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## Out Of This Snare

This is a Blunt, Gripping Story every Parent and Educator ought to read—the Story of Ed Leonski who was Hanged in Melbourne in 1942

BY THOMAS A. SHANAHAN, S.J.

This is the story of Private Edward Leonski, one of the bravest men I have ever met.

I came into the story early in June 1942 when I was transferred to Headquarters in Australia, located in the turbulent city of Melbourne. Our troops, freed from the hot, black holds of the transports where they had to sweat out a fifty-day voyage across the Equator, really let loose when they landed in Melbourne. Though they had a lot of war before them, they had a good part of it behind; so when they stepped ashore they celebrated. Only the night before they were confused and frightened youngsters; when they stepped ashore they were lionized. Accepting the role, some of them did their first heavy drinking; it helped them to swagger more easily. One of them was Private Edward Leonski from New York City.

I went into the Russell Street Gaol, modelled after the sixteenth-century prisons of London, with the half wish that I'd fail as the two chaplains before me had failed; if I were successful I'd have to go all the way with the boy. For Edward Leonski had been sentenced by a United States Army Court Martial to hang by the neck until dead for the murder of four Melbourne women.

I called in at the M.P.'s guarding the prisoner. All four then on duty were also from New York City. I asked them about the prisoner. They liked him; they'd be willing to help in any way they could; they wanted to work with me for him. Only one was a Catholic. We were all Americans.

The few watts throwing a weak light down into the cell showed a lively all-American lad standing before me. He was tall, strong, and lithe-looking; his smile was under the shadow of a sneer. With my name I put out my hand. He clamped down on it hard and watched me.

"All right, Leonski, I know you are strong. Let go of the hand," I said.

When a Protestant chaplain had been to see him, he brushed the man off by walking around the cell on his hands. When a Catholic chaplain before me tried to help him, he laughed.

"Leonski," I said, "the show is over. There are now only two persons in the world interested in you, God and your self. Here's a book. See what you can make out of the first chapter. If you are interested, I'll be back tomorrow night and talk over that first chapter."

I handed him Father Martin Scott's *God and Myself*. He said nothing, and I walked out wondering. But the next night I went back. He stood up when I entered.

"How did you make out with the first chapter?" I asked.

"I finished the book," he said and looked at me.

"Let's see how much you have of the first chapter," I said.

To my silent amazement, clearly and logically he went through the proof of the existence of God from the order in the universe. To my word of praise he responded with a smile, this time free of sneer.

For sixty minutes every evening ex-

cept Monday, from mid-June to September Ed Leonski and I held class. He did his assigned reading during the day. At night I checked his assimilation. Keenly perceptive, he went to the heart of each proof in the clear firm steps; it was a pleasure to work with him. Then he wanted more, the life of Christ, the Church He established, the Sacraments.

With school out after an hour's instruction, we'd call in the other American general prisoners. Then we talked and ate sandwiches from a nearby restaurant. All had at least a ten-year sentence hanging over them. All six had the same story—when drunk they got into serious trouble. Some from good homes, some from broken homes, they stuck together to ease the mental torture of their disgrace. The M.P.'s were, with one exception, real men, not outsiders but right in with the prisoners, doing all in their power to ease misfortune. I was proud of them all, prisoners and M.P.'s. They were all good young Americans. But it was easy to see that Ed Leonski was the best liked of the lot; he was a natural leader in an easy, likeable way.

One night he told me the whole story from beginning to end. As he spoke I wished there were a microphone on the table between us so that parents and teachers might hear the story.

There was only one person in his life for whom he had any attachment, his mother. She was a charwoman every night downtown in New York. Young Ed grew up straight and strong. He was easily the leader in the sports available on New York City streets; he graduated from a city high school about twelfth in a class of four hundred.

To help his mother he took a job after school hours in a chain grocery store, and here the first seeds of moral corruption were sown. The manager instructed him how to cheat the customer on each purchase of potatoes, apples, butter, or anything in bulk that had to be packaged. The young clerk soon figured out a few ways of his own to pick up spending money. With this, he started his good-time program, girls but no drinking. The drinking would impair his healthy physique—that vanity without moral judgment was the beginning of the end that confronted him in a Melbourne jail. He liked to be the big shot; but in all of it he never crossed the law.

The draft removed him from the one restraining influence in his life, and shipped him off to Texas. He resented the draft. With the allotments taken out he had little money for the kind of strutting he had back home. One desperate day he took off without leave.

Resentment for the whole setup flared within him, and he picked up a large stone which he held fast in his large hand to loosen the restraining arm of an M.P. who might challenge him. It was his first awareness of viciousness. He headed for a house of public women well known at the camp. He had no money, so he tried to talk his way—unsuccessfully. He tried force, and the woman screamed. The M.P.'s came and he was court martialed for

## HOW FAR WILL RUSSIA RISK WAR?

### Berlin Bluff is Part of Wider Plan for Europe

"The next move in Germany will be to get the British and Americans out of Berlin—it's in the bag."

This information was given me by a member of the British Communist Party's Political Bureau a month before the Soviet "war of nerves" in Berlin began.

But reports reaching this country from Moscow via Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria all make it clear that the Soviet leaders, whilst quite prepared to play with fire, were anxious to avoid real war at all costs.

Eighteen months ago Czech Communist leaders visiting Moscow were told that the Soviet leaders were convinced that they would be able to avoid war, and that the countries of Eastern Europe should proceed on that assumption.

British Communist leaders visiting Tito and Dimitrov last autumn were told that this was still the Soviet Union's view and since military schedules are normally based on ten-year periods, Russia and her neighbours would budget in the expectation of peace being maintained during the next ten years.

Latest reports from Cominform Headquarters in Belgrade all indicate that this is still the view.

The Russians, in fact, have been playing a game of bluff, making warlike noises to frighten the democracies but, with the usual Marxist flexibility they are ready to retreat at the first sign of toughness.

The danger, however, is that, despite their fear of war, they may yet involve the world in another and utterly devastating conflict.

The Berlin incidents make an interesting study of Communist methods and are also notably reminiscent of the old Hitler technique.

#### THE BERLIN "WAR"

During the latter part of March the Russians started their new war of nerves and a propaganda blast was followed up by references to the need to "protect the inhabitants by restoring order."

Then on March 30 General Lukyanenko hinted in a newspaper interview that the "present system of permits needs strengthening."

In the agreement by which the Allies entered Berlin, Britain and America were promised "free and unrestricted utilisation of the established corridors."

attempted rape. This mark on his record really hurt him.

Soon he was on one of the first transports loaded to the gunnels with raw troops for the Southwest Pacific. He passed the time stuffing himself with sex-crime pulp; and for further fun he ridiculed the lads who prayed or spoke of religion. He got great enjoyment from asking questions about their religion which they were unable to answer.

Ashore at Melbourne, with all the appearance of America's best manhood, he took what the port city offered; and with the lax discipline of the in-town camp he had plenty of time at his disposal. For the first time he took to drink. He didn't know why, except that inside he was confused.

(Continued on Page 4.)

Yet on March 31 the Russian General Dratvin gave only 24 hours notice of the Russians' intention of taking unilateral action in introducing new and far-reaching regulations for the control of traffic.

On April 1 the British and Americans suspended rail services between their zones and Berlin, and instituted special air services.

On the following day Russian troops demanding the right to examine papers, held up a British train.

With Soviet planes interfering with those of Britain the crash which occurred the following day, involving the loss of 14 British lives, was not altogether surprising.

British and American reaction was immediately to give all their planes fighter cover, but after Marshal Sokolovsky had expressed deep regret, these were withdrawn—since when the Russian attitude on the question has steadily stiffened, and meanwhile they have switched back to making difficulties on both road transport and signals.

#### WHAT RUSSIA WANTS

These tactics are yet another attempt to carry through her post-war plan of fulfilling a specific programme by all means "short of war."

Here are the four points she hopes to gain by her plan:

1. An economic system similar to the Russian in each of the countries in which the Red Army was present;
2. A buffer which would be invaluable to her for military, trade and political purposes;
3. Increased influence throughout the Middle East, with a foothold on the traditional East-West trade routes;
4. A position of great power and influence in the United Nations which would be used to stimulate those conditions normally conducive to the spread of Communism in the Capitalist world.

Russia expected to realize these ends on the basis of the assumption that the democracies will always climb down in the face of threats.

But though a number of these points have already been gained, some have been frustrated, through the first cautious attempts to call Russia's bluff.

When the Greek rebel government was first set up it was definitely Russia's intention immediately to recognize it and then follow up quite openly with the sale of arms on a large scale, as one government trading with another.

#### CLIMB DOWN

British and American reactions to the formation of the puppet government made her abandon the scheme entirely lest the situation which arose in Spain in the 1930's should be repeated.

Having failed so far, the Russian leaders hoped at least to be able to transform the character and extent of the Greek operations by getting large quantities of "heavy" war material through to the rebels. But again the stiffening attitude of the democracies has made them climb down.

The "war of nerves" in Berlin and throughout Europe will be won if the British and the Americans show no signs of nerves themselves.—*Catholic Herald*, April 16, 1948.

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**Church Calendar**

MAY 1948

THURS. ...27 CORPUS CHRISTI.  
 FRI. ...28 S. Augustine B.  
 SAT. ...29 S. M. Magd. de Paz.  
 SUN. ...30 2 P.—S. Felix.  
 MON. ...31 Our Lady of Mediatrix.  
 JUNE 1948  
 TUES. ... 1 S. Justin.  
 WED. ... 2 S. Marcelline.  
 THURS. ... 3 S. Clotilda.

**The Catholic Guardian**

MAY 27TH 1948

**THE ARCHBISHOP'S LETTER**

Most heartily do we commend to our readers' careful consideration the letter, reproduced elsewhere in this issue, sent by His Grace the Archbishop to the Prime Minister on the proposal to prepare teachers to impart sex-instruction in the schools.

It was Chesterton who in *The Everlasting Man* observed, even from the comparative history of religions, that on the question of sex the human race has a record of insanity. Instances are not hard to find from every age and clime. Even the most primitive societies have had to regulate the sex-relationship as have had the modern State and Christ's Church.

Mere regulations however are insufficient and each individual has to be approached and instructed as an individual. Unless he is given as much instruction as he can 'take' and no more, great lasting harm can be done. The lesson of self-control must be inculcated and here religion comes in as, if sex-instruction is to be constructive and positive, God's point of view in giving the sex-instincts must be given. As God-given, the sex-instinct is one hundred per cent good, *provided* it is used, and used only as God wants it used. Otherwise it results in fearful degradation.

The only sane approach is therefore one of reverence, of reverence for oneself and for persons of the opposite sex. Mere instruction alone can result in intensifying the very evil it sets out to remedy. Unless it could be proved for instance that medical students were paragons of virtue in this regard and paragons precisely on account of their knowledge, it would seem as if we should not be too hasty in committing ourselves to the proposition that biological ignorance is at the root of the problem.

His Grace gives instances where group-instruction would, as he very rightly insists, be intolerable. And who is to guarantee *all* the teachers against even an occasional flippant, brutal or cynical reference? Who is to exorcize the snigger, the furtive groupings and the smutty comic reference?

The fundamental problem however remains as, if sex-instruction has to be given it must

be given in the right atmosphere. The obvious persons to give such information are, in the first instance, the parents. If to-day the problem has become a menacing one, it is because unfortunately the information comes from a tainted source, from the bad companion. This means that the parents have failed in facing their responsibilities under this head. His Grace's suggestion that the parents should be instructed *how* to impart such information is practical and constructive advice, and the method of approach to the parents should be jointly planned and urged by both Church and State.

**Thoughts for the Month of May**

(Continued)

32. It is impossible for a child of Mary to be lost. Some may think that this is an exaggeration. By a child of Mary is meant one who is sincere to amend and is faithfully in honouring the Mother of God. It is morally impossible that such a one should be lost.

33. St. Anselm says that as it is impossible for one who is not devout to Mary, and consequently not protected by her, to be saved, so it is impossible for one who recommends himself to her, and consequently is beloved by her, to be lost.

34. St. Antoninus repeats the same thing in other words: "As it is impossible for those from whom Mary turns her eyes of mercy to be saved, so also are those towards whom she turns these eyes, and for whom she prays, necessarily saved and glorified."

35. We read in Blossius that God revealed to St. Catherine of Sienna that in His goodness, He had granted to Mary, who was His Mother, that no one, not even a sinner, who devoutly recommends himself to her, should ever become the prey of Hell.

36. In the Imitation of Christ we read "Oh! how many would have remained obstinate in sin, and have been eternally lost, if Mary had not interposed with her Son that He might show them mercy."

37. What then, will be our lot, Oh, tender Mother who are sinners, but desire to amend our lives and have recourse to thee?

38. Richard of St. Victor exclaims "Who will presume to say if I have thee to defend me, O Mother of Mercy, that the Judge will be unfavourable to me, when I am presented before the divine tribunal?"

39. How enraged is the devil, when he sees a soul persevering in devotion to the divine Mother. Once he told Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez when he was at prayer and was troubled with bad thoughts, "Give up thy devotion to Mary and I will cease to tempt thee."

40. Let us always repeat the words of St. Bonaventure: "In thee O'Lady have I placed all my hopes; and thus I confidently trust that I shall never be lost, but praise and love thee for ever in Heaven."

C.W.M. Series.

**Feast of Corpus Christi**

(COMMUNICATED)

"If thou didst but know the gift of God which is imparted to thee, and Who it is Who speaks to thee." These words of Our Lord, addressed to the Samaritan woman, relate in their application to everyone of us, who appears before Our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar. The presence of Our Lord in our Churches is a divine fact, which even to the understanding of the angels remains incomprehensible. But our faith enables us to understand this mystery. By faith we believe and confess, although we do not see what we believe, upon the word of the Church alone. For instance we believe and confess that original sin is washed away by Baptism, although we do not see it. But now, in regard to the Holy Eucharist, we believe in spite of what we see and feel. Therein consists the triumph of faith.

"Blessed are they who see not, and yet believe." This assurance of Our Lord to those who surrounded Him, when he dwelt upon this earth, verifies itself in all its truth, when we apply it to His Sacramental presence on our altars. Here in fact is the same Jesus present, who at Bethlehem lay in the manger, who lived at Nazareth for thirty long years, spent three years journeying through Palestine preaching the Gospel and who died upon Calvary. It is the same Jesus, Whom, at this very moment, the angels and saints contemplate in Heaven.

We are wont to envy the contemporaries of Our Lord who saw His visible presence. But if we faithfully and lovingly look at Him in the most Holy Sacrament, and earnestly avail ourselves of the graces which His real presence gives us, then we shall realize that we are in a better position than His disciples. We are permitted His Divine Presence more permanently and for a longer period of time. Our Lord is present day and night among us, and we can commune with Him whenever we wish. He is, so to say, compelled to hear us. He is ever ready, and welcomes us to His Divine Presence at whatever moment we please to come. What a happiness! If we only realised rightly now to value this inestimable favour.

Blessed the eyes which, with Mary, St. John, and the Penitent Magdalen beheld the Redeemer dying on the Cross praying God to forgive sinners. But we are more blessed, when we are present at this identical sacrifice renewed every hour, nay every minute of the day and night!

**Sex Education Scheme "Ill-Considered"**

"Any attempt to introduce sex instruction in the school curriculum, while causing grave disaffection among the Catholic citizens of the Dominion must meet with our sternest disapproval."

In these words the Archbishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Cooray, O.M.I., in a letter to the Prime Minister, sets out the attitude of Catholic Bishops to the proposal of the Education Department to organize Group talks on sex to teachers as a preliminary to the introduction of this subject in the school curriculum.

The proposal, His Grace says, "has caused me some surprise as I was under the impression that with the opposition raised some years ago when the idea was first mooted, the plan of introducing sex education in schools, had been abandoned by the Departments who sponsored it."

**POPE'S ENCYCLICAL CITED**

The letter proceeds:—If the Press report is correct and the idea has been resuscitated then my duty as Archbishop-Metropolitan obliges me to state that the Catholic Church has a definite ruling on the matter, expressed clearly by His Holiness Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical "Christian Education of Youth." I attach the relevant passages. From this extract the following points emerge:

1. Some information on sex matters is necessary or opportune, but not such

as a professional study of the subject requires, much less with an abundance, of descriptive details that do not concern the young.

2. Such discreet information must be communicated by the child's God-given guardians and teachers, namely the parents. School-teachers cannot assume this responsibility without a definite mandate from these God-given guardians.

3. At all events sex instruction must be private: it cannot be made a subject for open session.

**INTOLERABLE IN MIXED SCHOOLS**

"You will appreciate the wisdom of these measures which, far from being arbitrary or reactionary on principle, are based on a sober realisation of the following facts adduced in the same Encyclical:

(1) 'Particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as a weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions.'

(2) 'An unauthorised or unskilful person (such as most young teachers must prove on this point) volunteering sex information may do so with such details that it may happen that instead of extinguishing this fire of passion he unwittingly stirs or kindles it in the simple and tender heart of the child.'

(3) 'Imparting sex-information in a public class-room would strip the matter of its sacredness, evoke titters and comments from coarser elements present even in select classes, cause greater discomfort and abashment to the more refined. In mixed schools where boys and girls are taught together the situation would be intolerable for the child of any decent family.'

"You will excuse me, for this lengthy explanation, but I feel it is of the utmost importance to give you a full and fair view not only of our attitude but of the considerations that motivate it. Sex education is not merely a medical matter. It has also tremendous psychological, moral and religious implications.

"I am sure we can count on you to support this sober and sensible view of the question and bring your well-known sound common sense to bear on what, if reports are true, must be classified as a rather ill-considered scheme of a Department, which should realise that if a large section of parents is ill-equipped for imparting sex information tactfully, it is they and not the teachers that should be instructed."

**LOCAL & GENERAL**

**The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart.**—The members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, S.P.C. Branch, Senior Division will celebrate their Patronal Feast on Friday the 4th June.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the College Hall on Monday the 31st May at 5-30 p.m., when Mr. C.W. D. Alwines will address the meeting on "The Life of St. Paul."

The Triduum preparatory to the feast comes off at the College Chapel on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd June at 6-30 p.m. at the College Hall.

On the 4th inst. High Mass will be sung at the College Chapel at 7 p.m. The Most Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for adoration immediately after Mass.

The senior members will have the first hour for their adoration.

**Papal Knight Gives Talk on the Oblates in Ceylon.**—"After they arrived in the Island in 1847, the Oblates of the Mary Immaculate—the pioneers of the Catholic faith in Ceylon—built hospitals, orphanages and schools: They also converted the notorious criminal, Sardiell Appu," said Dr. J.P. de Fonseka, Papal Chamberlain, in a lecture on "The Oblates in Ceylon", given at the St. Mary's College Hall, Negombo.

Dr. V. Croos Da Brera, who presided, said that Negombo should be proud and glad to have Dr. de Fonseka there amongst them, as he was one of the foremost Catholic writers of the world.

**The Ceylon Government Pensioners' Welfare Association.**—The Honorary Secretary of the Pensioners' Welfare Association desires to inform the Members of the Association and others concerned that the Minister

for Finance "has taken the earliest opportunity to introduce a motion in the House of Representatives to have the Widows and Orphans Fund, Ordinance revised." He wants all the Pensioners who have any complaints to make to contact him at 9/3 Palace Square, Kandy and supply him with particulars giving name and Pension Number so as to enable him to embody them in a memorandum that is being prepared for submission.

**Kerosene Oil Control Ends on June 1.**—The Government has decided, following representations made by the Parliamentary group at a meeting, to lift the control of kerosene oil from June 1.

This was announced by Mr. A. E. Goonesinha, Minister without Portfolio and Chief Government Whip, at a Press conference on May 18.

**Mr. Hanganarata M.P. for Kandy.** Mr. T. B. Hanganarata won by a majority of 3,857 votes at the by-election for the Kandy Seat in the House of Representatives, rendered vacant by the unseating of Mr. George E. de Silva, former Minister for Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries.

Total number of votes cast was 17,268, of which Mr. Hanganarata polled 10,365. The two other candidates Mr. Fred de Silva and Mr. D. B. Wadugodapitiya, polled 6,508 and 153 votes, respectively, the latter forfeiting his deposit. Spoilt votes totalled 240.

Mr. Hanganarata contested the Kandy seat unsuccessfully in the General Election, when he was defeated by Mr. George E. de Silva. He is an old boy of St. Anthony's College, Kandy.

**London Matriculation.**—The following candidates were successful from St. Patrick's College in the London Matriculation held in January this year: S. Boniface, C. A. Joachimpillai, N. Kunaretnam, W.M.P.B. Menikdiwala, B. M. J. Satrnkalsinghe and V.S. Sivahambaniam.

**Holy Family Convent, Jaffna:** R. Anthonypillai, V. B. A. Emmanuel, R. Ponnampalam, W. B. Sandrasagara and J. R. Vanigasooriyar.

**Clerical Service Promotions.**—We are glad to learn that on the results of the examination held on Oct. 18, 1947 Messrs. P. B. Swampillai of the District Court, Kandy and E.S.W. Selvadurai of the Ministry of Labour have been admitted to Grade II of the Executive Clerical Class of the General Clerical Service. Both are old boys of St. Patrick's College.

**Personals.**—Mr. T. Quantia Fernando, the permanent District and Magistrate of Nuwara Eliya-Hatton having gone on leave, Mr. Victor Tambinayagam, J.P., U.M., Proctor has been appointed to act for him.

**Gal-Oya Plan Meets with Approval.**—All parties in the House welcomed the Gal-Oya Scheme as a step in the right direction. The Minister of Agriculture, in moving two supplementary estimates, outlined the scheme with lucidity and said that investigations had reached a certain stage on a similar project for the Kelani River.

The scheme, said the Minister, would be able to supply water to irrigate 60,000 acres (26,000 acres were already under cultivation, one season a year), for two seasons a year; that is, 120,000 acres would be brought under cultivation.

Secondly, it would prevent flooding in an area now regularly menaced by floods. Thirdly, hydro electric power (9000 h.p.) could be generated for industrial purposes. And finally, the scheme would supply pipe-borne water to 20,000 homes.

The work would be completed, emphasized Mr. Dudley Senanayake, in about 4 years from now.

**Conciliation Boards Formed in Vavuniya.**—The residents of Vavuniya South (Sinhalese Division) at a largely-attended meeting held at the Junior School, and presided over by Mr. E. L. B. Hurulle, the Divisional Revenue Officer, decided to form Conciliation Boards in all the villages in the division.

Mr. S. Paranjothy, Rural Development Officer, Vavuniya, explained that the purpose of the Boards was to settle disputes, so that the villagers might be spared the expenses and trouble of going to Courts.

Mr. S. M. U. B. Madukande, retired Rate-Mahatmaya, also spoke.

**Smugglers Modernise Methods.**—Outnumbered and outmanoeuvred, the Customs authorities along the Northern coastal strip, between Kayts Point Pedro, are carrying on a ceaseless campaign against smugglers who under cover of darkness attempt to bring large quantities of ganja, opium, liquor, tobacco, textiles, rice, and even gold from India to Ceylon without paying import duties.

The smuggler gang operates a dozen high powered launches, much faster than the two launches the Customs possess. Recently a smuggler launch was captured but it turned out to be the slowest of the lot.

In carrying out their nefarious trade, the smugglers resort not only to fire arms but also hurl dynamite at pursuers.—*Sunday Times*, May 23.

**Rights of Indians in Ceylon.**—Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, replying to a question on behalf of the Prime Minister, announced in the House of Representatives that a Bill embodying the outcome of the conversations between the Prime Ministers of India and Ceylon, which was now under preparation, would be introduced in the House during this session.

Replying to a supplementary put by Mr. W. Dahanayake, Mr. Bandaranaike, refused to publish the details of the conversations as a sessional paper because they were confidential.

**Holy See Acquires Territory.**—The Holy See has signed an agreement with Italy regarding the boundaries of Papal territory and Castelgandolfo. Under the agreement the Vatican acquires as extra territorial property a small number of houses which flank the Papal territory and overlook its gardens.

The agreement was signed by Mgr. Domenico Tardini, one of the acting Papal Secretaries of State, for the Vatican, and by Marchese Lupi Di Soragna, Italian Ambassador to the Holy See for Italy.

**Royal Wedding Jubilee.**—The Holy Father cabled good wishes and congratulations to the King and Queen of England on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of their wedding. Cardinal Griffin presided at the High Mass in Westminster Cathedral, at which the *Te Deum* was sung.

The *Te Deum* was sung, by direction of Archbishop Downey, in the churches and chapels of the Liverpool diocese on Sunday in thanksgiving for the blessings received during their Majesties' reign.

**'U.K. Education System Faces Break-down.'**—A break-down in the whole Government educational system in Britain within the next three or four years is forecast by Mr. St. John Ervine, the playwright and educationist, unless something drastic is done to increase the number of schools and teachers.

He thinks the standard of education in British state schools, worse now than during the last half-century. This he attributed to over-crowding and the lack of a thorough preparation for raising the school-leaving age from 14 to 15 in April, 1946, to give every child an opportunity of secondary education.

Difficulties that have to be coped with include a substantial increase in the numbers attending schools through the raising of the leaving age particularly of those needing advanced instruction.

The shortage of teachers, mainly due to the war, but also to the withdrawal of many men and women of high quality because they are dissatisfied with the financial conditions.

An acute shortage of school buildings, both primary and secondary. This is due to priority for buildings being given to housing and factories producing goods for export and to the limit placed on all forms of capital expenditure throughout the country.

The worst sufferers are the senior boys and girls who are suffering from what Mr. St. John Ervine calls "intellectual frustration" because secondary schools are not available.

Harassed headmasters have, he says, been known to fill in the time of their senior pupils by making them wash milk bottles or sending them on errands.

**Eire may not Accept Marshall Aid Plan.**—Eire may refuse American aid proffered under the European Recovery Programme.

Mr. Sean MacBride, Eire Minister for External Affairs, left Shannon airport on May 18 for Washington to discuss the position with United States authorities.

"I should like to warn against any undue optimism about E.R.P. aid", he told a Press Conference.

"Announcements so far made from Washington would indicate in the case of Ireland that this aid would only be given by way of loans.

"Inasmuch as our exports to the Western hemisphere are negligible, we would have no means of repaying any dollars which the United States would be kind enough to offer to us.

"It appears to me that we shall be unable to avail ourselves of E.R.P. aid if it is by way of loans."

**U.S. Navy to Hold Exercises.**—The U.S. Navy Department confirmed that 29 American warships will conduct major manoeuvres in the Mediterranean during June and July.

The vessels taking part will be in two groups: 1. Thirteen ships, including the 45,000 ton battleship *Missouri* and the new 45,000 ton aircraft carrier *Coral Sea*, carrying 3,183 midshipmen and naval reservists on a normal summer training cruise.

2. Sixteen warships, composing the U.S. Eastern Atlantic Fleet.

The Eastern Atlantic Fleet now has 18 warships, but 12 replacement ships will join from the U.S. early next month, and 14 units of the Fleet will sail for home, reducing its strength to 16. The returning ships will include the aircraft carrier *Philippine Sea*, which will be replaced by the 27,000 tons carrier *Mearsarge*.

The Navy Department said the two groups would join in normal "manoeuvres."

Earlier the U.S. Navy had announced that it was relieving its 14 ship squadron in the Mediterranean, and replacing it with 12.

**German Missionaries.**—The first group of German Catholic missionaries to be sent to the Far East since the end of the war were due to leave Bremen last month for Japan. Groups of missionary nuns have already left Germany for South America and South Africa.

**Cyclone Kills 18.**—Eighteen people were reported killed, and more than 100 injured by a cyclone in Southern Brazil on May 17. Houses were destroyed, and other extensive damage caused by the cyclone.

WEDDINGS

BENJAMIN—STEPHEN

The Church of Our Lady of Refuge was the venue of a pretty wedding when Mr. E.R.P. Benjamin, Sub-Inspector of Co-operative Societies, Northern Division and son of Mr. and Mrs. B. Benjamin, Chapel Street, Jaffna, led to the altar Miss Josephine Antoinette Selvarane, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Stephen of "Ranelagh", Main St., Jaffna, on Wednesday the 12th inst. at 7 a.m. The Revd. Fr. S. J. Stanislaus, O.M.I., a relative of the bridegroom tied the nuptial knot and offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Revd. Fr. Stephen Venderkone, O.M.I., Parish Priest, preached an impressive homily invoking God's choicest blessings on the newly wedded couple. The service was fully choral, the parish choir rendering hymns specially suited to the occasion. At the close of the Mass the parties repaired to the vestry where the register was attested by Messrs. Emmanuel Tiruchelvam and S. Rajaretnam, Additional Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, N.D. The bridegroom was supported by Mr. T.T. Gananathan as bestman and Mr. A. V. Manuelpillai as groomsman. The bridal entourage was composed of two bridesmaids, the Misses Pushpam Barbara Emmanuel and Drusila Jayamalar Stephen, while the little Oliver Thomas, Premela Rajakarier and Rajini Emmanuel filled the role of flower girls.

The bridal saree consisted of jari fishnet material of white satin, while the effect of the ensemble was enhanced by the flowing tulle veil and a

bouquet of madonna lilies. The bridesmaids carried sheafs of golden orchids. The reception that followed the nuptials took place at the U.C. Town Hall which was tastefully decorated and furnished for the purpose. Amid the strains of Nagasalam, the new couple arrived to receive the felicitations of the numerous friends and relatives who had assembled there for the purpose. Mr. A. R. Supramaniam, retired District Judge, in a felicitous speech proposed the toast of the bride and the bridegroom. He recalled to mind his past association with the parents of the new couple and expressed his delight at participating in that morning's function. Benjamin and Stephen, he said, were two names biblical in their origin and import and a contract entered into between parties bearing those names could not but be full of promise and felicity. Brought up in the best traditions of two great Christian families, the bride and the bridegroom were assured of a bright and prosperous married life. The bridegroom suitably replied adding the toast of the bridesmaids. Mr. Gananathan responded to this toast in humorous vein. Refreshments were served ad libitum.

On Saturday the 15th inst. Mr. and Mrs. B. Benjamin were "At Home" to their numerous friends and well wishers at "Conselyn", Chapel Street, Jaffna, on the occasion of the Home-Coming of their son and daughter-in-law.

The new couple were the recipients of a host of congratulatory messages and presents from all over Ceylon and the Malayan Union.

SELVADURAI—SWAMPILLAI

The marriage took place at Our Lady of Refuge, Jaffna of Mr. E. S. W. Selvadurai son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Selvadurai of Jaffna and Miss Grace Swampillai daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Swampillai of Jaffna on Wednesday 19th May, 1948.

The bride was given away by her father and was attended by Miss Joyce Swampillai as the chief bridesmaid assisted by Miss Rita Swampillai. The bridegroom had Mr. J. A. Ignatius as bestman while the groomsman was Mr. Joe F. X. Bastiampillai.

The nuptial service was solemnised by Very. Revd. Father T. M. F. Long, O.M.I., and the homily was preached by the Revd. Father J. Nolan, S.J. The signing of the register was witnessed by Mr. R. J. Paul, retired District Judge, Nagpur and Mr. Victor E. Rajakarier, District Judge, Galle.

The bride's parents held a reception at their residence. Senator C. Coomaraswamy proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom to which the bridegroom replied.

On Saturday 22nd May Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Selvadurai held a reception on the occasion of the home-coming of their son and daughter-in-law at their residence.

WANTED

Wanted cashier and typist clerk preferably with knowledge of shorthand for immediate appointment. Selected candidate should furnish cash security Rs. 2,000 and Company security if required. 3% interest will be paid on the cash security. Salary including war allowance is Rs. 100 per month to start with.

Canvassing will be a disqualification. Applications will close on 10th June.

The Managing Director,  
TRADE & TRANSPORT CO. LTD.  
Jaffna.

TENDER NOTICE

The Assistant Government Agent, (Emergency), Jaffna, will receive tenders up to 12 noon on Wednesday 2nd June, 1948, for the purchase of 7,163 torn and unserviceable Empty Gunny bags at the former I.P.S. Store, Kili-nocbchi.

Tenders should be made on forms obtainable on application to the Assistant Government Agent, (Emergency), Jaffna, from whom all particulars on the subject can be obtained.

E. J. RAJARATNAM,  
A.G.A. (E), Jaffna.

Kachcheri (E),  
Jaffna, 20th May., 1948.

# Out Of This Snare

(Continued from Page 1.)

Strutting his strength in a pub one afternoon, he amazed the bar standers by ordering a drink from each of ten bottles behind the bar, whiskies, brandies, and liqueurs. Calling for a sixteen-ounce schooner, he poured in each of the ten drinks, lifted the glass aloft and downed it in one long draught. He looked around to enjoy the remarks of amazement. He did it again.

Thus began his twenty-two days in an alcoholic fog. He groped around the blacked-out streets of Melbourne merely a male animal. He stalked his first victim into a secluded spot, then silently moved in on her. She screamed with frightened surprise. Animal-like, to preserve himself from detection, his powerful hands squeezed her throat to shut off the screaming. Her lifeless form under his hands brought him through the haze clearly enough to make him realize what he had done. But he did not let his head clear. He soaked it in more drink to drown the revolt within him. Again he was a prowling beast. For the twenty-two days he had the Melbourne papers screaming for his capture. The Army was embarrassed for the killer was in a U.S. Army uniform.

He told me that when his mind cleared he had a fairly good recollection of the first murder, but he could recall nothing of the other three; in fact, he could recall very little of the entire twenty-two days. His nineteen-year-old physique carried him along, but his reason was separated from every restraint except the cautions dictated by self-preservation. Medical authorities testified in court that none of the women were raped; it seems that as soon as they screamed, he instinctively stopped their screaming to protect himself.

One morning back in camp, his head cleared. He wondered what had happened to him; he tried to disavow to himself any connection with the fantastic self-accusation of murder; he couldn't believe it, but couldn't shake off the conviction. He checked his clothes and found blood stains. With a deep feeling of guilt he tried to wash away the stains. His younger tent-mate came in and they talked. Leonski shifted the conversation and it turned to the camp, to the town and the murders. As he worked the story given by the papers from his buddy, Leonski heard for the first time what he had done. Staggering under the horror of it, he wondered aloud if he were not the murderer. The younger lad, frightened with the burden unloaded on him, went to his immediate officer. Leonski was arrested and condemned to hang from the neck until dead.

During the trial he admitted nothing and had the court puzzled by his air of nonchalant bravado. They could find no answer to the question, why did he do it? He had no motive. He was merely a young male animal on the loose. But he was a young male animal in whom were buried many pictures of sex crimes from the pulp magazines.

That he had so brutally destroyed defenceless life gave Leonski resignation to his death penalty; he regretted only that nothing could be done to undo the damage.

After his story, which he allowed to be used if it would do any good, he went to confession. It was his first.

He had been baptized in the Catholic Church, but had not received sufficient instruction to be able to say the Our Father. His mother was forever leaving for her work as he returned from school. And the public schools did not give him even the code of the Ten Commandments.

On the first of September I was ordered to Sydney, but on November sixth I received secret orders to return to Melbourne. Father George Hannon, curate in a parish near the Russell Street Gaol, had in my absence spent about two hours every day with Ed, continuing the instructions we had started together. Each of us had seen a nineteen-year-old social castoff build himself up by religious instruction and God's grace into a man who daily looked death in the face and smiled happily.

Father Hannon was so confident that Ed Leonski was ready to meet his Maker that I felt more able to carry out

the instructions of the Commanding Officer. I reported to Colonel Purdy in his hotel room.

"You are to assist Leonski," Colonel Purdy said, "Tomorrow morning at six he will be hanged."

"Does the boy know?" I asked. "No," he replied, "you are to tell him. This is my first official act as Chief of the Military Police," he continued. "I'm just back from the front lines because of poor health. I'll do anything you ask, but I can't change the order of the court, nor can I change the time of execution." It was two o'clock in the afternoon, and together we outlined every move that would be necessary.

At seven that evening I called to see Ed. He stood up with his usual smile and cocked his head inquiringly.

"Why are you down, Father?" he asked.

"On business," I stalled, "I couldn't leave town without saying hello to you." So we sat on the side of his cot and talked for ten minutes. Then he came back to it.

"Father, why are you down?"

I faced it obliquely. "Remember Ed, the answer Our Lord gave to the Good Thief on the Cross—"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." With another question I shifted, and on the surface we were away from it.

"When will it be, Father?" he asked quietly. His voice was steady and so were his eyes looking straight at me.

"All right, Ed, here it is," I said. "At six o'clock tomorrow morning."

We both went silent, each with his head down.

The radio had been on, but I hadn't noticed it. In the silence between us the radio's voice became more articulate. Strangely the program was the Catholic Hour. The Jesuit Father Johnson was speaking about the Resurrection as the basis of our faith. Without comment Ed and I listened to the end; no two listeners were more attentive that Sunday evening. And then it was over. "Let's turn on some music, Father," Ed said, "and call the fellows in. I want to see them."

Their greeting for me was silenced as they gathered around Ed in protective sympathy. There was nothing in Ed's face to tell them of the presence of death; it must have been on mine. I withdrew to a corner of the cell, stretched out on a wooden bench, and lit a cigarette. Lighting the cigarette showed me how nervous I was, so I smoked quietly and alone, letting them work it out their own way.

Calling attention to me stretched out on the bench, one of the lads had the courage and humour to dispel the gathering gloom. "Look at the chaplain," he said wittingly, "Isn't he a hell of a chaplain?"

And so we brightened up. And as if we were planning a football game between two New England high schools, coachlike I was showing this group of American boys in a sixteenth-century English prison how one of them whom they had come to love would meet the opposition in the morning.

At ten o'clock Ed and I were alone, ready for the official reading of the court sentence. There was a sharp rap at the cell door, and we stood at attention. Accompanied by the Military Police, now militarily rigid, Colonel Purdy entered and acknowledged my salute. Army regulations do not allow a condemned man to salute. My knuckles touched Ed's knuckles; they didn't quiver, didn't clinch; they remained relaxed even though the reading of fallacious lines like "with malice afore-thought," "deliberately and wilfully." With the court sentence read, the Colonel looked up.

"Thank you," he said to Ed, for I'd told him the boy would make it easy for him.

Ed saluted. The Colonel acknowledged with the most sincere and dignified salute. Army regulations could not give a soldier's death, but Ed was going to death like a soldier, and no one knew it better than the Colonel who had seen boys from his own home state go to their death to dig the enemy out of the swamps of Bona. The Military Police departed.

We walked out into the courtyard

to talk without interruption. Out in the yard Ed looked up at the stars and took in a long deep breath of fresh air.

"Ed," I said, "I want you to know how much I respect you. If I were in your position, I couldn't do it half as well."

"Don't say that, Father," he said, "You believe what I believe. Well, that's all there is to it. I wish it were not so easy, for I ought to suffer more to atone in some way for what I've done."

At midnight Father George Hannon came to relieve me; I couldn't take a chance of weakening in the morning so I had asked him to come over. I went back to the rectory and tried to sleep till three, and in the meantime Father George heard Ed's final confession. When I returned, Ed gave me final instructions about the letter to his mother.

The three of us with Ed in the middle then walked up and down the prison courtyard saying the Rosary, praying to the Mother of God. Beginning each decade Father George would picture the scene from Our Lord's life and would make the application to the present. Ed listened intently, Father George led the prayers, and we responded, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

It was a grim sight, our shadows walking through the shadows of the prison bars cast by the light over our shoulders. More bitter irony was the shrieking of the drunken streetwalker that accompanied our prayers. It ceased when I called the Australian guard and gave him a package of cigarettes to silence her.

At four o'clock we were ready for Mass in the cell. Ed served and received Holy Communion. As we were about to start, one of the six fellow prisoners asked if he could go to confession; he had been baptized, I found, but had given up his faith five years before. Ed told me one time that he was passing on his instructions to Brownie, hoping it would help him. I don't know what happened to Brownie later, but on his deathbed Ed Leonski, by his example, pulled a fallen-away back into the Church.

After Mass Father George said a Mass of Thanksgiving, and Ed and I served. All the Army prisoners and the M.P.'s on duty knelt through this Mass also, silently praying each in his own way. Father George had no sooner packed his Mass-kit when we heard the sharp official rap on the heavy wooden door. It was exactly five-thirty.

A detail of M.P.'s came in, snapped the handcuffs on Ed's hand behind his back; and the procession of M.P.'s, prisoner, and priests started out of the cell, down the long prison corridor, out the prison door into the prison van. An M.P.'s flashlight showed a bench along the back, and we sat on it with Ed in the middle. I lit a cigarette, held it for him and he inhaled long and deep. And then while Father George held the flashlight I started the prayers for the dying from the ritual. Father George joined, and then Ed in a firm clear voice. Everything was all right with me until I happened to look over the edge of the page and saw a glistening tear on the cheek of the M.P. guarding the prisoner. My throat tightened. I let George and Ed go it alone. When I had swallowed the lump I joined them in the litany for the dying.

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," we prayed. "I give you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph assist me in my last agony."

The van stopped in front of a building that was gray in the morning mist; when we came on the brightly polished hard wood floor, I looked up. We were in a building built like a huge gymnasium. Khaki-clad legs lined the walls. Down the middle we marched with parade step until we came to the white drop-curtain. The body would drop behind this curtain, and Father George would be there to give him the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

"Good-bye, Ed" Father George said. "Thank you, Father," he said.

Ed and I, arm in arm, moved beyond the curtain, up wide steel stairs following the two M.P.'s.

"How are you, Ed?" I asked going up the stairs.

"All right Father," he said, "I know there's something inside me they can't kill."

We made a turn to the right on a steel ramp running along the wall. I saw the noose and so did he. He looked at it, turned to me, and with a slight nudge into my side spoke the last words I heard from him.

"It's a cinch, Father," he said.

The civilian hangman was ready, and irons were snapped on Ed's ankles, and a gray hood tied around his head. I held up the crucifix, my vow crucifix, for him to kiss and gain the plenary indulgence. The high colour had gone from his fair cheeks, leaving only traces of itself in spots. I embraced him. Silently his eyes spoke a thank you and good-bye.

His lips were tight as the gray hood was pulled down over his face. His carriage was erect and his step firm as he was led out along the narrow steel walk into position on the trap. I stood on the steel walk in front of him, an iron handrail separating us. The noose was brought into position, and I raised my right hand.

"All right, Ed," I said, "Here is the final blessing."

As my hand began to trace the sign of the Cross, he went down swiftly with a coughing sound. His face was looking up at me through the mask with his head characteristically cocked to the side. I gave him final absolution.

Father George was having a bit of difficulty anointing the swaying body, so I went down to help him. I held steady the hands now limp under the manacles while Father George anointed the palms with the sign of the Cross.

"Through this holy anointing, and His most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive every sin these hands have ever committed. Amen." So it was for five anointings. Then we knelt down and prayed aloud the Our Father and Hail Mary, ending with, "May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace, Amen."

As the medicos tested for life with stethoscopes, an M.P. came up to me.

"He was a man, Father. In combat I'd like to have a man like that leading the way," he said simply and sincerely.

The dawn was lighting up the hills as we stepped out into the air, and my thoughts turned naturally to the Resurrection. "Why, it's just like Easter morning," I thought. At noon I offered a Requiem Mass with the body present, the doors of the Church locked to curious outsiders. A few officers detailed to supervise the burial sat in the back. Father George and Father Stewart, the Pastor, served the Mass as their offering of public praise for the American boy who had died in disgrace far from his native land.

There was no military funeral. The casket, covered with canvas, was put in an Army truck. We rode ahead in Army sedans to the cemetery far removed from our honoured dead. We three priests began the burial service, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord hear my voice."

I am sure that He did. At any rate, I know that Our Lord helped me on the way back to Manila. When fear held me back and my duty as a priest ordered me into danger, I made it easier for myself.

"What do you say, Ed?" I prayed, for I had asked Ed to pray that I might be able to do the work demanded of me by duty.

Only this year Father Fred Gallagher and I were talking at Holy Cross of chaplain days. He had come into Melbourne some months later with the Marines from Guadalcanal.

"Leonski," he said, "That's funny you should speak about him. I had Edward Leonski's body moved up and buried alongside some of my Marines who died in Melbourne hospitals from wounds they received in battle."

And his body was buried where it belonged, with the rest of the American boys. Few of them had a harder fight on their hands than Ed Leonski.—The Sign, April 1948.