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mimesis under that Word; the church which awaits the coming of the Lord in joyously energetic hope and in holy fear — that church stands in the apostolic succession in a sense and in a reality which no unbrokenly successive imposition of palms on pates can guarantee.

St. Louis, Mo.

A VIRGIN AND CHILD FROM MEDIEVAL CHINA

In the *International Review of Missions* (July 1956) Dr. John Foster, professor of church history in the University of Glasgow, discusses the finding of a Latin gravestone in the city of Yang-chou when in 1951 its ancient walls were pulled down. The gravestone goes back almost to Marco Polo's time, d. ca. 1324. Under the Mongol dynasty (1206—1368) there were many foreigners in China. In the 1320's Yang-chou was visited by the Italian Franciscan Friar Odoric, who wrote of the city: "I came to a city by name Ianzu, in which is a place of our Friars, and [in which there are] also three churches of the Nestorians." This was all that was known so far of Latin Christians in Yang-chou. The discovery of the Latin gravestone is therefore of considerable historical importance. In shapely Italian script the gravestone says "In the name of the Lord, Amen. Here lies Catherine, daughter of the late Sir Dominic de Viglione, who died in the year of the Lord 1342 in the month of June." There is also an engraving showing the Virgin and Child. As the writer shows, the "virgin" is St. Catherine, and the picture reminds one strongly of Cimabue's *Madonna Enthroned* (Florence, ca. 1300). According to legend, St. Catherine was a princess who was beheaded in Alexandria after severe torture, at the beginning of the fourth century. Angels transported her body to Mount Sinai, where a monastery was dedicated to her and named after her. In this St. Catherine Monastery, Tischendorf about a century ago discovered the Codex Sinaiticus. Dr. Foster traces the St. Catherine picture on the gravestone in Yang-chou back to John of Montecorvino, the first Italian missionary in China (ca. 1294), who, in a letter addressed in 1305 to his superiors at home, reported that he had baptized 3,000 persons and had "bought 40 boys, sons of pagans, between 7 and 8 years old, who as yet were not learning any religion." These he taught the Latin letters and "our rite" and then baptized them. He then asked for a number of books for the instruction of his students. Dr. Foster believes that it was one of these Chinese students who wrote the beautiful gravestone inscription and sketched the picture of St. Catherine as the "Virgin and Child."

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