And it is the artist with Christian purpose who can make incarnate the beauty and splendour of redeemed humanity, no matter what is its earthly plight. His is a metaphysic of hope. And his task is now to embody this hope, to transcend the sensuous with spiritual purpose, to restore some part of our world to its possible perfection. Yet the last generally accepted tradition in Christian art was the Baroque, which is a glorious meeting of symbol and image in the attempt to transport the world of the Renaissance with all its discoveries into the other world of Heaven. This is a release of the image towards its true end, towards an expansiveness that needs to sublimate the massiveness of individuality in the greater glory of God. And, in this tradition, and indeed at all times, in happiness and in travail, the Christian artist can say, with St Paul, 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision'.

MR JONES

PEREGRINE WALKER

IT was said that Mr Jones had never seen the sea and that he believed the earth to be flat. I never knew his geographical views at first hand, and I would scarcely have dared to discover. For he was a formidable man, occasional of speech and always infallible. He spent his seventy years in one place, nearly all in one house indeed (apart from the irrelevant years of childhood, which in Mr Jones you could hardly believe had ever happened). He began as hall-boy in The Court in 1890, or thereabouts, with a wasp waistcoat and a proper respect for the protocol of place in a household of thirty servants. He lived to see much change, and when he died in 1952 the family he had served so long had moved to a much smaller house, The Court had become a school, and there were even council houses in the village.

But Mr Jones was more than a family retainer who had lived on into a world he could never really understand. He was fashioned, certainly, by the circumstances of time and place: the old General was the law and prophets for him, and there could

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be no countryside to match the gentle borderland, with the menacing mountains beyond. Yet he gave you a wonderful sense of the complete man, for whom change and decay could never seriously disturb the given order of things. In The Court he had, as butler, presided in the servants' hall, with Mrs Humphreys, the housekeeper, as his well-upholstered consort. (He never married, nor indeed did she, and it was a scarcely forgivable blunder to enquire of Mr Jones about such banalities.) Oddly, he was always *Mister* Jones, though that may have been the achievement of his final years, when his authority was absolute, his knowledge of precedent supreme. He would sometimes admit that things had altered, and in particular that servants (referred to as a class which he supervised rather than as a category to which he had ever belonged) were not what they were. There was, for instance, that hall-boy who had actually failed to hear the car approaching on the drive. ('Listening to the wireless, can you imagine?'—an activity of which Mr Jones was innocent to the end.) When the second war came, and a school was evacuated to a wing of The Court, Mr Jones was ready to make allowances. But his pantry remained inviolate, and in a green baize apron he would keep the silver up to standard, and with reluctance would supervise the women from the village who had taken the place of the footmen on the ground floor. One of his epics was the tale of the General's illness long before, when a morning-room had to be made into a bedroom. 'Very difficult, since footmen never did the bedrooms, and the housemaids never did the rooms below.' A compromise had been necessary, but fortunately Mrs Humphreys was able to get 'an older woman' who was regarded as outside the hierarchy of floors and functions.

Mr Jones—and I only knew him in his last ten years of life—was a large man who had much trouble with his feet. The full face presided—it seems the only word—over a figure that was stout but organized; the morning coat, like the quiet voice, was always under control. Almost the first time I ever saw him was one morning early in the war, when he brought the shaving water to my room. He moved silently to the windows to draw the curtains, and in the process brought them crashing to the ground. Such a thing could scarcely have happened before in a long career of introducing the morning light to guests at The Court. The problem of privacy hardly arose, for the windows looked out on

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the lake and the empty acres of the park beyond. But his comment was interesting. 'The shutters', he explained, 'are still drawn, and it will be possible for you to dress, I think.'

Mr Jones's loyalties were absolute: to the Catholic religion and to the family he served. For him indeed the two allegiances were one; throughout the centuries the family had remained faithful, and Mr Jones himself came of the local stock that in its turn had remained Catholic under the shadow of The Court. His interpretation of history was perhaps arbitrary, of the same order as his alleged flat-earth convictions. The Court was a Palladian mansion, built in the eighteenth century on the site, and indeed on the foundations, of a Tudor manor house. In the cellars, vaulted stone ceilings recalled the earlier house, and here, Mr Jones maintained, Mass had been offered in penal days. There was no proof of this, but it was possible, perhaps likely. But for Mr Jones it was certainly so, and he would indicate a tunnel (blocked up when The Court was built) which led into the woods and was a way out for a suspected priest. His attitude to the family portraits was of the same order. The cheerfully ambitious attributions to Van Dyck or Kneller were accepted without question, and he would refer with some contempt to 'a gentleman from the National Portrait Gallery' who had cast doubt on the artists' names, entered in Mr Jones's own catalogue, and by his direction transferred to the gilt labels on the frames.

Mr Jones came into his own in the chapel, a building of the same period as The Court, which, by custom, had become the parish church for a wide area, though still technically a private chapel for the family. He would rehearse the list of chaplains he remembered and he deplored a little the greater freedom they had come to enjoy. 'I remember the General walking up and down the terrace, with his watch in his hand, saying "It's twenty-nine minutes to eight, and the chaplain is late. What do I pay him two hundred a year for?" ' The General's daily practice was to rise at half-past six, and it required an hour for him to dress and say his prayers. Mass followed, and this, too, should have its appointed length: twenty-five minutes it should be, and the liturgical cycle of varying readings was no excuse for less or more.

Mr Jones was no great believer in hymns or indeed in any suggestion that the laity should do more than be present punctually and in their proper place. The family used to assist at Mass

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from a gallery, with brocaded chairs and a red velvet hanging all along the edge. Mr Jones's place was down below, and, when collections were introduced after the General's death, he would himself take round the plate which in his hands always seemed a salver. His own prayers were as exactly arranged as were those of the General. He favoured *The Garden of the Soul*, and his weekly confession was preceded by ten minutes earnest consultation of Bishop Challoner's examination of conscience.

On Palm Sunday and Good Friday he would read the Passion in English, standing in his place. This had always been done by the General himself, and on his death Mr Jones assumed the task. He read well and deliberately, with no attempt at dramatic rendering for effect. He used his *Garden of the Soul*, dog-eared in his huge hands, and for the Catholics on the estate this was a ritual they had come to expect as essential to these sacred days.

He read *The Universe* with discriminating care. He was, surprisingly, fair game for any advertisement that offered novenas or unusual spiritual reward. The foreign missions interested him, and in his pantry you might sometimes surprise him deep in the study of a magazine that showed the White Fathers at work in Africa. In his will he left money for Masses for the missions. No anniversary of any relation, however remote, went without the request for a Mass; the envelope containing the stipend would state the particulars—'Mary Jones, died on August 1, 1897, of a stroke, aged 83 years'. He was a great admirer of the novels of Robert Hugh Benson.

For most of his life he had looked after an invalid brother, bedridden in a cottage in the village, and when the brother came to die and soon afterwards The Court became a school, he went to live there himself. Or, more exactly, he slept there, for early and late you would see him as usual in the smaller house to which the family had moved after the war. He adapted himself to the new life with uncomplaining loyalty. But he could rarely be induced to visit the school, and the transformation of his pantry to a bursar's office must have seemed a sort of sacrilege.

He died, after a short illness, in a hospital run by nuns. As it happened they belonged to the same order which, sixty years before, had for a time taught in the village school to which Mr Jones had gone as a child. 'You looked after me at the beginning and at the end', he said just before he died.

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