

Irish Augustinian Mission in Nigeria *)

Introduction

On Sunday evening 22 January 1940 three cramped, travel-stained and very weary Augustinians reached Yola, the centre of the British Administration of the Province of Adamawa, Northern Nigeria, British West Africa. The three friars, all members of the Irish Province, were Frs. Anthony Dalton, Berchmans Power and Gabriel Broder (an Englishman). They discovered on arrival that all available accommodation at the Station was occupied. They had no choice then but to move their belongings into the so-called 'Catholic Church'. Here they made their 'Headquarters' for almost a week. This 'Church' was nothing more than a rectangular hovel measuring 30' x 15' with grass-mat 'walls' and a grass thatched roof.

The story of that Mission really commences in 1936. On August 6 of that year the newly elected Provincial of the Irish Province, Very Rev. Thomas Cooney, wrote to Archbishop Riberi,

*) Sources for the history of the Mission are fairly abundant. Much interesting matter will be found in the quarterly publication of the Irish Province, *Good Counsel*, ii- (July-September 1938-). There is a very useful article by Rev. F. X. Martin, O. S. A., in *Tagastan*, vii (1944) 142-52, entitled 'The African venture'. Another article in the same journal (xi, Summer, 1948, 12 sqq.), 'The white man's tomb', by Very Rev. Carlos Vicuna, O. S. A., ex-Ass. Gen., also deals with the subject. I have been able to use the indispensable Irish Provincial African files and a MS contemporary account of the vital years 1940-3, written in Nigeria by the first Superior of the Adamawa Mission and now Prefect Apostolic of Yola, Monsignor Dalton, O. S. A. The monthly *Augustinian Mission News* (May, 1949-), issued by the Irish Province, contains invaluable information and up to date news of the Mission. A very helpful report on the Mission by Fr. A Garman, O. S. A., covering the period May 1939 - September 1948, was published in *Good Counsel*, v (October-December, 1948) 15-23.

Apostolic Delegate to British Africa, informing him of the decision of the Provincial Chapter to send priests to do missionary work in Africa. The names of Frs. Luke Maddock and Berchmans Power were suggested as pioneers for the Mission ¹⁾. As nothing transpired from this communication Fr. Cooney then wrote on November 14 to Fr. García, Procurator-General of the Order, asking him to petition Propaganda for a mission-field in either East or West Africa, as those regions seemed the most suitable and practicable for Irish foreign missionaries ²⁾. In his letter Fr. Cooney briefly indicated the following reasons for seeking a pagan mission for the Irish Province: 1) to answer the call of Pope Pius XI for missionaries to pagan lands; 2) the missionary spirit of the professed students and young priests of the Province; 3) a marked increase in the number of postulants enabled the Province to seek further fields for missionary activity. Father García approached Propaganda and Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi replied thanking him most graciously for the offer made by Father Cooney ³⁾.

In April 1937 Archbishop Riberi visited the Prefecture of Jos, Northern Nigeria, staffed by the S. M. A. Fathers. During his visit Dr. Riberi referred to the offer of the Irish Augustinians and suggested the Province of Adamawa as a suitable territory for their new mission. During the same year Father Cooney, O. S. A., was away from Ireland on visitation of Irish Houses in Australia. On his way home he stopped at Rome and wrote to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi on Dec. 21, stating that the Province was prepared to accept any Mission assigned by the Cardinal. He also mentioned that two Fathers were already in Southern Rhodesia, gaining experience in the Vicariate of Bishop Chichester, S. J., Salisbury ⁴⁾. The two priests were Frs. Luke Maddock and Berchmans Power, who sailed from London, accompanied by four Jesuits, on 15 October 1937.

On 9 February 1938 Propaganda wrote to Fr. Cooney, stating that Archbishop Riberi had been asked to select some English governed territory for the Irish Augustinians. He had accordingly chosen an area comprising parts of the Province of Adamawa per-

¹⁾ Copy of letter in Irish Provincial Archives (Nigeria).

²⁾ Copy of letter in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

³⁾ S. Con. Prop. Fide, N. 4247/36 (30 November 1936). Copy in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

⁴⁾ Copy of letter in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

taining to the Jos and Benue Prefectures, as well as sections of the British Cameroons hitherto under the jurisdiction of the Prefecture of Buea and the Vicariate of Karthoum. In this latter area (British Cameroons) no missionary work had yet been done. The territory entrusted to the Irish Augustinians was stated to contain 33,765 sq. miles, a population of 658,000 of which almost a third (205,000) resided in British Mandated territory — an area of 11,115 sq. miles. The Irish Augustinians would have as Ordinary, Monsignor Lumley, S. M. A., Prefect of Jos ⁵).

Fr. Cooney on February 23 placed before his Definitory the proposal received from Propaganda, which was formally accepted ⁶). Propaganda ratified the decision on April 30, and in a letter to this effect Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi expressed his profound appreciation of the step taken by the Irish Augustinians. He also stated that the new missionaries would be subject to the jurisdiction of the Prefect of Jos until such time as the Mission was sufficiently developed to warrant erection as a Prefecture ⁷). All was now set for the departure of the first Irish Augustinians to Nigeria; and on October 12, Frs. D. B. Redmond (Superior), A. Dalton and G. Broder sailed from Liverpool. After disembarking at Lagos — the main port of Nigeria — they travelled 700 miles north-east to Jos which they reached on November 2. There the three friars were joined by their confrère Fr. Power in January 1939. He had travelled from Southern Rhodesia, but his companion Fr. Maddock, who had already done some twenty years of mission work in Australia (1915-36), failed to pass a medical test and was forced to abandon the idea of going to Nigeria.

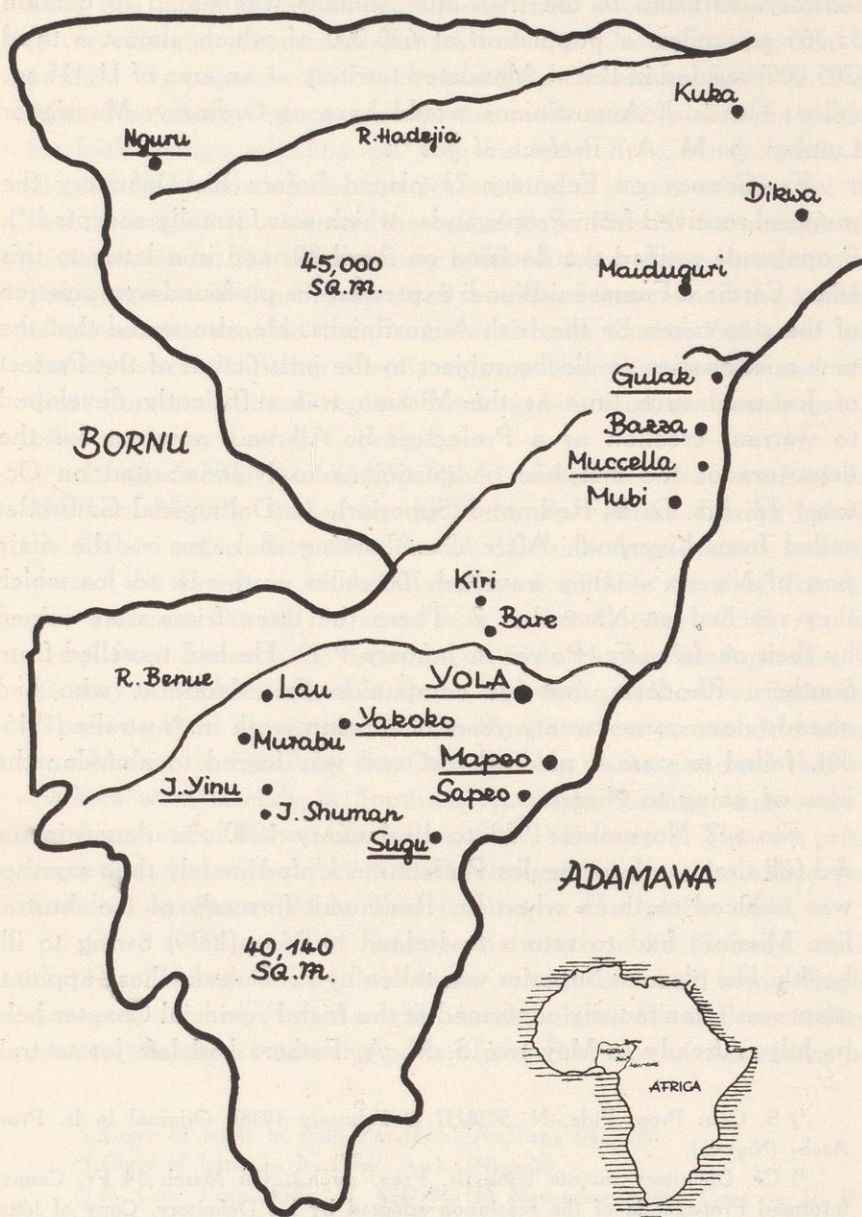
From 2 November 1938 to 19 January 1940 the Augustinians did full time work in the Jos Prefecture. Unfortunately their number was reduced to three when Fr. Redmond (formerly of the Australian Mission) had to return to Ireland in May (1939) owing to ill-health. His place as Superior was taken by Fr. Dalton whose appointment was unanimously confirmed at the Irish Provincial Chapter held in July. Already in May two S. M. A. Fathers had left Jos to trek

⁵) S. Con. Prop. Fide, N. 5038/37 (9 February 1938). Original in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

⁶) Cf. Definitory minute book (Ir. Prov. Arch.). On March 14 Fr. Cooney informed Propaganda of the resolution adopted by his Definitory. Copy of letter in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

⁷) S. Con. Prop. Fide, N. 1106/38. Original in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

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N. B. — Central Mission Stations are underlined.

Adamawa with a view towards selecting the most suitable sites for the Augustinian mission. Sugu and Boi were eventually chosen and government approval was sought. Boi was rejected, but in September permission was granted to start a mission at Sugu. The way now lay open and on 19 January 1940 Frs. Dalton, Power and Broder set out for Yola to take over formally the territory assigned to the Irish Augustinians by the Holy See.

To form a realistic and balanced appraisal of the Irish Augustinian effort in Nigeria it is essential to take into account the actual locale, the people, the influence of Mahommedanism and the progress made by non-Catholic sects. These factors, which cannot possibly be treated here with the attention they merit, constitute to a greater or lesser degree obstacles in the way of missionary work in most parts of North Africa ; but their impact is particularly felt in Adamawa — ' the Benjamin of the Missions, last in time and poorest in inheritance '. Moreover, the fact that the foundation year coincided with the outbreak of World War II must be borne in mind when one essays to measure the progress or, as the case may be, lack of progress made by the Irish Augustinians in Adamawa.

Adamawa

The Province of Adamawa, British West Africa, lies roughly between 6° and 11° North and 11° and 15° East. The area consigned to the Augustinians also embraces, as we have seen, parts of the former German Cameroons which became British Mandated territory through the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and are now administered as units of the Adamawa Province. Thus the northern tip of our Mission reaches almost to Lake Chad on the verge of the Lower Sahara and was previously a section of the Karthoum Vicariate. The most southern point of the Mission infringes on another part of the British Cameroons which had belonged to the Buea Vicariate maintained by the Mill Hill Society. Actually the entire area entrusted to the Irish Augustinians (40,140 square miles) is larger than Ireland itself.

Adamawa has been described as ' savannah country ; tawny rolling plains, covered with scrub, stretch away into the horizon, broken by barren mountains ⁸⁾ '. The province is bisected by the

⁸⁾ *Good Counsel*, v (Oct.-Dec., 1947) 16.

river Benue flowing east to west, a tributary of the lordly Niger. On the whole the country is low-lying, especially along the banks of the Benue — the most fertile area. The year is divided into two seasons. The Wet season begins in April and lasts until mid-October ; this period is marked by continuous and extremely heavy rain: according to a report, 43" was recorded at the mission station in Jauro Yinu in October 1951. During this Wet season Bazza in the north of the province is isolated for two months from another mission station, Gulak, although both are only twenty-five miles apart. In fact communications throughout Adamawa were exceedingly bad, there being only one all-season motorable road. The Dry season sets in towards the close of October and then the countryside undergoes a profound change ; bush fires roar across the plains and nothing remains but a ' black waste of ashes and stunted trees '. March, April and May are the hottest months, the temperature reading up to 105° in the shade. All the missionaries are protected by inoculation against small pox, yellow fever, typhus, cholera, etc., and none can afford to go without a daily prophylactic against malaria. Due to the extreme heat and lack of fats in the diet the missionaries gradually lose weight, but perhaps the chief danger to their health is the inevitable sequel of living in a ' Bush ' country where monotony and loneliness and sometimes apparent failure have to be contended with.

Unlike Southern Nigeria with its millions of Ibos and Yorubas, Adamawa is inhabited by numerous distinct tribes, the largest being the Mumye (90,000). It is estimated that there are over 100 spoken dialects in Adamawa: the two main languages are Fulani (used by the Mahommedans) — the *lingua franca* — and Hausa (used in government administration and in the schools). Altogether the pagan population totals approximately 800,000, while the Moslems are said to number 300,000. Almost 90 % of the entire population is illiterate. The pagan tribes may be divided into two categories: those tinged with Mahommedanism and those who are purely pagan, following their Ju-Ju and other primitive ancestral customs. To the first category belong the Chambas, Kilbas, and Jukons ; to the latter the Verres, Mumuyes, Higis, Komas and Marghis generally. Of the two the latter type offers the better material for evangelization. The largest concentrations of pagans lived until recently in ' closed territory ' where no whiteman was allowed to enter. All the pagans

are desperately poor and their way of life is exceedingly primitive. Hence the entire financial responsibility for the upkeep of the Mission has had to be, and still is, borne by the Irish people, apart from an annual grant made by Propaganda and some miscellaneous subventions. Here we should like to thank most gratefully our Maltese, American and German confrères for donations to the Mission. To date (1955) a sum of £130,000 has been contributed by the Irish Augustinian Foreign Mission Association.

Any survey of the Adamawa Mission that does not envisage the preponderant influence wielded by the Mahommedan element cannot avoid being absolutely misleading. When the British entered Adamawa at the beginning of this century and established a Protectorate, Mahommedan rule extended over the entire Province except in a few areas, particularly the territory of the Jukon tribe south of the Benue. Faced with a working system of government and law, the British decided to maintain the existing *status quo* and, having introduced certain changes, to rule indirectly through the Fulanis, the dominant Mahommedan class and mainly farmers. Thus when our Fathers entered Adamawa they found a Fulani Emir at Yola governing (with the exception of one District) the entire Province through his district chiefs and sub-chiefs, with his scribes and tax-collectors in every village — all astutely upholding the law of the Koran. Hence it is that all the major towns and villages are under the direct control of Mahommedans. Though relations between our missionaries and the British officials have always been correct and on the whole friendly, no Catholic schools or churches were permitted until recently in or near Mahommedan towns. Indeed before a mission is sanctioned by the government, the permission of the local Moslem chief must first be obtained. On the surface the Mahommedan is both polite and even cordial, but beneath he is steadfastly opposed to Catholicism on religious and political grounds. Moreover, prestige and power are synonymous in the mind of the pagan with Mahommedanism, while the very attractive nature of the Moslem code itself and the appealing promises for the faithful after death all constitute a severe handicap for the preacher of the lowly and ascetical gospel of Christ.

Lastly, the presence and activities of Protestant missionaries cannot be overlooked. The Church of the Brethern Mission arrived in Adamawa in 1924 and chose as its field of work the northern

section of the Province. Its greatest success has been achieved in providing efficient medical and humanitarian services, backed by ample financial resources. Generally the Brethern are friendly towards our missionaries, but the then Ordinary of Jos, Mgr. Lumley, S. M. A., was doubtless correct when he informed Propaganda in November 1939 that these Protestants were 'formidable rivals'. The Sudan United Mission came to Adamawa in 1911 and established its headquarters at Numan on the south bank of the Benue some forty miles west of Yola. This sect maintains numerous mission stations among the pagans south and west of Yola and has also crossed the Benue. It has apparently unlimited funds, is bitterly anti-Catholic, yet it is none too popular with the government. On the whole the sect has failed to win the respect of the people. Other Protestant missions are at work in Adamawa, such as the Sudan Interior Mission and the American Baptists. Their progress has not been impressive. The important point, however, is that the Protestants had acquired the best pagan sites before our Fathers came to Adamawa. No doubt their religious and educational work lacks depth and thoroughness, but by claiming a 'sphere of influence' they are enabled to prevent our missionaries from entering and challenging their position and from establishing mission stations in or near so-called Protestant areas.

The foregoing sketch, though necessarily brief, depicts the essential background against which our Fathers began to lay the foundations of the first Catholic Mission in Adamawa. Those foundations were carried out during the war years at a time when communications with Ireland were exasperatingly slow, difficult and uncertain; reinforcements of manpower almost impossible, and when prices of building materials, labour and foodstuffs rocketed. That so much was accomplished and maintained is deserving of the greatest praise. That even more was not accomplished, especially as the personnel of Protestant missions became depleted and sites were abandoned, is a matter for regret. It must be set on record, however, that the blame for lost opportunities and lack of development cannot be placed on the pioneers and their later co-workers who went to the very limit of human endurance to place the Catholic Mission on its feet and keep it there.

The history of the Augustinian Mission, which has been placed under the special patronage of Our Mother of Good Counsel and also under the patronage of St. Theresa of Lisieux, during the

period 1940-7 largely centres on Adamawa south of the Benue. This does not mean that the northern section of the Province was neglected. Various exploratory tours were made from December 1942 onwards and sites, e. g. Pakka (130 miles N. N. East of Yola), were selected, but due to Fulani opposition government permission was refused. Moreover, in March 1946 Frs. Kieran Cotter and Justin Hanly trekked to Gulak 180 miles north of Yola and picked a site at Kaya, the centre of the Marghi farming area.

St. Augustine's, Sugu, A. D. 1940⁹⁾

The fact that the first mission centre established by our Fathers was at Sugu, 100 miles due south of Yola, where the Chamba tribe is located, is because this site, trekked by the two S. M. A., missionaries, Frs. Cannon and Harrison, in May 1939, was the first to receive government approval (September 1939). Immediately after the Augustinian pioneers arrived in Yola they picked a site and made the required application for a church and school which are the twin spearheads of missionary work. Due to Mahommedan opposition permission to open a school at Yola was refused, though in due course a church was sanctioned in December 1940.

About January 28 of that same year the entire Augustinian Mission staff, Frs. Dalton, Power and Broder, loaded their lorry with stores from Jos some 350 miles away. The road to Sugu runs almost directly south from Yola and the Fathers broke their journey at Jada, a Fulani town sixty miles or so from Yola and twenty-eight from Sugu-their destination. At Jada the District Officer Mr Bryant was most helpful, giving detailed information regarding the rest of the journey. He informed the Fathers that no motor had been over the remainder of the road to Sugu for four years, nor had it been repaired. Frs. Dalton and Broder decided to make for Sugu on foot, accompanied by a line of carriers with various loads on their heads. Early on the following day Sugu was reached. Meanwhile one of the epics of the Adamawa Mission was being enacted. Fr. Power had returned to Yola with the truck for further supplies and with indomitable courage and admirable initiative he determined to bring the truck all the way to Sugu, a truck carrying some 8 cwt. of essential commodities and implements. It took

⁹⁾ Early history in *Mission News*, i (June, 1949) 4-5.

him two and a half days to cover the twenty-eight miles from Jada to Sugu. Not only had he to clear stones off the track (one cannot speak of a road), cut through bush, fill holes and cross five dry river beds (two of them 100 yards wide), but he was forced to build a bridge across the 100 yard awning of the river Ini. It was almost an incredible feat, dangerous and exhausting, yet typical of this pioneer missionary.

The first mission structure at Sugu was a round mud hut erected as a temporary (so it was thought) dwelling for the Fathers. Next came huts to accommodate boys intended for the forthcoming school. At length a new Fathers' residence was started about the beginning of April. After many setbacks owing to the rains which repeatedly flattened sections of the gradually rising walls the roof was placed in position early in May. Shortly afterwards the Fathers had their first experience of a tornado. 'It came', wrote Fr. Dalton, 'just one continuous roar that pounded the ears until they were numb. The rain was blown before it in sheets — one impenetrable grey wall of water... the top of the roof was torn like so much paper... the rain poured in... mocking all our puny efforts of the month that had passed'. Fortunately the damage was not too extensive and in a short time the roof was on again and stayed on despite tornado after tornado. Now began the real work of a mission. The plan adopted is the usual method operating in missionary countries. A central station comprising Fathers' house, church and school (a 'boarding school' at Sugu) was erected, the whole estate or mission compound, as it is called, covering an area of five acres. The next step was to set up in the outlying region a number of satellite bush schools where catechists could teach elementary religious knowledge. These stations are visited and inspected once a month by a Father from the central mission. Thus the beginnings of Catholicism are laid. Progress at Sugu, however, was not so swift.

School opened on 17 March 1941 with twenty-five boys. All efforts to secure a Catholic teacher failed and a Chamba, who was a Mahommedan or thought he was, had to be employed. He failed to come up to expectations and the fact that the school survived at all is due to Fr. Broder's untiring vigilance. Later at another most difficult period (1943) Fr. Malachy Cullen proved himself a second Don Bosco and the boys stayed. Although a pagan town, Sugu was not as promising as had been expected. Mahommedan influence definitely retarded progress, especially when the chief

became a disciple of the Koran ¹⁰). Despite giving free medical treatment to hundreds and actually saving the lives of those suffering from snake-bite the Fathers received no practical thanks for their invaluable and selfless work. In Sugu, for example, they were told that certain foodstuffs were unobtainable and therefore could not be bought, although it was common knowledge that there was no shortage of the goods in question. Mention of medical work by the missionaries calls to mind how the first contact was made with the natives. Hitherto the latter had stood coldly aloof, but one day during building operations a labourer was injured. He was successfully treated by one of the Fathers and the news brought pagan men, women and children, as well as Fulanis of both sexes, flocking to the mission, looking for treatment.

It is impossible to deal with the subsequent history of the Sugu mission in any detail. Fr. Augustine Garman arrived in Yola on 29 August 1940 after a harrowing journey by barge up the Benue from Makurdi. At Sugu he planned and brought to completion an excellent Fathers' house, working, as did the other Fathers, with his own hands. In addition himself and Fr. Kieran Cotter, apart from building a new spacious school, worked in the dispensary, taught in the school, trekked for new mission sites and supervised catechism classes in outlying districts. Other Fathers also contributed to the growth of the Sugu mission. That growth, none the less, was painfully slow, so slow that between February 1940 and 1945 not more than ten pagans were converted. Today the picture is indeed different, though not as striking as in other missions that came later. In 1952-3 ¹¹) twenty-two Baptisms were recorded. During the same period 159 Baptisms took place at Yola (an exception no doubt), ninety-seven at Mapeo, ninety-one at Bare and 116 at Bazza. The total Catholic population of Sugu in 1952-3 was 165 and Catechumens numbered 465. Though the Catechumenate was the largest in the whole Mission, the Catholics were numerically the lowest. It must be remembered that statistics for the early years of a Mission can be misleading. Anything approaching mass-conversions will never happen in Adamawa. The work of conversion,

¹⁰) The present chief is to all appearances a friend of the Mission. His daughter, Mary, was baptised on Christmas Eve 1949.

¹¹) This is the latest period for which statistics from individual stations have been available at the time of writing (Dec. 1955).

due to the many tribal divisions and more obvious causes, is bound to be slow and unspectacular. Our Fathers are content to plant the Faith patiently and firmly ; they are wisely concentrating their main effort on the youth. It may and very probably will take fifty years before the wisdom and quality of their work will be justified. But that it will eventually be justified in God's own time is absolutely certain.

St. Theresa's, Yola, A. D. 1940 ¹²⁾

Yola has always been the headquarters of the Adamawa Mission ¹³⁾. A site was chosen on the west end of Jimeta town near the African hospital — the only government hospital in the whole Province ¹⁴⁾. The mission compound stands on an elevated stretch of rock and sand and commands the best view of the surrounding area. Something has been said already of the Fathers' first experience in Yola. After vacating the rectangular hovel, the fluctuating staff (sometimes one, sometimes two priests) moved into a temporary structure of mud and grass built by the redoubtable Mr Bello (the only Christian Fulani in all Adamawa) whom Fr. Power had commissioned. Meanwhile a new Fathers' residence and a suitable church were going up. The house was occupied at long last on Christmas Eve 1940, and the occasion was fittingly marked by a Missa Cantata in the open, celebrated by Fr. Dalton. Before the Mass there were six or seven Baptisms and afterwards two weddings. Even though the candidates were of southern Christian extraction and hence did not represent the pagan population, they helped to make that first Christmas a memorable one. No real progress was possible, however, as long as permission for a school was not forthcoming. Eventually about the middle of 1941 government approval was granted but only for children of immigrants from southern Nigeria. The joy of this paltry concession was offset by the news that Fr. Power's health necessitated his withdrawal from

¹²⁾ Early history in *Mission News*, i (July, 1949), 4-5.

¹³⁾ This central station was dedicated to the Little Flower in deference to the wishes of her sister Mother Agnes of Jesus (Pauline) who presented Fr. Cooney in 1936 with a relic of the saint for the first church of the Mission.

¹⁴⁾ Jimeta is about six miles west of Yola itself and is the government centre: both towns are referred to as Yola.

the Mission. On August 15 he left by river steamer for South Africa and served as full-time Army Chaplain with the Basuto soldiers for five and a half years.

In mid-January 1942 the foundations of the present Fathers' house designed by Fr. Garman were laid. Application was again made for a school for native children ; at length it was sanctioned on condition that neither parent was a Moslem. This was December 1943. Six years later there were over 200 pupils on the roll-books and the average attendance at Sunday Mass was in the region of 600. In 1952-3 the Catholic population was 1126 ; Solemn Baptisms alone numbered 134 and during this same period the school had the status of a Senior Primary. The varied missionary activities of the Yola central station continue to expand and the number outstations is increasing.

*Santa Maria, Mapeo, A. D. 1941*¹⁵⁾

Perhaps the most striking feature of the history of the Adamawa Mission is the story of Mapeo. This central station is dedicated to Our Mother of Good Counsel and is familiarly known as *Santa Maria*. In November 1940 Fr. Power trekked the Mapeo district — sixty miles south of Yola — and marked a site on 8 May 1940 among the Chamba tribe on the borders of the Verre country. The site was approved in February 1941, so Fr. Power again trekked the district and built a crude but solid mud house and provided school accomodation. Owing to the strength of the Ju-Ju or 'Laura' the school failed to make any progress, although the local Fulani chief lent his support to the Fathers. The influence of the witch-doctor was more potent and it is tempting to assume that some diabolical agency was at work. By January 1942 when Fr. Philip O'Shea was holding the fort on his own the picture could not be more depressing — no boys, no school, no Catechumens, no prospects. Then, to make matters worse, Fr. O'Shea had to leave the Mission and return to Ireland at the end of January. There being no Father available to take his place Mapeo had to be closed. Unbelievable as it may seem, the entire Mission staff at this juncture consisted of Frs. Dalton, Broder and Garman. Their morale

¹⁵⁾ Early history in *Mission News*, i (August, 1949) 4-5.

was severely tried. Apart from the shortage of priests, the disappointments and hazards of mission life with the emphasis on health and loneliness combined to challenge their tenacity. But they held firm. Three new priests, Frs. Cullen, Hartnett and Harney arrived early in October ; and on the 15th Frs. Garman and Harney reached Mapeo and set about reopening the mission. Both unfortunately got violently sick and once again Mapeo had to be closed. Contact, nevertheless, was maintained and on 10 March 1943 Fr. Harney decided to go ahead and reopen the school. The entire attendance numbered three boys whom Fr. Harney began to teach Hausa, a language which he scarcely knew. It was a heart-breaking mission, though an occasional gleam of hope was not lacking. On May 13 the first Baptism took place: Mai-Yanga and his wife were the recipients. The said Mai-Yanga was not a Chamba ; he was a native of the French Cameroons which lie very close to Mapeo. The great privilege of baptising the first Chamba was reserved to Fr. Cullen whose friend Juguda, christened Petrus on Pentecost Sunday 1946, became the rock on which Mapeo is built ¹⁶).

The school continued to be most disappointing. It is well to remember that the Chambas are a matrilineal people ; perhaps there lies the origin of their fickleness. There can be no doubt that the womenfolk, so persuasive and deceptive, opposed the idea of boys going to school. The reason alleged was that the school was a diabolical institution and the Fathers were emissaries of Satan. The fundamental reason was that the boys would not be available for farm work. On June 13 Frs. Dalton and Hanly came to Mapeo with some Kilba boys from the Pakka area who, they hoped, would attract the Chamba boys to school, or at least familiarise them with that strange institution. The idea also envisaged the training of the Kilba boys for later work in their own area. The school had now four Bagarmi (French Cameroon), nine Kilba and six Mapeo boys. Frs. Cullen and Harney trekked the Verre country looking for more boys, while Fr. Hanly tried various experiments in an effort to hold the nineteen boys then resident at the mission. It was not easy. During the following year 1944 the number of pupils despite all kinds of inducements never exceeded thirty. Suddenly the tide began to turn. A good catechist was secured, a new school was

¹⁶) *Good Counsel*, v (April-June, 1947) 19; *Mission News*, vii (March, 1955) 4-5.

built and commenced to fill up. Mapeo has never since disappointed. Before the close of 1948 about 100 boys were boarding at Mapeo which also supervised a religious instruction class opened at Sapeo in 1949 and a church in Mambewa village. In 1952 the school was classified as a Junior Primary and the mission was conducting seven classes of religious instruction with an attendance of 204 students. Religious statistics for 1952-3 reveal a total of ninety-seven Baptisms, 3120 Confessions and 4160 Communions. The Catholics numbered 187 and the Catechumens 436. These figures have now been well eclipsed and Mapeo — the Cinderella of the Mission — has survived to become one of the most outstanding stations.

*St. Peter Claver's, Jauro Yinu, A. D. 1945*¹⁷⁾

The fourth mission established south of the Benue is Jauro Yinu. It was also the first station founded beyond the confines of the Yola District. Early in October 1943 an application for a site at Pakka was refused, so the Fathers decided to explore the region south-west of Yola. Frs. Dalton and Hartnett trekked 110 miles to Jalingo in February 1944. They marked a site at Jauro Yinu among the Jukons, six miles west of Jalingo the District Headquarters of the Muri Division. After an unusually long delay the government approved the site in March 1945, and Frs. Hartnett and Cotter moved into the newly finished residence on August 28¹⁸⁾. That same day the first Jukon, a dying child who had been brought to the church was baptised — a gift from St. Augustine on his feast-day ! Early in the following year Fr. Cotter completed the church and also a dormitory for boarders. Yet its troubles were not over. On Whit Sunday night 1948 lightning struck the Priests' house which rapidly took fire and became a total loss. Repairs, including a new roof, were carried out and furnishings were replaced. By the summer of 1952 two Junior Primary schools were functioning, while since March 1948 Jauro Yinu has been supervising the mixed-school at

¹⁷⁾ Early history in *Good Counsel*, v (July-Sept., 1948) 17-21; *Mission News*, i (September, 1949) 4-5.

¹⁸⁾ Cf. *Good Counsel*, loc. cit. 21; *Mission News*, loc. cit. 5, gives the date as June 1946, which is inaccurate.

Kona, a thickly populated pagan district offering excellent ground for conversions. The mission is also in charge of another school opened at Jauro Shuman in May of that same year (1948). It is, nevertheless true, that St. Peter Claver's, now ten years in existence, has made comparatively slow progress. The Catholic population in 1952-3 was 178 (the lowest in the Province apart from Sugu), Catechumens numbered 283 (the lowest, excepting Yola and Gulak (founded in 1948)). Baptisms at Jauro Yinu during the same period totalled sixty-nine (a good average), Confessions 2050 and Communion 3600 (the highest in the Province apart from Yola (8,000) and Mapeo (4160)). These figures are certainly encouraging and must be taken into consideration when assessing the progress of this mission among the Jukons.

*St. Rita's, Bare, A. D. 1948*¹⁹⁾

One of the most notable features of missionary work in Adamawa during 1940-8 was the number and extent of treks carried out. The record is held by Frs. Broder and Cullen who in March 1945 covered about 750 miles on foot, working down to the southern extremity of the Province and contacting the Mill Hill Fathers near Kumbo in the British Cameroons. As has been stated already, various treks were made throughout the northern section of the Adamawa Province, and in the course of one of these Fr. Dalton during August 1946 marked a site at Bare of the mud flats, ten miles north of the Benue, opposite Numan. The Bare people live by farming, and fishermen of the tribe work on the rivers Gongola and Benue. The mission site was approved in November 1947 and a temporary shack was erected by Frs. Broder and Hannon in February 1948. Shortly afterwards Fr. Cotter replaced Fr. Broder and in August the school was opened. Fifteen boys attended, while evening classes for adults were also organised. At Bare in 1952-3 within the space of four or five years the Catholic population was 197 and Catechumens numbered 294. Ninety-one Baptisms, 917 Confessions and 1344 Communion were recorded. The Junior Primary school and three classes of religious instruction were not overcrowded, but at the same time could not be faulted. The school at Kiri,

¹⁹⁾ Early history in *Mission News*, i (November, 1949) 4-5.

founded and supervised from Bare, continues to progress. All in all this central mission has done remarkably well, especially when one considers the proximity of long established Protestant missions, particularly the Sudan United Mission at Numan (founded 1911).

St. Joseph's, Gulak, A. D. 1948

The second mission established north of the Benue and the farthest distant of all from Yola is at Gulak in the extreme north of the British Cameroons. Frs. Cotter and Hanly in March 1946 trekked to Gulak from Yola (a distance of 180 miles) and picked a site at Kaya in the Marghi country. It was approved in November 1947 and Frs. Cullen and Seary took up residence on 17 March 1948. There is a large though scattered pagan population in the district, but early efforts at evangelization proved most disappointing. Then one of the Fathers decided that his National Apostle St. Patrick — the original patron of the mission — was less efficacious than St. Joseph. The mission was accordingly rededicated on October 4. Two days later the first Baptism took place. A severe outbreak of the dreaded disease, cerebro-spinal-meningitis helped to break down existing prejudice and indifference, since the Fathers were able to treat the victims with success. Not all cases responded to treatment (some were too far advanced and medical supplies were insufficient), yet a very large proportion of those who succumbed received Baptism. By 1950 Gulak had eight outstations- the largest number in the Province. Three years later the Catholic population of this mission was 218 (only Yola and Bazza had higher figures); the Catechumenate, however, was comparatively small (159), but it must not be forgotten that St. Joseph's at the time was, apart from Bazza, the latest foundation made by our missionaries. In 1952-3 thirty-seven Baptisms, 1000 Confessions and 1200 Communion were registered. The latest figures have not been received, though unofficial reports state that the mission has continued to make steady progress.

Our Mother of Consolation, Bazza, A. D. 1950 ²⁰⁾

The third central mission station established in the northern half of the Province is at Bazza in the Chubunawa district. The site was first surveyed in February 1948 by Frs. Garman and Broder. Bazza town lies about 130 miles north of Yola. The surrounding area is possibly one of the most thickly populated parts of Adamawa, the Higi tribe numbering 64,000. A site was marked midway between Bazza itself and Chukumu on the verge of closed territory and approval was sought in 1948. Protestant missionaries strongly objected, but sanction for a Fathers' house, church and school was granted in July 1949. Fr. John Seary — first native Australian Augustinian priest — deserves special mention for his work in connexion with the building of the site and for laying the foundations of what has become one of the most successful ventures of the Mission. Due to lack of staff Bazza has for long been handicapped, notwithstanding the amazing progress made since 1950. Thus Fr. Thomas Flynn from January 1952 to the middle of 1953 had to manage on his own not only the central mission but also the outstations. In addition to instructing and teaching he rendered sterling service during a violent epidemic of cerebro-spinal-meningitis and won the confidence and support of the natives, as well as baptising a very large number. Baptisms at Bazza for 1952-3 totalled 113 (the highest proportion in the Province apart from Yola); 1500 Confessions were heard and 3000 received Holy Communion. A Senior Primary school was opened this year; and the latest school in the Province — Muccella — is being partly supervised from Bazza, which is undoubtedly a very flourishing mission.

St. Monica's, Yakoko, A. D. 1955 ²¹⁾

From the very beginning it had been the dream and prayer of all our missionaries to secure a mission-station in the beautiful mountainous country of the Mumuye people, between Yola and Jauro Yinu. The government allegedly had some trouble with these

²⁰⁾ Some interesting sidelights on the early history of this mission will be found in *Consolation* (Dublin, Oct.-Nov., 1952).

²¹⁾ I own my information on this mission to Fr. Berchmans Power, O. S. A.

hardy pagans and refused to allow any missionaries to trek the area until 1953. Immediately, Monsignor Dalton and Fr. Cotter set out to visit the Mumuyes in the populous region of Yakoko, seventy-five miles west of Yola. For many years an old immigrant Catholic from Togoland, Mr Dalmeida, managed a store for John Holts & Co. at Zinna, about ten miles from Yakoko. This good man encouraged the Mumuyes to accept the Fathers and to send their children to school. A site was applied for and readily granted. Fr. Berchmans Power, having returned to Nigeria in October 1954, arrived at Yakoko in February of this year (1955) to begin building our newest mission, dedicated to St. Monica. How different Fr. Power found the response of the Mumuyes compared to that of the Mapeo Chambas in 1941 ! Even before he had the school buildings floored at Yakoko and at the outstation at Zinna ten miles away, there were over 100 little children eager to enrol. Both schools were opened last June and continue to advance. while approval for four additional outstation schools among the promising Mumuyes has been granted.

Arrival of F. M. D. M. Sisters, A. D. 1950

Up to the year 1953 education of girls had not been carried out on the Mission on any scale. The absence of nuns had for long been the main reason, but it is well to bear in mind that in Adamawa, as in all pioneer missions, the idea of educating women has never commended itself to the natives. Mahommedan influence is no doubt largely responsible for this attitude, but even apart from that, the idea only becomes acceptable with the advance of civilization and education itself. Hence the arrival in July 1950 of an advance guard of Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood from Guildford, Surrey, England, marked a new stage in the development of the Adamawa Mission. The first care of these nuns is not specifically education in the academic sense but rather medical work among women. Infant mortality and maternity diseases have from time immemorial been rampant in Adamawa ; consequently the advent of nuns who specialise in this field is a tremendous blessing. In February 1952 the government asked for our co-operation in running a Health and Welfare Centre in Sugu. The offer was gladly accepted, for, *inter alia*, it provides excellent

opportunity of making contacts. The Centre, staffed by three nuns, opened officially in 1954 and has been a marvellous success and has won the highest praise from government officials. There is, however, at this juncture an immediate and most pressing need for an all-out effort to grapple with the problem of women's education. Progress made in this direction since 1953 indicates that with a sufficient staff and the necessary funds this essential work is capable of rapid expansion. To date the Mission is supporting and conducting two boarding schools for girls at Yola and Sugu. An Adult Women's Domestic School is also functioning at Yola. About 300 girls are at present being educated by the Mission.

Seminarians

The most vital work of all is not being neglected — the provision of a native clergy. Two Mapeo boys, instructed and educated by the Mission, are now students at All Hallows Junior Seminary, Onitsha, Southern Nigeria. After completing their Secondary education they will enter the Senior Seminary to study for the Priesthood. Three more applicants hope to go to the Junior Seminary in January 1956.

Apart from the usual programme of church and pastoral work, education, supervision of outstations, canvassing for pupils and giving medical aid, the Fathers have been instrumental in providing vernacular Catholic literature for the people. This is, of course, an essential missionary adjunct. To date the Catechism has been translated by our missionaries into Chamba, Jukon, Marghi and Bare dialects and printed versions have been made available. A Hausa prayer-book and a Catechist Handbook have also been produced. A number of Fathers contributed to these invaluable projects, but a special tribute must be accorded Fr. Aidan Kennedy who had the initiative to procure while holidaying in Dublin an Adana printing machine which he has put to excellent use in Adamawa.

Prefecture Apostolic of Yola, A. D. 1950

As is well known, the Adamawa Mission was raised to the

status of a Prefecture Apostolic by the Holy See on 14 July 1950 ²²). On the following day Fr. Dalton was nominated Apostolic Administrator. The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop David Mathew, had on numerous occasions readily and warmly congratulated our Fathers on their wonderful work in the most difficult of all African Missions (excepting Sokoto in north-west Nigeria) — Adamawa. Finally, Fr. Dalton on 27 October 1950 was appointed Prefect Apostolic of Yola ²³). *Roma locuta est !*

Statistical tables may not reveal spectacular results with regard to Adamawa, but interpreted in the light of time, circumstances and background they cannot be other than most heartening and gratifying. The Mission is still in its infancy. Prospects were never better. Even should the political situation in the Province lead to independence, our position is secure. Plans for 1956 show that the momentum is increasing. The Senior Primary School at Bazza is to be completed and in 1958 will become an Elementary Teachers' Training Centre ; two compounds for adult women trainees are to be erected at the Sisters' school, Sugu ; Bare will have a Senior Primary school next year (1956), as well as a new church, and schools are also to be built at Numan and Gwyana ; five Junior Primary schools are planned for and will be supervised from Yakoko and Jauro Yinu ; a Junior Primary school to be directed from Mapeo is scheduled for 1956 and another under the supervision of Gulak. These are but some of the projects. Doubtless the Mission has had its ' Dark Night ', its (to use the late Bishop Shanahan's phrase regarding a phase of his own magnificent work among the Ibos) ' brick wall of failure '. The field is not yet won. Adamawa will never witness the astounding transformation that crowned Bishop Shanahan's apostolate in Onitsha-Owerri between 1902 and 1932. Still there can be no doubt that Adamawa will be christianised, provided an adequate supply of priests, working through God's Grace, and sufficient financial support are forthcoming.

²²) *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, xliii (1951) 102-3.

²³) *Ibid.* 286, where Danton should read Dalton.

Prefecture Apostolic of Maiduguri, A. D. 1953

Before we bring this survey to a close, a word must be said about the latest Augustinian assignment in Nigeria. On 19 May 1951 the Apostolic Delegate, Dr Mathew, wrote to the Irish Provincial, Very. Rev. J. C. Dullea, applauding the work done by the Augustinians in Adamawa ²⁴). He stated that Northern Nigeria was being flooded with Protestant missionaries from the U. S. A. and Canada. He was anxious that the Irish Augustinians should enter the Province of Bornu immediately, since hitherto no Catholic Mission had been established in this territory. The Bornu Province, which adjoins Adamawa at its northern extremity, is administered politically by the British; the population numbers 1,595,708 and the territory comprises 45,000 sq. miles. At the Provincial Chapter of the Irish Province held in July 1951 it was decided to accept the Delegate's invitation. Mgr. Dalton reported that although Maiduguri, the capital of the Province, had a Catholic population of 1500, composed mainly of southern immigrants, the only other suitable site for a mission was Gashua on the extreme west of the Province. There were in fact only three pagan areas (widely separated); the remainder of the country was almost entirely Mahomedan, with Protestant missions in two places.

From the point of view of the Adamawa Mission the offer to evangelise Bornu was not too inviting. Commitments in Adamawa itself were exceedingly heavy and urgent; the Fathers there were scarcely able to cope with immediate demands, much less embark on an entirely new missionary venture. The tide, as we have pointed out, had definitely begun to turn and it was imperative to take full advantage of the situation. The real crux of the matter was shortage of priests; from 1949 to 1951 no addition had been made to the staff of the Prefecture; only one priest could be spared to supervise and manage Bazza.

The call of the Church, however, did not go unheeded and Mgr. Dalton and his Council detailed Fr. Hanly to make a start at Maiduguri. This veteran of the Adamawa Mission arrived there in March 1953. A site for a mission was approved by the government, but due to Moslem opposition permission to start a school

²⁴) Letter in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria).

was refused; it was granted later and there are now about 200 Junior Primary pupils attending. As an earnest proof of its deep interest in and hopes for Bornu the Holy See on June 29 erected the Mission into a Prefecture ²⁵⁾ and appointed Mgr. Dalton Apostolic Administrator on 26 February 1954 ²⁶⁾. Though valuable and most necessary work is being done to consolidate the immigrant Catholic population and although a residential mission has been established at Nguru, near the Sahara, progress in this Prefecture will be slow because of the great shortage of priests. Next autumn, we are glad to report, Adamawa and Bornu will receive the necessary reinforcements from Ireland. And so Augustine's Irish sons endeavour to reclaim for Christ and Augustine the land of his birth and the nursery of his monastic institute which was established in Ireland some twenty-years after the Great Union of 1256.

Benedict HACKETT, O. S. A.

St. Patrick's,
Rome.

Roll of Honour

- 1937: Frs. L. Maddock, B. Power (served in Salisbury, Rhodesia).
- 1938: Frs. D. B. Redmond, A. Dalton, G. Broder.
- 1939: Frs. A. Garman, P. O'Shea.
- 1942: Frs. M. Cullen, O. Hartnett, A. Harney.
- 1943: Frs. K. Cotter, J. Hanly, K. Anderson, C. Fitzsimons.
- 1945: Frs. G. Roche, B. Hannon, A. Kennedy, A. O'Connor, P. Martin.
- 1946: Frs. A. O'Mahoney, T. Flynn.
- 1948: Frs. J. Seary, F. Heffernan, J. Callaghan.
- 1949: Frs. C. Power (brother of Fr. B. Power), C. Madden, D. Coleman.
- 1951: Frs. J. Crean, D. Gough, G. Cunnane.
- 1952: Frs. A. Donovan, L. Lyons.
- 1954: Frs. J. King, J. Bresnan, K. Moylan.

²⁵⁾ *Acta Apost. Sedis*, xlv (1953) 775-6. For some unaccountable reason the index to this volume does not list the Prefecture under its proper title (Maiduguri).

²⁶⁾ S. Con. Prop. Fide, N. 762/54 (Copy in Ir. Prov. Arch. (Nigeria)). In the *Acta Apost. Sedis*, xlvi (1954) 423, Mgr. Dalton's appointment as Prefect Apostolic of Yola is given under the date 26 Feb. 1954. This is incorrect.

Statistics for 1940-55

	June 1940	June 1955
Priests	5	24
Nuns	0	6
Catholics	90	3502
Catechumens	20	4500
Central missions and outstations	2	59
Schools and classes of religious instruction	0	62
Attendance	0	3606

N. B. Statistics for the Maiduguri Prefecture are not yet available, but we have included Frs. J. Hanly and C. Madden in the above total of priests (June 1955), as well as the school at Maiduguri; the number of pupils (200) has also been added. In addition to the 3606 pupils listed above under June 1955, thirty-two additional scholars are being educated at present outside the Yola Prefecture, apart from the two seminarians in Onitsha, Southern Nigeria. In some cases the above figures are only approximate.