

This month, we dedicate our December issue to St. Francis Xavier the great Apostle of the Foreign Missions, who died four hundred years ago at . . .

SANCIAN

Alfredo G. Parpan, S. J.



*A lonely palm hut on a lonely isle
 And a man lay dying in the dawn;
 Pale face ashen in the candle light
 Sputtering in the misted morn;
 The tired hands tight on a crucifix,
 The shining eyes transfixed on the nailed Form.
 Once more he sees . . .
 Red drops dropping from Hands and Feet
 And the ugly gash on the bloodied Breast.
 Once more he hears . . .
 The cry of thirsting Lips
 Water could not relieve. And he
 A helpless wreck, lying on this beach . . .
 Not yet. Not yet. A broken sob.
 Tired eyes pleaded: not yet!
 Rome's command was yet undone,
 The cold world lay unlit;
 Only his heart was burning.
 But soft the Master's Voice was calling . . .
 Soft. Insistent. Home.
 Home? When ripened fields lay waiting in the sun?
 "I have hoped in Thee, O Lord,
 I shall not hope in vain"—
 The listening breeze caught up the words*

And bore them to the shore,
Sharing its secret with the moaning surf
That sent some rippling waves up an inland stream
To rock a sampan moored
And wake an infant wailing . . .
The breeze sped on to mock
The temple bells to sullen peal: in vain!
And the poppies roused in drowsy murmurs echoed: in vain!
But "not in vain" the bamboos heard
Rustling by the Yangtze banks, protesting.
They heard the message clear dropped by the whispering breeze
The mandarin stirs on his silken couch . . .
And the farmer in his mud hut, smiling,
Dreams of rice fields, someday, heavy with grain . . .
Back to the misted isle the breeze sped,
Back to the palm leaf thatch on the shore,
Whispered on the dying man's ear
Its finished task; cooled the flushed brow
And blew the candle out.
The gasping breath has ceased,
The shining eyes to shine no more.
The watcher rose to pray, his vigil ended.
El padre santo was dead, and
Dawn was breaking on the east.

A few years ago, the late Bishop of Buffalo, the Most Rev. John A. Duffy, was taking an afternoon walk and met a little girl, who bowed courteously to him. The Bishop stopped and asked the youngster her name.

"Mary," the girl answered, and promptly added, "What's your name?"

"John," the Bishop replied.

Some time later Bishop Duffy was walking along the street with a dignified Monsignor, busily engaged in a serious conversation. There was an abrupt pause in the discussion of the Bishop and his clerical companion, when a certain little girl stopped before them and very politely said,

"Hello, John."