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## The Wisdom of Nun-Sense

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Christ. The last known written words of Luther, uniting himself with the Psalmist, were: "It is true that we are beggars...." So should be the sentiment of all Christians during these blessed days of restoration, scholarship, sympathy, and grace.

BROTHER D. GABRIEL, F.S.C.

## THE WISDOM OF NUN-SENSE.

NUN-SENSE. By Sister Madeleine, C.S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1964. 147 pp.

A nucleus of fifteen articles written over a decade, a quarter of a century teaching experience. Out of these, almost naturally, as the author states, *Nun-Sense* "just grewed" like Topsy. The topic range of the book is wide indeed, and as old as creation and as modern as a computer. Under seven sections with the not unfamiliar ring of "The Unknown God", "Life Can Be Beautiful", "A Little Learning Is Not A Dangerous Thing", "Imperatives", "Orchids to You", "Nuns Are People", TV, sedatives 4H clubs, sports, Pravda, and a host of twentieth century facts and fancies are discussed to provoke a supernatural line of thought. Thus, "children of the world" might chuckle and then ponder as Sister Madeleine provocatively bursts bubbles. The bill-board-blighted age draws the reflection, "If men loved their wives the way manufacturers loved their products, the divorce rate would plummet downward". In defense of wrinkles she exclaims, "Why should we be ashamed of having been born before someone else?" "Children of the light" will appreciate the author's perception, Christianize the constellations. Cassiopeia's W right side up may be an M—for Mary. Mercy is a moot question in the "Divine Debating Society". "...the Lord loves a good debater, but unlike most debaters, He loves to lose to His opponents." The book threads with the hint that almost all the paraphernalia and trivia of our highly scientific and too often materialist civilization can be used as launching pads to the "other world".

A sense of the supernatural in the current of a work-a-day world, a bit of originality, kindly wit, short chatty chapters—these go for the merits of *Nun-Sense*. However, the reader feels the pages overladen with references to this century's facts, fads, and fancies. True, the lamp of Christian truths and attitudes has been turned on many and varied aspects of our somewhat self-conscious, comfort-devoted age so that real values are discerned, but one wonders if depth was somewhat lost to range.

In any case, *Nun-Sense* provides light spiritual reading for just about everybody. That long wait at the doctor's office or those elusive five minutes between two occupations—these are gaps that could be profitably and delightfully filled by and with *Nun-Sense*.

SISTER MARY TERESITA FIEL, R.G.S.

## THE ELUSIVE ILLUSION

SOUTHEAST ASIA: ILLUSION AND REALITY IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS: By Lennox A. Mills. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964. 365 pp.

Professor Lennox Mills' concept of illusion and reality in politics and economics is a tangled web of generalized conclusions drawn from a smattering of isolated cases which appear to him as Southeast Asian fact. He undertakes a study greatly limited by the factor that, as he himself admits, the region is in a state of flux. In his attempt to visualize the basic forces at work in the region and to draw tentative conclusions from them, he encounters the normal difficulties which Southeast Asian affairs analysts inevitably meet. Due to the change patterns of the region, the best and safest approach is oftentimes that of presentation of facts and events.

The book as a whole is just that: a sampling of major events and developments in each country along economic, political and military lines. When Mills manages to stick to such a track, he is well within the limits of competency and objectivity. When he does not, his observations and conclusions are far from objective. A posteriori conclusions with an a priori outlook do not mix very well together.

In fairness to Professor Mills, it can be said that the work as a whole comes off passably, particularly the chapters on economics and international relations. His chapter on foreign aid, in the brief space allotted to its discussion, is an engaging chapter. It does not measure up to the quality of John Montgomery's *The Politics of Foreign Aid*, but then again it must be remembered that it took the latter a whole book to discuss the subject, and Mills does not present his work as anything less than a generalized study.

Mills' first chapter, on Nationalism and Democracy, is the most disappointing. One would expect more from an opening chapter. He labors under the impression that the sole standard for judging democracy and its manifestations is the orthodox Western pattern. He completely overlooks one thing in particular: that the Western pattern is