



Craftsman's Fair photos taken by Edw. DuPuy, Black Mt., N.C.

Sisters discover the dulcimer at a . . .

Mountain Fair

by Sister Mary Stephen

THOUGH we had a reading acquaintance with the dulcimer, to see and hear its beauty was truly to discover it. (For fuller explanation see next page.) Besides dulcimer makers, we met whittlers, weavers, spinners (of yarn and tale!) at the annual Craftsman's Fair held last year at Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Why such an interest? Because of the aim of the Southern Highlands Handicrafts Guild who sponsored the Fair — to preserve traditional crafts of the region, encourage creative use of design and material, and to provide sale of the crafts. Surely if handicrafts play such an important part in the economic and cultural life of the mountains, they are worthy of our investigation.

Some of the Highlights

There was an interview with ALLEN EATON, famed lecturer, author and scholar in the field of handicrafts and rural life.

JEAN RITCHIE, youngest member of the "Singing Family of the Cumberlands" was there with dulcimer and folk songs.

Wood carvers from many areas were present, but those from the Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N. C., were of particular interest. One of their group carved a thirty inch Mountain Madonna from local cherry wood for one of Glenmary's mission churches. Objects ranging from tables of fine design to the wood-carved "bony hounds" so familiar in the hills — these can supplement the meagre income of many a mountain farmer.

A Variety of Skills

Basketry, weaving, spinning, dyeing, iron-work — of what value are such skills in our industrial age? Of what value is self-expression and creative work? As one wood-carver said: "I like to whittle. It helps me say things I can't say in so many words."

Throughout the exhibit we often recalled Pius XII's advice to missionaries that they share and use the riches

of art and culture native to their people. The "restoration of all things in Christ" must be applied to total creation. Every human value has a place in God's Plan. Is it mere wishful thinking to look and labor for the day that these crafts and skills will contribute to the enrichment of the life of the Church in the United States?





So the sisters took one home

and many more discovered the dulcimer! The quaint, oblong, usually 3 stringed instrument has a plaintive and sweet (in Latin "dulcis") tone. It offers an excellent accompaniment for hymn, folk and ballad singing.

Because different instruments of the same name have been discovered in other ages and countries, research concerning the dulcimer is difficult. But Allen Eaton claims that no prototype to the instrument as it is found in the Southern Highlands, has been discovered elsewhere. The dulcimer then is thought to be native to Appalachian America.

Homer Ledford from Winchester, Ky. (the craftsman shown on the opposite page) is the fashioner of the instrument which Sister Michael is playing.

Incidentally

Sister Michael is the Sister currently "Up for Adoption". (Adopters share in the Glenmary apostolate in a special way by supporting a particular Sister with prayer and sacrifice.) Sister Michael is native to New England, Haverhill, Mass., to be exact. Having a facility for music, Sister soon learned the art of dulcimer playing.

If you are already an Adopter, you might simply wish to contribute towards the support of the Sisters Art Department with which Sister Michael is also connected. To understand the cultural heritage of the missions and to provide better art objects for that field — these are some of the department's aims.

I am interested in adopting Sister Michael.

I pledge \$..... towards the work of the Art Department.

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