



THE CARMELITE NEWS

DECEMBER 1966 — JANUARY 1967 Number

WHITEFRIARS, FAVERSHAM, KENT

Published by the St. Mary's College Building and Missionary Fund



A HAPPY CHRISTMAS, and may the blessings of the Holy Season come down on you from the Holy Child as you kneel at the Manger.

SS. CRISPIN and CRISPINIAN

**Patron Saints of Cobblers, Shoemakers
and Leather Workers**

THE ROMANS invaded Britain in 55 B.C. They had no wish to invade Britain. To them it was a land of rain, fog, and swamp fever, but the Saxons were continually raiding the coasts of Gaul, which roughly speaking, would be the France and Netherlands of to-day. They liked the better life with the gold and silver, silks, foods and wines, that went with a developed civilisation. They never learned the cult of oysters until the Romans taught them. Even to-day at Reculver there are mounds of oyster shells that only need to be ploughed out. The Romans in Gaul decided that the only way to quieten the Anglo Saxons was to invade and occupy southern England. The Roman occupation left many distinct marks upon southern England and gave it, for perhaps the first time, that systematic way of life that we associate with civilisation.

Crispin and Crispinian were reputed to be Roman brothers who became Christians. They were probably the sons of a Roman officer or official employed in the administration of the country. Crispin (Crispian) means son of Christ, just like the word Christian. It was easy for them to cross over into Gaul on the Roman supply ships. There is a strong tradition that they grew up in Faversham. They went as Christian missionaries to Gaul where they made their headquarters at Soissons. In imitation of St. Paul they

worked with their hands, making shoes, and earned enough to support themselves and help the poor.

They perished under the persecution of Diocletian who was one of the most terrible persecutors of the early Church. He had appointed Maximianus as co-emperor and Maximianus resided in Gaul. At first Maximianus sought to turn them from their faith by alternate promises and threats. But they replied: "Thy threats do not terrify us, for Christ is our life, and death is our gain. Thy rank and possessions are nought to us, for we have long before this sacrificed the like for the sake of Christ and rejoice in what we have done. If thou shouldst acknowledge and love Christ thou wouldst give not only all the treasures of this life, but even the glory of thy crown itself in order through the exercise of compassion to win eternal life." Afterwards the two saints were beheaded at the command of Maximianus.

In the sixth century a stately basilica was erected at Soissons over the graves of these saints, and St. Eligius, a famous goldsmith, made a costly shrine for the head of St. Crispinian. Some of the relics of Crispin and Crispinian were carried to Rome and placed in the church of San Lorenzo in Panisperna. Other relics of the saints were given by Charlemagne to the cathedral, dedicated to Crispin

and Crispinian, which he founded at Osnabruck. Crispin and Crispinian are the patron saints of shoemakers, cobblers and leather workers of all kinds. They were more widely known on the Continent than they were in England.

Before the Reformation there was an altar to these Saints in the Parish Church of St. Mary of Charity in Faversham, and pilgrimages were held there on their Feast Day the 25th of October. The Reformation put paid to "all that nonsense" and to-day we cannot trace where the altar stood in St. Mary's, or if it is one of the remaining altars to be seen there from which the dedication has been blotted out.

Some years ago I bought an old house in West Street, Faversham. It had originally been two cottages and I restored them back again into two houses because they were needed to accommodate staff of the Carmelite Press. Since the frontages of these houses needed replastering I engaged a local architect to do some medieval figures on the wet plaster before it dried too hard. This work is done by

free hand drawing with the aid of a pointed tea spoon. Subsequently the grooves are shaded in, in a colour suitable to the locality. The figures are two Chaucerian figures mounted on horses taken from the Canterbury Tales; they are heading towards Canterbury because it was the Pilgrims Way. I have dedicated these two houses to Ss. Crispin and Crispinian because I am sorry to see an old and respected local tradition disappearing from the memory of the people. Up to the moment these two small houses have created quite a stir in the locality and gradually the newspapers are waking up to the fact that something new is happening in an otherwise dull street.

It is hard to see how an old tradition like that could disappear so completely when one reads that wonderful oration about Crispin and Crispinian which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Henry V. I have no doubt that Henry V knew many words, but I doubt if he was capable of such splendid oratory as Shakespeare pours out from him on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt.

This day is call'd the feast of Crispian :
 He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
 Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
 And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
 He that shall live this day, and see old age,
 Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
 And say, To-morrow is Saint Crispian :
 Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
 And say These wounds I had on Crispin's day.
 Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
 But he'll remember with advantages
 What feats he did that day: then shall our names,
 Familiar, in their mouths as household words, —
 Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloster, —
 Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
 This story shall the good man teach his son;
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 But we in it shall be remembered, —
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ;
 For he to-day that 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 a-bed
 Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

The two main figures represent the Wife of Bath and the Prioress, characters from the Canterbury Tales. They are shown facing towards Canterbury joining the Pilgrims Way. Then there is the toad looking down at them. The toad has long been forgotten as a Christian symbol, but the ancient Christians who were very well used to toads read more into them than we do. If you look at a toad he will look at you, immobile, unblinkingly, without the slightest trace of movement. Watch him closely and suddenly he will blink his eyelids. Mr. Toad is just simply lubricating his eyeballs, but the split second in which he blinks impressed the early Christians who saw in the immobility of the toad the immeasurable immobility of God. How God waits patiently, almost as if He didn't know, and then judgment comes in the blink of an eyelid. That is the reason for the inscription underneath the toad 'in ictu oculi iudicio'—by judgment in the blink of an eyelid—or if you like to put it another way—God's judgment comes like a flash.

Over the entrance to 73, is the Constantinian Pax with, of course, the fish swimming in the waves. The symbol of the living Christ.

Fifty yards up the street is the "Bull" Inn. "Bull" inns are nothing to do with agriculture or stock breeding; the "Bull" inns of the Middle Ages were always associated with local abbeys or monasteries nearby. They were subsidiary houses for rest, food and entertainment, but they operated by a warrant issued by the abbey or monastery. This was a licence written on parchment and hung at the entrance to the inn. It showed the prices they were allowed to charge the travellers and the accommodation that could be provided. This parchment was called a bulla. Every inn associated with a monastery bore a religious title but the commonest of all was the "Bull" a shortened form of bulla. Perhaps you may recall that sometimes the Pope issued a Papal Bull, in other words, a bulla giving instruction on some aspect of Catholic ecclesiastical life.

Then the road went over the bridge at Stonebridge Pond and up a short steep rise to Davington Priory sitting on top. This was an abbey of Benedictine Nuns which was taken over at the Reformation.

Important visitors stayed at the abbey or monastery; their retainers were accommodated at the "Bull" Inn.

In a way that small part of Faversham is the really historical part of the town. Up Tanners Street the Abbot had his gaol. There was a tannery that gave its name to the street—the street of the Tanners. The stream that comes down from the uplands still runs at the bottom of our garden, down past the old gaol where the tannery stood and so into Stonebridge Pond. There were always plenty of eels in Stonebridge Pond, the scavengers of dead cats and other four footed creatures who found in its dark waters a resting place for their bones.

So, time marches on. Crispin and Crispinian, long since dead, left their bones in foreign lands while we, the Christian missionaries of the present cope with the same problems that they had; how to convert the pagan mind of the present into the Christian mind whose image is in our hearts.

We are getting out a colour picture of these two Saints and eventually a small ceramic in glazed pottery that can be inserted outside or inside the shops of cobblers and shoe shops. Perhaps it might even be adopted by the big shoe manufacturers who I am sure would be glad to see some restoration of the tradition that the craft and trade of shoe making, leather working, should renew once more acquaintanceship with their patron Saints.

★

THANKS

Thanks to Fr. Titus Brandsma and St. Martin de Porres. Mrs. M. Scott
Thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Joseph and St. Jude. E. Smith
Thanks to St. Jude for many favour received. Mrs. L. Schulte

CHRISTMAS PUZZLES

Here is a Christmas puzzle to occupy the children and adults. Take the numbers 15873, multiply by any single number from 1 to 9. Multiply the result by 7. The answer will always be a complete line of the first number with which you multiplied. For example:—

$$15873 \times 3 = 47619$$

$$47619 \times 7 = 333333$$

This result will not be repeated in any other combination but 15873. Can you explain it ?

Here is another. A man had five small chains of three links each—

ooo ooo ooo ooo ooo

He wanted them made into one chain. He asked a blacksmith to do it. The blacksmith said 'a shilling for each link I have to break.' 'That will be 4/-' said the man. 'No' said the blacksmith 'it will be 3/-.' How did the blacksmith do it? Answer:— He split the first three links and inserted them into the three remaining spaces so making a complete chain with three splittings. Try it out on your friends.

★

MR. SQUIRREL'S PARTY

I AM continually surprised at what could be called animal instinct. I know an hotel with a large car park, and at one end is a hickory tree. It isn't a tree that is native to the British Isles. It comes into full leaf and blossom at the end of July and sheds its leaves again in early September—a short life. It is one of the hardest woods known, widely used for policemen's batons, parole sticks and in all circumstances where heads need to be cracked.

The hickory nut is so hard that you cannot crack it with a hammer. The squirrels love them, but how do they open them? They gather and then bury them, and then when the sap rises in the following spring the kernel inside swells and cracks the nut, so Mr. Squirrel unearths them again and gives a party.

O LORD

support us all the day long of this troublous life until the shades lengthen and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done.

Then Lord in thy great mercy, grant us safe lodging a holy rest and peace at last through

Christ Our Lord
Amen

Cardinal Newman

CRISIS

POSTAGE rates, printing costs, labour costs have risen to such a degree that we, like so many others, must curtail our overheads.

Here is what I recommend on our behalf and indeed on behalf of our subscribers. We will cut out Christmas cards from our side and unless you are feeling over generous you can do the same. That will save the costs of the card and postage. Therefore we send our Christmas greetings to you on the prayer leaflet that is enclosed. It is an old favourite in our Press.

Our Coming Novenas

ST. JUDE

Dec. 16th — Dec. 24th

THE DIVINE INFANT OF PRAGUE

Dec. 24th — Jan. 2nd

THE HOLY FAMILY

Our Lady Keep You!

Yours in Carmel,

M. E. Lynch O.C.