

## Twenty-Five Years of the Regional Seminary Aberdeen Hong Kong

THE climb up a steep mountain is rewarded from time to time when the traveller pauses to gaze back over the slopes already climbed, to look out over the ever-growing scene that stretches away into the dim distance. Seminary work is accompanied by difficulties all its own; it can at times be very up-hill work. A twenty-fifth anniversary is an excuse to stop for a moment and look back over the slopes and cliffs already conquered, to look out at the ever-calling harvest-field stretching away so far into the distance.

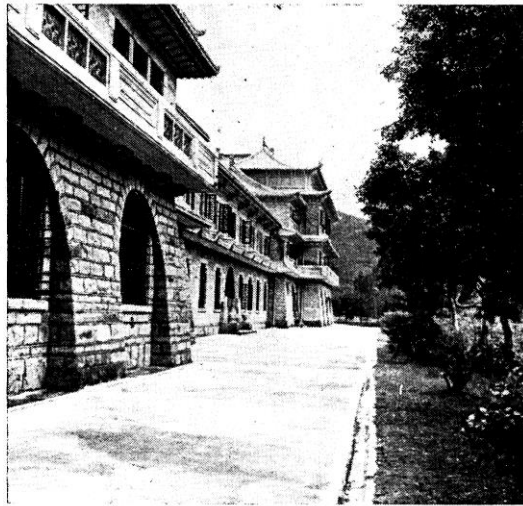
The first classes in the Regional Seminary began on October 28 1931. One of the projects of Archbishop, now Cardinal Costantini, was the foundation of a Regional Seminary for South China. Various places were suggested but when in the early months of 1927 he visited Aberdeen and stood on the headland between the mountains and the sea, he said that there was no need to look for another site. Many problems had to be solved, many permissions asked, money obtained, before work could begin. Last-minute delays were overcome by the kindly intercession of the Patroness of the Missions, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, so it was on her feast day in 1930 that His Excellency, the Vicar-Apostolic of Hong Kong, the late Bishop Henry Valtorta laid the cornerstone of the building. Those were the hard days of the worldwide depression and it was found impossible to carry out the original plans for a fine Chinese-style building. Only one side of the quadrangle was completed and even that part took longer than had been expected by the contractor. Finally in October 1931 the first classes were held. There was no proper kitchen, no proper chapel. All supplies had to be ferried across the inlet of the sea that separates the Seminary hill from the village of Aberdeen. There were difficulties; there were also advantages. The situation was very beautiful; the difficulty of approach secured

privacy; the sea was at hand for swimming, the mountains for walks.

The first ten years passed in comparative uneventfulness. Then followed the Japanese occupation and all the rigours of those hard days. Came the dawn after that dark night and from Macao returned the little remnant of seminarians who had survived the war years, which except for the final two months

high, classes and meals had to be multiplied, attics cleared out to house the overflow from the regular dormitories. Then again the swing back to more normal life, with the new problems of the "Field Afar". To China for the present return is impossible, but workers are needed for the rich harvest-fields in Indonesia, Borneo, New Guinea, Madagascar, Formosa. So little bands of seminarians set out like Xavier

### SCHOOL FOR FUTURE PRIESTS



Front view of the Regional Seminary of Our Lady Queen of China in Aberdeen, Hongkong.

of the war in the Far East, were spent in Aberdeen.

That group was joined by another from Kaying and soon the regular life of the Regional Seminary was once more established. Four years later came the "Invasion" of refugees from Red China: from Manchuria they came and from Shantung, from Hakow, from Kingshien, from Shanghai. Some stayed, some went on to Macao or Manila, but the numbers in the Regional Seminary for a time were very

for foreign lands where their own fellow-men are to be found, but where besides the overseas Chinese there are the original inhabitants still waiting for the "Good Tidings". It is the hope of the Regional Seminary that the spirit of Xavier, the longing to win the world for Christ, may fill all the priests ordained from the Regional Seminary.

A few details may be of interest:—From the beginning to the present time, 412 seminarians have been enrolled in the Seminary Registers. These include the 79 seminarians who are at present studying in the Seminary, and who come from 25 different dioceses or prefectures, and from one religious congregation, the "Discipuli Domini". Not included are the Kingshien seminarians who came with their professors and for a few months were a "seminary within a seminary" until they went on to Manila.

Many of those ordained have been imprisoned in Communist China, some have been released, many continue to endure the hardships of life in gaol. We recommend all our priests to your prayers — kindest gift to us in honour of our Silver Jubilee — we recommend in a special way those still in China, above all those in Red prisons.