

The foundress goes on, against this background, to show how their life is essentially contemplative; and to warn them that if they lose their contemplative spirit they cease to be a leaven. They are 'nomad contemplatives'. In a world that is in many ways so uprooted there could hardly be a more pertinent vocation than this.

DOROTHY DAY, who has been living this kind of vocation for years, gives a plain, matter-of-fact description of what it may mean in the *American Catholic Worker* for April:

The older I get the more I see that life is made up of many steps, and they are small affairs, not giant strides. They may loom large in our consciousness, they may look big; but they are but boulders on the way that we have overcome. I suddenly remembered last month that I had kissed a leper, not once but twice, consciously, and I cannot say I am much the better for it. My progress has been no swifter. Once it was on the steps of Precious Blood church early one morning. A woman with cancer of the face was begging (beggars are only allowed in slums) and when I gave her money (no sacrifice on my part but merely an alms which someone had given me) she tried to kiss my hand. The only thing I could do was kiss her dirty old face with the gaping hole in it where an eye and a nose had been. It sounds like something but it was not. One gets used to ugliness so quickly. . . . Another time I was putting out a drunken prostitute with a huge toothless rouged mouth. I had been remembering how St Thérèse said that when you had to say No, when you had to refuse anyone anything, you could at least do it so that they went away a bit happier. I had to deny her a bed, but when that woman asked me to kiss her, I did, and it was a loathsome thing, the way she did it. It was scarcely a human normal mark of affection. One suffers these things and forgets them. But the daily, hourly, minutely giving up of one's own will and possessions which means poverty, is a hard, hard thing, and I don't think it gets any easier. . . .

The gestures of life are of course important, but they are not the life itself; and it is always difficult to keep perspective. We like to fancy ourselves in our gestures and then we fall. But the perspective of the life of poverty is what we need to live as Christians.

CORRIGENDUM: The price of SONGS OF ZARATHUSTRA reviewed in the May issue should have been 8s. 6d. We apologise too for the misprint in the name of the publishers, George Allen & Unwin.