INTERNMENT

ADJUSTMENT to the novel life one is condemned to lead behind barbed wire begins the moment one has been assigned one's quarters. This adjustment is at first purely physical; but long before one has mastered the routine of living in such a place, there are naturally attempts at adjusting oneself to it also mentally. The obvious and most general first adjustment comes by way of resentment, disguised in most cases by a forced jocularity, which tries to laugh off the whole thing. "Are we downhearted?—NO", used to be the slogan for this sort of attitude during World War 1. In my own case this kind of light-heartedness came naturally as a reaction against the period of uncertainty preceding it: for we had lived for months in a daily atmosphere of anxiety, as to whether our place (an S.V.D. seminary in Manila) would be commandeered by the Japanese army or not, and where we could go in such a case. The wearying part of this had been that one day it seemed quite certain that the Japanese would never take this place, whilst the arrival of another military party of inspections the next day made it certain that they would. When, therefore, on July 8th, 1944, the thunderbolt struck, cancelling our previous release on parole, I for one, felt a great relief that all uncertainty and futile conjectures were over and that now one found onself actually interned, with no more anxieties as to what course to take and what decisions to make. There was nothing now to do, but to wait and "suffer fools gladly".

Passivity comes to me naturally—or perhaps it is the result of thirty-six years lived in Asia. To most of my fellow-internees it certainly never came. Their urge to be doing something found vent in cabinet-making, carpentry of all sorts, cooking and gardening. As an extreme example, I may quote a neighbour who, having made for himself a bedstead and an armchair, thereafter regularly took one after the other to pieces, only to put them together again as before. Hammering became a universal mania, so much so that one hour per day had to be proclaimed a close season for hammering.

But, of course, mental equipoise cannot be had thus cheaply by mere mechanical means. The psychological difficulty is caused by the feeling of resentment. One suffers and resents it and, therefore, is angry with those inflicting this suffering: and the main difficulty seems to me to consist in one's distinguishing between the objective and the subjective aspect of this infliction. Objectively speaking there may be atrocities perpetrated and crimes that cry to high heaven for vengeance: but once one is behind barbed wire

there is obviously nothing one can do about that. Perforce one has got to agree that "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord". Subjectively, there ought to be left no room for resentment, if one succeeds, not only in distinguishing logically between the objective and subjective aspect of the matter, but also in practically separating the two aspects. And that, of course, is where the difficulty comes in.

Most internees at Los Baños seemed chiefly to resent the "humiliation of the White Man"—and woman: for our camp was humane enough not to break up families, nor to separate the sexes generally, except for housing unmarried women separately. My often repeated remark that we should be glad not to be in German hands, always met with angry dissent. What these formerly privileged people resented was that it was these "yellow monkeys" who now were masters and that it was the racially superior, who had to do dirty manual work which they had hitherto deemed only fit for "natives". Having, personally, never felt race-prejudice, I was of course in the fortunate position not to share this resentment. Having lived in India as an Indian, I had known what it feels like to be treated as a "native" and, for instance, to be turned out of a railway compartment by Whites who took me for an Indian. Rather than undeceiving them on that point, one had, of course, gladly borne the indignity as an infinitesimal making up for the outrages committed for centuries by White race arrogance. Surely the obvious way to meet Japanese arrogance now, it seemed to me. Moreover, as I watched men and women working in the gardens of the Camp, tanned to a deep brown, against which the Japanese appeared quite fair, one was struck by their magnificent physique and rude health. The men, clad only in shorts, and the women not wearing very much besides, obviously had greatly benefitted by their work in the open air and tropical sun—and as between them and the bored Japanese sentries, one felt that their lot was the happier one. (My remarks, of course, apply only to the time when the feeding of the internees was adequate: during the last couple of months of slow starvation the picture changed pathetically).

To one who, for 2½ years of Japanese occupation, had suffered from malnutrition, whilst "free" in Manila, the food in the Camp at first seemed a great improvement. In fact one of my friends actually gained weight and another one was cured of a mysterious digestive disorder, which had plagued him for years and years. However, when the Americans began to strike at the Philippines (September, 1944) and the Rising Sun commenced to set, our Japanese masters started to take it out of us and our food deterior-

ated rapidly, both in quantity and in quality. People began to discover all kinds of weeds and expatiate on their vitamin contents, and of course, everything else they could grow in their gardens was utilized, including such unlikely items as the trunks of papaya trees. The trouble with me was, that such fare—especially camote (sweet potatoes) tops, gobbled down by most people without thinking—simply put me off my food completely and that therefore, instead of suffering from the pangs of perpetual hunger, I simply lost all appetite. Objectively speaking, I lost 60 lbs. in weight, but subjectively, I was spared all the misery of feeling hungry, as most others did.

Besides, from the first, a friend of mine, a Dutch priest, and I had set our faces against the constant talk about food they had had or were having or were going to have, which people indulged in. My friend wanted to start a society with vows for the duration, the first rule of which was to be that members would not talk about food for more than one hour a day: his bishop, to whom he unfolded his plan, stopped him at once by remarking that he would never get any members for his society. My friend was a brilliant metaphysician and we would spend lots of time arguing out all sorts of problems. Moreover, by careful foraging one could borrow quite a number of books, the study of which was worthwhile and could thus fill some lacunae in one's knowledge and understanding. Then there were classes of all sorts, which certainly took people's minds off the unpleasant *hic et nunc*. I myself was fortunate in being asked by a group of nuns of different orders to teach them liturgical Latin: I took the Missal and we worked our way right through, my pupils learning *missa, missae, missae* instead of the usual *mensa, mensae, mensae*. It was great fun, especially as one could intersperse one's lessons with historical details regarding the growth of the liturgy. Then there was a series of lectures I gave on the origin and growth of the Nationalist Movement in India, and though I gave them right at the end of our time, when things looked pretty bleak, I was able to hold the attention of 40-50 people once a week —which speaks highly for their mental resilience.

The most trying part of our existence seemed to me the acute discomfort to which we were put. The water supply was quite erratic; often it failed altogether for days, when every drop of water one wanted had to be carried to one's barracks from a spot 500 yards away. I remember one day, when the work squad of the day had carried (on their backs) sacks of salt eggs into the canteen: when the men came back, mud-bespattered and soaked in sweat and brine, there was not a drop of water for them to wash in. If

the water did not fail, the light would: until during the last month there was no more electric current available at all. Of course one had to wash all one's own clothes, and the dishes; if something tore, one had to mend it as best one could. The paths were such that after a good shower it was impossible the wear shoes, as the mud would simply have sucked them off one's feet. And over such paths the food-squad of each barrack had to cart the food for a hundred people, twice a day. As every group had a private fire-place on which to cook extra food, to eke out the official rations, the question of firewood was indeed a burning one; and to go up a hill outside the camp to cut down trees and branches, dragging and carrying them back to Camp, was actually looked upon as a rare privilege.

It is difficult to understand how wearying the cumulative effect of this unceasing "pigging-it" can be, unless one has been through it oneself. Added to it there is the extremely depressing effect of being cut off from all contact with the outside and all news. Finally—and this perhaps was the worst of all—there was a complete lack of privacy all day and every day and all the twenty-four hours of the day. So that even without any spectacular maltreatment—which we were spared—there could, in the last resort, be no doubt about one's suffering in so squalid, bleak and futile an existence as we were leading. We were made to suffer.

Why?

We were punished, not for what we had done, but for what we were. In other words, our punishment was unmerited and one was, therefore, not able to say: It serves me right after all. Now the obvious starting point for a Catholic puzzling out such a problem is the fact that God is supremely good and that therefore He would not have permitted me to get into my present evil position, if I could not turn that evil into a far greater good.

The first consideration, therefore, was that, though the Japanese were not making me suffer for any sin I had committed, I could accept that suffering as a well merited punishment for sins I had in fact committed, which so far had not met with an adequate temporal suffering. This satisfied one's sense of justice: but, of course, it was only the lesser half of the story. For the full story was a matter, not of justice, but of love: and one realized it as one's experience suddenly revealed to one that, inasmuch as one's sufferings could at all be said to be unmerited and that just in that rarest part of one's wounds, one actually was permitted to share in the sufferings of Christ and thus "to be moulded into His image". (*Rom.* 8. 29).

The victim of acute suffering, of misery, pain and ignominy,

makes, in stark reality, no melodramatic glamour appeal to the beholder, whatever it may do on the stage. It is a disgusting, sometimes a ludicrous, sight, but always one unrelievedly ugly. And the victim himself knows that it is so and that all attempts at keeping up appearances have gone for good. One is up against ultimate reality—but there in that reality one finds beside, within, oneself, One who freely, voluntarily, "had given His body to the strikers and his cheeks to them that plucked them, who did not turn away his face from them that rebuked him and spat upon him" (*Is.* 50, 6)—"despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief: there was no beauty in him, nor comeliness and no sightliness that we should be desirous of him. He was offered, because it was his own will, he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins and by his bruises we are healed." (*Is.* 53, 3-7). By the gift of freewill, which is the very root and being of our personality, we too, if "reckoned no better than sheep marked down for slaughter", may freely elect to suffer with him, for him, who loved us first, solidarizing ourselves with him in his agonies, because our own love would not be satisfied with anything less. And what room is there in this for resentment, for self-centred protest and vengeance? "In all this, through him who has granted us his love, we are conquerors". So far from "affliction or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or peril or the sword" separating us from the love of Christ, they only serve to unite us to Him in a manner never even guessed before, when we realize that "neither death nor life, neither what is present nor what is to come, no force whatever, can separate us from the love of God, which comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Rom.* 9, 37-39).

Quis separabit? H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

A SCHOOLBOY'S REMINISCENCES OF CARDINAL NEWMAN

I AM only too conscious of the impertinence of this heading: What value could such memories have? And how far are they trustworthy? Yet they are my memories, and though some sixty years have elapsed, they remain as fresh in my mind as though they had happened but yesterday.

When I was just over four years old my mother took me to a dairy kept by a Mr. Godwin, who had been Newman's butler in Ireland. He put me on his knee and said: "Do you know Jack Smallman?" I did, for Smallman—whom I had always thought of as *Mister* Smallman—was a carpenter who fascinated me by