

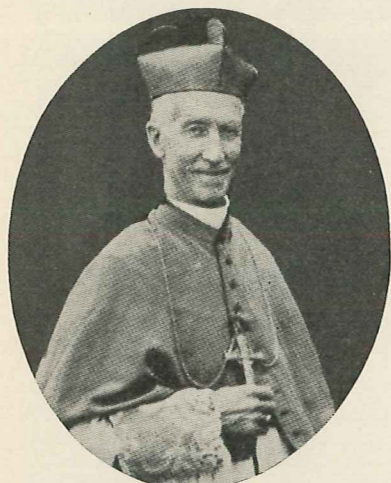
The Jesuit Bulletin

BELIZE MEMORIAL NUMBER

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No. 7



Bishop Murphy

ST. JOHN'S College grew out of the Select School opened in Belize in 1887 by Father Cassian Gillet, S. J. Frequent requests for the Jesuits to start a boarding College were finally answered by the erection of an unpretentious school building adjoining the Holy Redeemer Cathedral. Father William Wallace, of the Missouri Province, was the first Director of the College.

Success made expansion necessary. Loyola Park, a swamp land about two miles south of the city, was chosen as the site for a new college. When seemingly insuperable difficulties had been overcome, the cornerstone of the main building was laid on December 31, 1916. Classes were begun on July 16, 1917.

A steady increase in prosperity followed, only to be cut short by the outbreak of yellow fever in August, 1921. During this critical period it seemed certain that the College would be closed. In fact, the boarders were ordered home. But they were refused admittance to their native countries, and after a series of adventures on the high seas, the only course left open was a return to Belize and reoccupation of the College.

Thus once more St. John's continued as a Jesuit boarding school for boys. She had reached an enviable degree of success and was giving every indication of growth and prosperity when, on that fatal Thursday afternoon, September 10, 1931, the hurricane demolished everything but hope.

Dedication

To the eleven Jesuits who lost their lives in the Belize disaster;

To their parents and relatives;

To Bishop Joseph Murphy and Father Anthony Corey, Superior of the Mission;

To their fellow-Jesuits who survived the hurricane and whose heroism has inspired us all;

To their devoted helpers in the cause of Christ, the Sisters of Mercy;

To the boys and friends of Saint John's College, especially to those who perished, and to their sorrowing parents

This Bulletin

is affectionately dedicated.



Father Corey

Besides the loss of life to faculty and student body, the College was totally destroyed, a property loss of more than \$300,000. The Convent and Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy, five buildings in all, were also completely ruined and cannot be replaced for less than \$200,000. The Church and School of St. Ignatius, where Father Kempfues lived such a priestly life and died such a priestly and heroic death, were wrecked and afterwards burned to prevent the spread of

an epidemic. The loss to Holy Redeemer Cathedral lies between \$40,000 and \$70,000.

The following pages give a more detailed story of the Belize disaster. Though much information has already been made public, yet, as we have been privileged to receive many intimate communications from our brother-Jesuits who lived through the horrors and who were affected most keenly by them, we thought it only fitting to reconstruct the story in the light of these letters. We do this because we consider it profitable to our readers and some slight tribute on our part to the Belize heroes, both living and dead.

As a final tribute to the living, it must be said that not once have they left their posts. True Jesuits that they are, they have already begun once more to teach in the city of Belize, and they look with longing eyes into a future which they hope will see the rebuilding of the glories of the past.

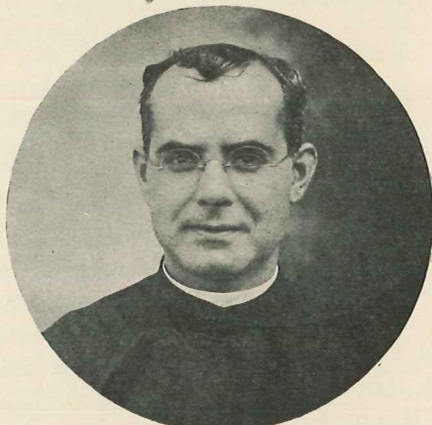


Top row: Mr. Baumeister, Mr. Burn, Brother Rodgers, Father Rooney, Father New. Middle row: Mr. Smith, Father Tracy.
Bottom row: Mr. Koch, Father Ferris, Father Kempfhues.

They Are Christ's

WE SHOULD like to give a complete story of the life of each of the eleven Jesuits who perished in the Belize disaster. However, as limited space makes this impossible, we are subjoining a brief sketch of each man, hoping that in some future issue we shall be able to deal more at length, at least with some of them.

FATHER FRANCIS KEMPHUES, of Cincinnati, spent his entire priestly life in British Honduras. His first years were passed in caring for the Caribs of Punta Gorda. There followed seventeen years in the once thriving town of San Esteban, where the Padre built his own church and home and ministered to a few outlying villages. His last three years found him as pastor of St. Ignatius Church in Mesopotamia, a new section in Belize. His missionary life was one of burning zeal, dauntless courage and intense, silent activity. In making converts he won the parents through the hearts of their children.



Father Palacio

The hurricane destroyed his church and school, burying him and a large number of children whom he had gathered for a holiday parade. Though his legs were broken and his skull fractured, he absolved the injured and dying, and urged the uninjured to fly for safety from the incoming tidal wave.

FATHER CHARLES PALACIO, Principal of the College, was born in Valencia, Spain. As a novice he volunteered for the old Denver Mission. Immediately after his tertianship he was sent to Belize. He spent four years

at St. John's, where his knowledge of Spanish and his perfect understanding of the boys made him especially valuable. His vacations were spent in Central America, traveling through Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador and Nicaragua, canvassing for students and advertising the international school at Belize. He lost his life while trying to bring help to the injured and suffering at the College.

FATHER BERNARD NEW originally belonged to the German Mission, his birthplace being Buffalo, New York. His four scholastic years and ten years of his priestly life were spent in British Honduras, partly as a missionary pastor and partly at the College. His superb sense of humor and chuckling laugh made him a messenger of sunshine to the people of the mission, to the boys at the school and to his fellow-Jesuits. He taught several classes a day, conducted a night school for the young people of Belize and acted as spiritual director to the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy. During the last vacation he canvassed for six weeks in the disturbed Republic of Honduras and returned with twenty-eight boys.

FATHER LEO ROONEY, of Superior, Wisconsin, was in Belize as a teaching scholastic and returned immediately after his tertianship. He was treasurer of the College for two years, a work which he carried on in addition to his teaching activities. For several years he taught the Spanish-English of the preparatory classes. When the need of a complete commercial course was seen, he undertook the entire work, and for four years was kept busy formulating schedules and constructing a modern business school, equipped with desks, typewriters, filing systems and a bank. Last July the commercial course was the main drawing card for boys from the Spanish Republics. Father Rooney was a zealous priest, eager to hear confessions, and gifted with a Christlike simplicity and clearness in preaching. He was able to administer absolution after the crash came, and it is probable that the rising sea caught him as a helpless, perhaps heretofore uninjured, victim.

FATHER WILLIAM TRACY, of St. Louis, was a big man physically, and possessed of a heart correspondingly large. Throughout his teaching years and his three-year term as Principal of St. Mary's High School he was noted for his charity. He had spent two years in Belize, where this same charity and sympathetic spirit made him a genial companion and loyal friend. His younger associates ever found him a refuge in their tiny troubles, an encouragement in their work and most generous in giving suggestions and efficacious assistance. The boys loved him and worked hard for him. He was buried uninjured beneath the wreckage with several small boys clustered round him. He administered absolution to the prisoners of the storm and met death bravely when the restless sea, which he had loved well, surged over the land and claimed him as a victim.

FATHER WILLIAM FERRIS, the last arrival at the College before its destruction, was born in Ireland. Though the Benjamin missionary of the colony, he was the oldest of those who lost their lives at the College. Thanksgiving to God for the removal of ill health seems to have induced him to volunteer for Belize. Despite his age, he had just entered upon his chosen work with the high spirits of a youth when he was hurled into eternity by the fall of the building and the rush of the tidal wave.

BROTHER JOHN RODGERS served in the Medical Corps on the western front. After the war he worked for two years in eastern hotels until at last a priest discerned

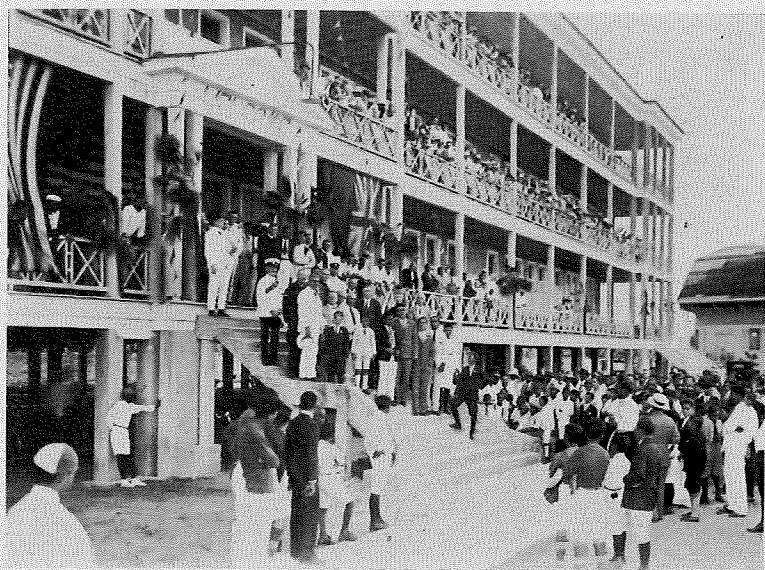
in him a religious vocation and referred him to the Society of Jesus. He spent his novitiate days working with Brother Saeger at Florissant. After his novitiate he went to Belize as infirmarian. He was remarkable for his tender devotion to the sick and for his simple childlike piety. He was well-liked by boys and townspeople and a source of happiness to his brother Jesuits because of his sage wit and propensity to pun. Brother Rogers was trapped on a stairway and killed in the subsequent fall of the building.

MR. RICHARD KOCH, of St. Louis, was small in stature, in manner almost timid. This was his third year of teaching at St. John's. In his quiet unassuming way he inspired the boys to study; with a patience almost impassive he urged the sluggard and coached the weak. When prefecting, he was gentle, yet firm; and a slight crimson flush on his countenance was enough to warn the boys that they were diverging too far from the line of duty. Much of his time was devoted to the library and camera club. He was self-forgetting and an exact observer of all points of rule. A delightfully pleasant humor colored his conversations and his views on life. He met the most trying situation with a smile, a smile which we believe even his sudden death did not efface.

MR. ALFRED BAUMEISTER, of Cleveland, had spent a little more than a year at St. John's. Devotion to duty, dynamic energy and an imperturbable disposition were his main assets in conducting his classes and dealing with the boys. His was a happy disposition, with a love for jesting and teasing. As moderator of the Mission Club (a seeming anomaly, since St. John's was itself a mission), he succeeded in working up among the boys a great enthusiasm for collecting stamps. His class was a difficult one—forty-two boys, differing considerably in age and previous training—but his patient consideration conquered all obstacles. He was caught by the falling building as he was hurrying some boys to safety.

MR. DEODATO BURN, a native of Belize, attended St. John's as a boy and was outstanding as a student and a deeply religious youth. He had just returned to his Alma Mater to begin his teaching career, and was working strenuously with the thirty-six boys who made up his class. In the crash he was imprisoned with several boys. Though he had been injured by a heavy beam, yet he encouraged the boys and joined them in their act of contrition. Unable to hold his breath when the water rushed in, he choked and was drowned, his head falling upon Mr. Tainter's breast.

MR. RICHARD SMITH, of Racine, Wisconsin, started his missionary teaching career only this July. He came to Belize with the zest typical of the young Jesuit. His interest in the boys, a pleasant manner in talking to them and questioning them early won their hearts. His fellow teachers enjoyed his curiosity about the boys and admired his evidently zealous spirit. He had just thrown himself into the teaching of commercial subjects and mathematics when the crash came and he perished with the boys he had come to serve.



A gala day at old St. John's.
The occasion was the reception
of Colonel Lindbergh

ST. JOHN'S of old Belize! We loved to call her that. We loved to think of the men

who had said good-by to home and friends, and consecrated their best endeavors to a work far from inspirational, as a corps of advance troops flung forward on the fighting line. And we dared to hope that the boys who passed through their hands year by year, to be trained to the discipline of Christ, so strange and foreign to most of them, might after all go back to their own countries and be there a nucleus from which would radiate just a tiny bit of Christian poise and virtue.

And then the hurricane!

The story of what these men and the boys they had come to love endured on the afternoon and night of the 10th of September and in the agonizing days of vivid recollection that followed brings tears to the eyes. But there was a glorious and a consoling side to the tragedy.

"I shall never forget," writes Father Corey, "how the boys one by one crawled through three feet of mud to confess to me as we lay outside of the new sea wall in the bed of the sea, and how the Fathers asked for absolution as they lay crushed beneath the pile of ruins before the flood came from the sea."

In the City

The hurricane struck Belize on September 10th, the day when the inhabitants were celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of St. George's Caye, for them a Fourth of July; and the little city of 15,000, once trim and comely with its quaint white houses, red zinc roofs and green shutters, was twisted and torn and splintered. Bishop Murphy has given a graphic description of the general destruction in the town itself.

"In the short space of three hours two hurricanes smote Belize and its environs, leaving death, destruction and desolation in their wake. Where in the morning had been gaily decorated streets filled with cheerful holiday groups and bustling with civic celebrations, night shrouded a place of mourning, of myriad ruined homes, of heart-broken families bemoaning the loss of their nearest and dearest, the abode of desolate hearts and shattered hopes. . . .

"At about eleven o'clock heavy rain fell, but even with that many school children gathered at the various schools to form the 'School Parade.' The rain stopped for a while before noon, and then, with the winds rising, the school managers told the children to go to their homes,

And T

as a big storm was likely to break soon. Most of the little ones obeyed, but many preferred to stay at the school grounds. In one case this stay meant a sad ending to youthful lives.

"By two o'clock the wind, which had been blowing in gusts from the West North West, grew stronger and steadier and wilder. At half past two, it blew a gale of 90 miles, and zinc roofs, slates, loose timbers from houses began hurtling through the air and into the streets. Many frame houses were pushed over off their supports and crashed to ruin. The steeples of Holy Redeemer Cathedral were wrenched off, and, by the close of the horrible blast at half past three, it was possible to see some of the dreadful devastation. A tidal wave dashed fifteen feet high with terrible speed into the river mouth, hurling barges, passenger boats, schooners and motor boats high and far inland up to the bridge. They crashed against sheds, warehouses, offices and homes, and in their own wreckage wrought other havoc. The whole city was flooded to the height of three or four feet. At the subsidence, about half an hour later, the water left a mud deposit of three or four inches in every street and in every house that outlived the storm. . . .

The Second Gale

"At half past four, up from the South screamed another and more violent gale. Its velocity, over one hundred miles an hour, made deadly work on what the first storm had spared. Houses were hurled into the streets or smashed down like match-boxes. Shutters were crushed in by sheer wind-force and sashes were broken to pieces. A pitiless flooding rain added to the horrors of the blast, and darkness intensified the perils. Human powers were of no avail.

"... The rain kept falling heavily after the gale had ceased, and darkness made all human efforts at alleviation of distress well-nigh impossible. The heavy blow was such as almost to kill hope and stun human feelings. The material loss in Belize will go into millions, but the loss of nearly 2000 lives is something far worse for the colony. Some families of six to nine members were utterly wiped out, most of them by the awful tidal wave at the end of the first storm. Houses and occupants were hurled down and swamped, the victims, on the south side especially, running into many hundreds. In some cases, as where the victims were fatally pinioned in wreckage with no possibility of rescue, the water was a mercy in bringing death most speedily and less painfully. The authorities organized burial squads, but the number of the corpses and the decomposition forced them to give up even the trench-burial and resort to cremation, especially where the victims were in the wrecked houses and could not be extricated. . . .

"The School and Church of St. Ignatius, in the Mesopotamia area, crashed, and imprisoned the pastor, Rev. F. Kemphues, and a number of children with marshals for the parade. Even as he lay with broken limbs and gasped for his forehead, he blessed his people who tried in vain to release

When The Hurricane!

him, and when he saw the tide sweeping up, he bade them run for safety. The water ended his life and those of the children in the school."

At the College

In the meantime what had happened at the College?

Brother John Jacoby, the head prefect of the boys, describes, how, in the early part of the day, they had gone to Belize with Mr. Leo ("Dave") Burns to watch the parade, had been caught in a heavy squall, but had returned otherwise in good spirits. It was a holiday and lunch was had for the boarders at eleven o'clock in order that all could go to the Barracks field in the afternoon and witness the races. The rain continued, however, and the races were cancelled.

Brother Jacoby's Letter

"1:30 P. M.—The Fathers—Ours—and the boys," Brother Jacoby writes, "began to watch the capers the wind cut. First it blew away pieces of roofing which Father O'Connor had used at the new sea wall, boards from under the house, boxes, barrels and what not. At this particular time Father O'Connor, some of the boys and I were standing in front of the gym. Suddenly the roof of the small boys' kraal sailed away as a small boy sails a piece of cardboard. Three boys were out at the kraal. They hung on to the uprights lest the wind blow them away. I rushed out after them. Since I was going with the wind, it didn't take long to get there; but to stop I had to get down on all fours and hold on to the walk. A servant came to help me and together we crawled back on hands and knees. This was around 2:30 or 2:45.

"When we reached the building I took up my position beside Father O'Connor in front of the gym. Most of the boys were over on the first floor veranda of the main building. They began making signs for us to get away. Looking round we found the entire back part of the gym on the ground. Then everybody ran away from the front part of the gym, thinking it would go also. We told Brother Stewart to turn off the electricity to the gym to avoid a short circuit, which would ruin our batteries. Father O'Connor and Mr. Burns went in front of the boys' refectory. I went with the others of Ours and the boys to the north end of the main building. The boys were not terrified; they were having fun running into the wind and struggling back, of course, wet to the skin.

"It was raining hard. I spoke to Father Tracy and remarked that I didn't think the main building would go. He said, 'I do!' Then we tried to get back on the veranda; but IMPOSSIBLE. After holding a little conference on the front veranda with some of the Fathers, Father Superior ordered us to make for the sea wall.

"The boys started down the steps in the rain and amid things that shot out from under the house,—wood, tin, boxes, barrels, etc. When they got into the wind, it fairly shot them out to the sea wall. I thought we would lose some



by having them blown into the sea.

Just as I had crossed the sidewalk there was a loud crash. I looked back and up. The tower was coming down, point first. Only one boy, Celio Ramos, was near the spot

where the tower would fall. I yelled for him to run. Meantime I ran backwards, watching the tower, and then the whole building went down in one heap with a crash louder than thunder. It fell just where it stood. Took only a second to fall. The boys were out near the sea wall. We finally got them over the wall into the mud, waist deep. The sea had retreated, how far I don't know. Things from the building began flying furiously. One half of the roof (south end) rose up and blew out to the tree by the sea wall. Roofing was flying in all directions."

Brother Jacoby then described how he tried to go back, but the boys held him, even dragging him to the ground. Father Corey likewise wanted to go back, but they begged him to stay. He then heard confessions there in the mud and gave all absolution.

"When the wind let up," continues Brother Jacoby, "Father Corey started back. Then the boys and I. I headed for the spot where the front entrance had been. I found two boys pinned under the wreckage on the front steps. . . . Just in front of them on the walk lay a boy, dead. It turned out to be Cesar Beltran. He had been hit in the head.

"I couldn't loosen the other two. Meantime Father Corey came in and I told him I'd get a pinch bar to pry under the timbers. The chapel was still standing and so was the bridge from the main building to the chapel. I know, because I went under it. It was at this time that Dave Burns left for town to get help. I got the bar, but could not pry. Went back for an axe, but couldn't find any. Oh, that helpless feeling!

Start for Belize

". . . Father Superior said to take the small boys, and anyone else who cared to go, to Belize. As we were leaving I told the boys that the bigger ones could stay, littler ones must come. Then they showed me how the water was coming over the sea wall. Dead calm all this time."

For, after the first part of the hurricane, which blew out to sea from the northwest and carried the sea along with it, there was a half-hour of complete calm. In the meantime the news of the disaster at the College had reached Belize. The Bishop's account printed by the Angelus Press states:

The "New St. John's"
Note contrast with the other picture, the absence of life and joy and color. Everywhere are the signs of death and desolation

"Then a man came breathless and cried from the street-gate: 'Father! The College fell and all the boys are killed. Father Corey and Brother Jacoby had some of the boys at the sea wall,'—and then, off he ran, to tell the people in town. Just then, Father Palacio came in, dripping wet. He had left the College before the storm broke. Upon hearing the awful message, he and Father O'Neill (who had come to Belize to inspect the needs of the Mission and was to sail in a day or two) procured the Holy Oils, and set off for the College. Beyond the city bridge they met Mr. Leo Burns. He had come from the College ruins and reported the catastrophe to the Police and to the Firemen.

"A friend in need took them into his motor car and they made their way with difficulty through the wreckage in their path till at last, before they reached the Yarborough Canal, the storm caught them and they abandoned the automobile. They ran out to the Vaults (old burial vaults), about a half-mile nearer the College. . . . The water was rising on the roadway, but they thought it was rain, and kept on. Soon the water was over their ankles. They passed the last house at the lagoon, when suddenly, out of the murk of the storm came guided a group of about twenty college boys, guided by Brother Jacoby."

Brother Jacoby's account continues:

"At the gate to the College grounds the water was over the road; halfway to the Vaults it was over our shoes. Here we met Father Palacio and Father O'Neill. . . . Father Palacio wanted to know if any of the boys were under the building. My crowd was all that was out, I told him. He went on. Father O'Neill stayed with me. Dave came along then and I asked him to hurry along the stragglers. . . .

"By this time we were near the white house, with the water up to our knees. Mahogany logs came floating over the road. They knocked some of the boys down. I told the boys to get up on the Vaults. I ran ahead to get Ramirez and Dacaret, who had passed the Vaults. Couldn't see them. The current was very swift and the water up to my waist. I jumped over the fence into the Vault enclosure. Less water there. Went back to the corner where the boys were getting up. When I went up, not a boy was in sight along the road. They had been swept away by the water or were up in the last white house. Then I motioned the boys to lie flat on the roof of the Vaults. I followed their example and so did Father O'Neill. We were in front of the boys beside the little tower. Father O'Neill heard my confession and said he was going to crawl back to the boys to give them absolution. He could only go half way back, and motioned what he was going to do. They understood and folded their hands in prayer."

Then came the terrible second part of the hurricane.

"The wind shrieked so loud that talking was out of the question. For about an hour and a half we lay flat. Shivering and praying. It was cold. . . . Now and then a wave would dash over the Vaults. It made the cold more intense. During the blow I tried to see if the boys were still there; couldn't see them or Father O'Neill, who was only twenty feet away. I thought they

had been blown away. Finally the wind let up and I could see Father O'Neill. I went back to him. . . .

"That Mangrove tree on the side of the Vaults had fallen over, and Father O'Neill was on the other side. One of the branches hit him in the head as it fell, but didn't injure him. At length he and I got back to the boys. We lay side by side to keep warm. When the wind let up a little, Ed Fasquelle said, 'There are some boys!' It was a gruesome sight to see boys crawling out from behind cocoon fronds, white as death. Dave was going around collecting them. We motioned and yelled for them to come to the Vaults. They came. By this time the water had gone down to their knees."

Now, back to the College. Ten members of the faculty, all Jesuits, had been caught in the main building when it crashed to the ground. Five of them, it is thought, were killed instantly. These were: Father New, Mr. Koch, Mr. Baumeister, Mr. Smith and Brother Rodgers. Of the remaining five, four were drowned when the tidal wave came in: Father Rooney, Father Tracy, Father Ferris and Mr. D. Burn. Mr. James Tainter was rescued, unhurt, at 2 A. M. He gives a graphic account of his plight:

Mr. Tainter's Account

"At twelve o'clock I drove Father Palacio and Mr. Koch to Belize to see if the town would celebrate at the Barracks. We left Father Palacio at Cuevas'. As we were returning, the wind was unusually strong, blowing a few trees down. At home nobody was excited. The boys were playing in the gym, yard, etc. Fathers New and Tracy kept reading the barometer, which was falling fast. 29.76—29.65—29.50—29.36, etc. Then the boys began to collect. Most of the faculty were on the third floor. A tremendous wind was blowing from the land. Father O'Connor walked over to the gym to inspect a few minor damages that the strong wind was causing. No one thought the breeze was anything but unusually strong. However, it was impossible to walk in the yard, as the zinc roofing was being blown off and was flying through the air like paper. The main building was gently rocking, as in an earthquake.

"It was now about 3:15 P. M. We went to the first floor veranda, down by the Fathers' dining-room and were there looking at the gym and at the boys who had collected in front of the store. When lo! the back part of the gym caved in, leaving only the front living quarters standing. The boys rushed to the main building to be protected from the terrible gale.

"Now most of the faculty were together with all the boys, except two or three. The breeze was getting stronger, but everybody thought the main building was the safest place, as so many pieces of debris were flying through the air and into the yard. However, we took the boys to the north end of the building, as the gym portion fell to south. We thought that if anything would happen to the main building it would thus fall clear of the boys. When we reached the north end, that sturdy backstop on the ball diamond fell. Juan Solis thought the yard the safest place, so he ran out into the

open. The wind began to blow him to the sea. Carlos Savage went out to help him back to the protection of the main building. This is the reason why we did not take the boys to the field,—the wind was so strong and so much zinc was flying that it would have been dangerous for the boys to go. Then we decided that the safest place for the boys was the land side of the building. Here they would get the full blast of the wind, but they could brace themselves against the building. Some boys started through the entrance, passed Father Palacio's office and the washroom. . . . Then there was a general rush for the campus. Some made it; others didn't; for at that moment or a minute later the big, grand College building seemed to move two feet towards the sea and then telescope directly down.

Trapped!

"Where was I? On the front veranda, outside Father Palacio's office, near the door which opens onto the porch. All I know is that the floor on which I was standing buckled. Castejon, whose hand I was holding, and I fell to the floor, and down came a ceiling on my back. I waited to be crushed. . . . It stopped!

"Then followed cracking, screaming, calls and yells. It was terrible. The first intelligible voice I heard, said, 'Father, give us general absolution.' I think it was Father Rooney's voice. Next I heard Father Tracy give the petitioner absolution. I then asked for absolution for myself and for those who I could feel were with me. Father Tracy gave it to us. We all said the act of contrition together, I then knew there were live boys with me as well as with Father Tracy, who was about five feet from me.

"I next asked who was with me. Ernesto Castejon, Vicente Saenz, Gonzales and Joe Manzonilla (servant) answered. And lo! next to me Dato said:

"'Jim, I am here, but a board is on my hand'.

"Then Castejon screamed and said a board was on his head. It was a veranda pillar. Dato freed his hand. Joe Manzonilla, Dato and I then tried to free the brave little boy from under the beam. It was impossible. We made Castejon keep quiet until I yelled for help. Father Tracy answered. I asked him if he were hurt.

"'No.'

"'Who is with you?'

"'Juan Solis, Amin Awe, and del Cid.'

"'Are you injured?' I asked again.

"'No, but we are trapped under a ceiling.'

"Then Castejon began to scream so that I could not hear the others. Father Tracy's group was the only one I could talk to. Again Dato, Joe and I tried to help Castejon. Useless. We said prayers. Then we felt the water coming in. We thought it was from the rain. It grew higher. Castejon yelled that he was drowning. Once more Dato, Joe and I tried to release him. This time, by force we pulled his head free from the beam. Now there were seven of us safe (as I later found out, Ernesto Hernandez was with us).

Death

"The water rose higher. We prayed—said a rosary. Dato and I were in a place where we

could almost sit up straight. We tried to encourage Saenz, Castejon, Gonzales, and Joe by telling them that the water would soon stop, and assuring them that God would see them soon if they had to die. Again we recited an act of contrition. I had Castejon's hand; he could not raise his head any higher and water covered it. I felt a slight movement and he was dead. A quick beautiful death, not a complaint from his lips. He merely asked, 'Mr. Tainter, will I die?' I think Vicente was next to drown.

"Dato and I had our heads as close to the ceiling as possible. The waves could now be felt and they were filling up the entire space. Our heads were under water. I held my breath; Dato did the same. As the wave subsided, we took another breath. We continued to do this for a number of minutes, the exact number I shall never be able to tell. He began to choke; his head seemed to lower. Then I felt his head strike my chest several times, and good Dato was dead.

"When the next wave subsided, Joe, the servant, said, 'Mr. Tainter, I think I can put my head higher over here'. I felt for him, took a breath, and put my head under the beam that separated us. Sure enough we had several inches more between our upturned mouths and the ceiling. Little Gonzales was still alive, too. The three of us then continued to hold our breath when the waves came and to take air when they subsided. The waves never rose beyond an inch from the ceiling in this place. . . .

"We lived like this for 15 minutes or more. Soon the water began to lower, and our hopes for safety rose. We started a rosary again. Water went down to our belts, to our shoes, and then lower. I heard a moan. I asked who it was. It was del Cid. He was still alive. On further questioning, he said that Azurdia and Alvaro Asensio were also alive. We later found Villamar alive with them. 'Where is Father Tracy, Awe and Solis?', I asked.

"They do not speak since the water,' he replied.

Rescue

"Then I heard a voice screaming in front of me. It was Luis Sagastume. Eight of us alive after the water,—three with me, four in del Cid's group, and Luis Sagastume. I began to yell. I heard a reply. It was Dave Burns. First they got out Luis Sagastume, as Father Corey had heard his voice before the water rose. I still thought it was rain that had filled our hole. Every time we heard it begin to rain we started a rosary. In reality it had been the sea wave.

"Dave could not hear del Cid's yells, so he began to dig us out. . . . Miraculously, we were reached by Father Zurlinden and Dave. It took them more than seven hours to get to a position where I could see a beam of their lantern. From then on it was easy. Later I found out from Father Zurlinden and Dave that they had no hopes of getting us out for a day or more as they could barely hear my voice below three stories of debris."

There is the harrowing story, too, of what happened at the College to those not caught in the crash of the building. Going back, therefore, to the middle of the afternoon during the

period of calm when the boys were hurrying down the road toward the Vaults and Belize:

A few of the boys, it seems, had remained with Father Corey and Father O'Connor, and were trying to get at those pinned in the wreckage. But then came the tidal wave. The sea, blown away from the shoreline toward the south in the first phase of the storm, began to surge in again, and, with the storm breaking once more and driving northwest, a veritable mountain of water swelled over the sea wall. Fathers Corey and O'Connor were both caught in the swirling tide and carried far back into the bush behind the College.

Father Corey was able to catch hold of a floating beam and hang on. His feet did not touch the ground. Another beam came near, and he was able to put his free arm around it before being swept away "faster than any boat ride he had ever had." At length the side of the tower came near, and he crawled up on that and continued to be swept toward the bush. Behind him there was always a terrible roar. The next day he saw what had caused it. All the front part of the gymnasium with the debris from the other buildings was being rolled along in a line nearly a half a mile long and some twenty feet high.

When the water went down, one of the boys and some Coolies hailed Father Corey and said they were going to head for the Marathon road, which joins the road to Belize near the Vaults. They arrived at the Vaults just as Father O'Neill, Brother Jacoby and the other boys were getting down. Father Corey and Mr. Dave Burns, who had saved himself by clinging to a tree when the flood came, made their way back to the College. When they arrived they shouted for Sagastume, whose rescue they had been trying to effect when the tidal wave came. The answer came back, "Here I am." After removing an abundance of rubbish, they were able to reach the little fellow and release him. Father Corey then took him on his shoulders and carried him to Belize.

Brother Stewart had been caught in the crash of the main building. He was injured somewhat but managed to wrench himself free and get above the incoming tide. Brother Teson, unhurt in the crash, likewise escaped by climbing up on the wreckage.

Father O'Connor narrated that after the first blow he was trying to get to Mr. Tainter in response to the latter's calls for help in behalf of little Castejon.

Father O'Connor's Letter

"I couldn't find an opening," he wrote, "and then came the wind from the sea and the tidal wave. I made my way to the front of the wreckage to avoid getting hit by flying pieces of lumber. The tide must have risen 10 feet then. There I saw the front part of the gymnasium building coming towards me. (The rest of the building, it will be remembered, had fallen previously.) I thought it would crash in on the wreckage where I was. While struggling about in the water, I received a blow on the back from a piece of lumber. I thought I was lost, but somehow or other I was able to get onto a piece of wall from the gymnasium and was then taken out around the north end of the

main building wreckage and away into the bush. When I was able to get out, I returned to the road and met Brother Teson with L. Paiz going to town, and went along with them. When we arrived at Coolie Yarborough bridge we found it was out. Father O'Neill and Brother Jacoby were getting the boys across with the help of a piece of telephone wire which had been stretched across the canal."

And then began the last sad experience of that day of sorrows. It was late in the afternoon when the tide receded sufficiently to permit the boys to descend from the Vaults. Most of the survivors of the College faculty, it is interesting to note, met at this point. Brother Jacoby and Mr. Leo Burns together with Father O'Neill were there with the boys. Father Corey had made his way thither out of the swamp; and a little later Father O'Connor and Brother Teson came down the road. Brother Stewart had remained at the College ruins. Mr. Tainter was still alive beneath the wreckage. Of the other ten, five had perished in the crash, four had been drowned while pinned in the debris, and one—Father Palacio—had been caught in the flood and whirled back into the bush as he hurried along the road, seeking to reach the dying to administer to them the Last Sacraments.

A Harrowing Journey

There remains the account of the hazardous trip to the Bishop's house in Belize. Brother Jacoby describes it:

"When we reached the bridge we found the whole crowd of boys and some fifty or more Coolies, men, women, and children. Joe Caballero had just swum to the other side. He picked up a piece of electric light wire, put a stick on the end of it, and threw it over. Some man dove for the stick as it floated by, caught it, and Joe pulled him over. He repeated, and another went over. Then I tried, and they pulled me over. But I knew the boys could never make it. If they missed they were sure to be swept to sea. It took a long time to get a person across, because sometimes the stick would fall short.

"Then by signs I made Henry Neal understand that he should fasten the wire on the wreck of the bridge in the water. He did so. (Henry Neal was one of the workmen at the College. His whole family was wiped out by the storm. When the College fell he had run there from his home on the road to Belize. Later, when he returned, his house and family were gone.) While he came over I held the Belize end of the wire. He lowered himself into Coolie Canal, up to his neck in the water, stood on I don't know what, and held onto the bridge wreck.

"As each person came across, I leaned out as far as I could reach, grabbed his wrists and pulled him in. They were under water as they came across. . . . Only one boy let go. I went after him. He got his arms around me and I thought I was lost. I made an act of contrition, then began to figure out how to break his hold. Just then my feet bumped the ground. We were safe. I carried him in, and went back to the receiving end of the wire. All the boys and whoever else was there came across. Father O'Neill came over and said he would take the

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boys to the presbytery The boys followed him, and all left in groups as they had gathered in coming across. Had I known what was in the road I think I would have said, "Wait and we will all go together." I think it took us an hour and a half or two hours to cross that canal.

"Finally all were over, including Father O'Connor and Brother Teson. We started for the presbytery. I put my right arm around Duarte. Some little fellow put his arms around my waist and held on till I had dragged him to the Presbytery. The road was clear for about half the distance to the Wesleyan school. Then we bumped into a tree. To get around the tree we walked into the cemetery. No fence there. It was so dark you could not see your own nose. And those burial vaults were hard on the shins. Trees, wires, graves all over! We kept on till we came to the ruins of the Wesleyan school. From there on it was just one twisted and torn mass of wood, boats, logs, wires, and what not.

"Once we were lost; didn't know which way to go. A light appeared away off to our left. I had my whistle and blew that, and blew, and blew, till the men with the light came up. They got us out of the cemetery. Meantime that boy was hugging my waist and holding Duarte. If one fell all fell, and we fell aplenty. We climbed up the sides of houses, putting our feet through windows. Now a wire caught us under the chin or around the knees. Again it was over a boat or through a fallen tree. And no one could see. The sense of touch had to work overtime. At the government house we bumped into a tree full of thorns

"We kept going with an occasional light to guide us till we reached the Presbytery. We had to crawl over the ruins of the towers to get in.

"Inside it was a mess. Mud . . . oily . . . inches thick over the whole downstairs. Lots of people there. We went upstairs. Into the Bishop's room, Brother Joe had carried what food he could get. When the water rose it reached the tops of the tables. Chairs floated about, Brother Joe says. Brother Joe gave the boys milk and crackers in the Fathers' library Later Father Corey came in with the report that he had got Luis Sagastume out, and left him in a house. Dr. Heusner had treated him At nine o'clock I scouted around for some blankets. None to be had. I rifled Brother Joe's wardrobe and found about six sheets"

Brother Jacoby then describes how he assembled the boys in the Bishop's chapel. The floor was wet, the roof off, the rain had come through, and was still coming.

"We rested till about 1:30 when Father Hickey came in with a candle and some vestments. Father Corey was going to say Mass at two. He did. My boys and I attended his Mass and went to Communion. Every one. Then we lay down again while the other priests said Mass"

Father Zurlinden

The rescue of Mr. Tainter, after ten or more hours in the wreckage of the main building, was just another of the heroic incidents of that night. "When Father Superior told of need of help for the college boys and Mr. Tainter," says the account of the hurricane published by the Angelus Press, "Father Zurlinden went to Mr. Henry Melhado to get his aid and advice as to how men, lanterns and tools could be secured from the authorities. They went to the Fire Department and were given two lanterns and four fire axes, but no men. On the street they met a colored man and persuaded him to join them. Another colored man was asked, and he consented to go. These two carried the axes, and all four proceeded with difficulty through the awful obstacles that filled the streets.

"It was eleven o'clock, and progress was impeded at every step. It took them over an hour and a half to reach the canal, a distance usually made in fifteen minutes. There were no men there, and no axes. They had only two lanterns They were only two men, and both were dead tired from hard work and worry. Mr. Melhado could not cross the canal: he was on the point of fainting from exhaustion and exposure. He had been doing ten men's work in the stricken city, giving help to others heroically. Father Zurlinden bade him go home and rest; then got the wire guide between his left arm and chest, and in his left hand the two lanterns were kept above the water. With his right arm he swam slowly to the other side, and got the lanterns to Mr. Burns who was awaiting him on the abutment. . . . Another hour of terrible difficulty and they were at the college to the great joy of those who heard their call."

Mr. Tainter was finally rescued at 2 A. M.

Conclusion

"Mr. Tainter," the account continues, "at once joined in the work of rescue, and by eleven in the morning all the five college boys and one servant boy were freed, one student with a badly bruised arm that had later to be amputated. Three other students had been injured by flying debris, but only one case gave serious apprehension, where skull had been struck and

Completed Burse The Bona Mors Society of Detroit

Incomplete Burses

If contributors desire their gifts, of whatever size, to be saved for the permanent endowment and go on perpetually helping in the education of priests, we shall gladly add the donation to the incomplete burse specified.

Poor Souls Burse No. 2	7,557.00
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In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. William Tracy	5,500.00
Patrick and Julia Haveran	5,000.00
In Memory of Peter John and Anna Jane Foote	5,000.00
Mary Dowling	5,000.00
C. F. M. Burse, Milwaukee	5,000.00
Happy Death Society, Milwaukee	5,000.00
North American Martyr's Burse	4,500.00
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St. Aloysius Burse	1,206.00
Our Lady of Prompt Succor	644.00
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Perpetual Members Enrolled

August 19 to October 15



Living

Mr. W. Niesen
Miss Magdalene Guequierre
Mrs. Henry J. Lyons
Mr. John P. Organ

Deceased

Miss Catherine Trainor
Mrs. Bridget Mulherin
Mr. Peter J. Stember
Mrs. Catherine Bender
Mr. Edward McGrath
Catherine Rosier
Mr. James Grimes
Mrs. Martha F. Reno
Mr. Felix Zamara

lower jaw broken. Hospital treatment saved this case Thirteen College boys died in the ruins, and five others were killed outside by the tidal wave. Four servant boys lost their lives, two in the ruins and two outside in the swamp. Death's toll from St. John's College took thirty-two victims, ten of them belonging to the Faculty,—five priests, four scholastics and one brother."