation there in the valleys, caught up in the vortex of the world's busy activities; power, vigour, vision on the hill-top, generated through worship, strengthened by the simplicity, the sincerity of monastic rule. Thus does the Community of the Resurrection pursue its vocation. Thus it sends out its men to the farthest limits of the world; thence it recalls them for recuperation, spiritual renewal, final rest.

EPILOGUE

1924

'TO-DAY is the fifteenth anniversary of my Profession. If I live for fifteen more I shall be just sixty. The Community was only fifteen years old when I first came to it. It is a good thing to have had no doubts ever as to the rightness of that and it is equally good to get back for a time into the life here, very much developed and strengthened as it is in all sorts of ways.'

1949

'Please remember me on the 23rd, in view of the 25th, S. James' Day; our C.R. Foundation Day and the *fortieth* anniversary of my Profession: 1909-49. "Hast thou been so long with me . . . and yet!" That is what comes to my mind. So this Retreat must form my preparation for that, as also for my "last lap" in South Africa. *Vide* Philippians iii. 12-15.'

Of no one could it be more truly said that he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We who knew him thank God upon every remembrance of him—of whom it could most truly be said with the Psalmist: 'I have applied my heart to fulfil thy statutes always even unto the end.'

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