

A LETTER from Father De Snick, Quiangan, Ifugao.

If you ask a little girl from Manila "to whom is the month of May dedicated?" she will tell you: "to the Blessed Virgin". Ask a little boy: "to whom is the month of June dedicated?" and he will answer: "to the Sacred Heart of Jesus".

Is that true, dear Reader of the Little Apostle? It is true for you, but it is not true here amongst the Ifugaos. Most of my 65,000 Ifugaos are still pagans. They do not yet know the true God. The lovely Blessed Virgin is a Saint they never heard about. Heaven and hell are truths they ignore. Here the month of June is the month of the devil: It is harvest time in our province and during that time more than ever the Ifugaos worship all kinds of spirits; really devils, for their spirits are bad spirits.

The Ifugao women pluck the ears of rice one by one and make small bushels of them. The men go to the ricefields and when the women have gathered about thirty or forty bushels of rice, the men carry the bundles to their granary. Once arrived at their granary they place their bundles on the ground but in such a way that an open space is left in the middle. In this space they place two or four wooden statues of men or women, about one or two feet high.

They are not really idols but rather a kind of fetish. Each one of them has a name. Sometimes they are dressed as Ifugaos. Some of

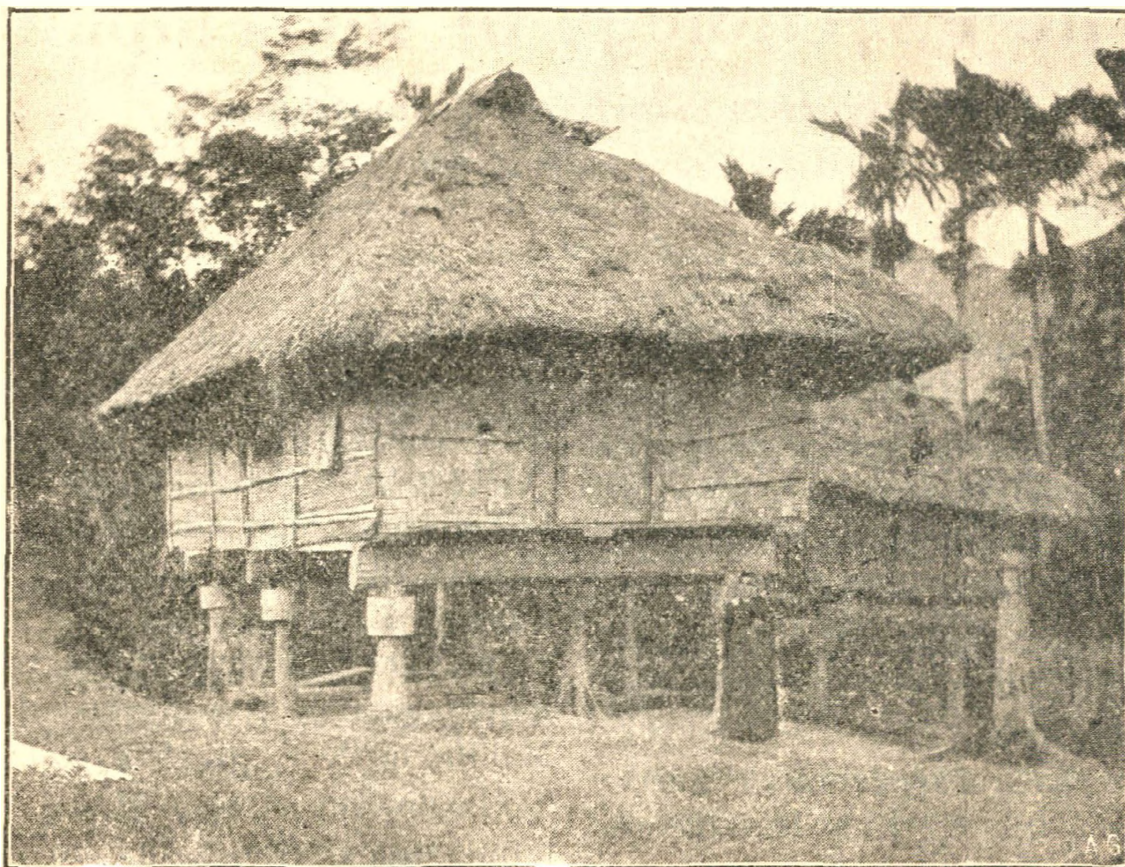
them have glass eyes and boast of a head of hair. But how ugly they look in that heap of rice!

And why are they put in that kind of a pulpit made of rice? First to protect the rice against thieves. So the Ifugaos believe, but Second they are there to bless the rice. Just think of it: the wooden mannequins have to work miracles or at least to extend their blessing to the gathered rice!

When all the rice bundles have been gathered and brought to the granary, the proprietor invites the old man (who acts as a priest in their religion) of the village to come to the granary and to offer sacrifices to the spirits.

The neighbors gather around the place. They kill pigs and chickens, drink plenty of bubud (rice wine) and give food and drink to the fetishes, who of course are never hungry and cannot swallow a drop of wine. But they receive their part of the banquet. The old man makes long recitations, says some kind of prayers, while the people dance around the pig, drinking more and more until they finally get as drunk as drunk can be.

Poor people they could know God, live a life worth living, go to heaven and be happy for ever....but no....they worship the devil in the bad spirits. If they knew only the gift of God. If only they were



First Convent in Quiangan, with Fr. Moerman

taught, but who will instruct them?
I, you may say, dear reader. Yes,
as their missionary I am willing to
teach the Ifugaos the road to heaven,
but I can not do it alone. Come
and help melet us work together
for God and Country. Let us together
work for the Ifugaos, make of
them a strong clearminded christian
population. Help me for alone,
what can I do for 65,000 pagans?

Help me by your prayers, if you can
not come here in the mountains;
help me by supporting a catechist
who will take your place, and with
me, visit the hundreds of villages,
instruct the thousands of children,
help the old people and send the dying
to heaven where they will pray for
you and secure heaven for you or
increase your glory there immensely
for ever. Would'nt you like it?

WHO DOES GOD'S WORK WILL GET GOD'S PAY

Who does God's work will get God's pay.
However long may seem the day.
However weary be the way.

Though powers may thunder "Nay!"
No human hand God's hand can stay.
Who does His work will get His pay.

God hurries not, nor makes delay.
Who works for Him will get His pay.
Some certain hour, some certain day.

But God's high wisdom knows a way.
And this is sure, let come what may.
Who does God's work will get God's pay.

—**Boston S. J. Calendar.**