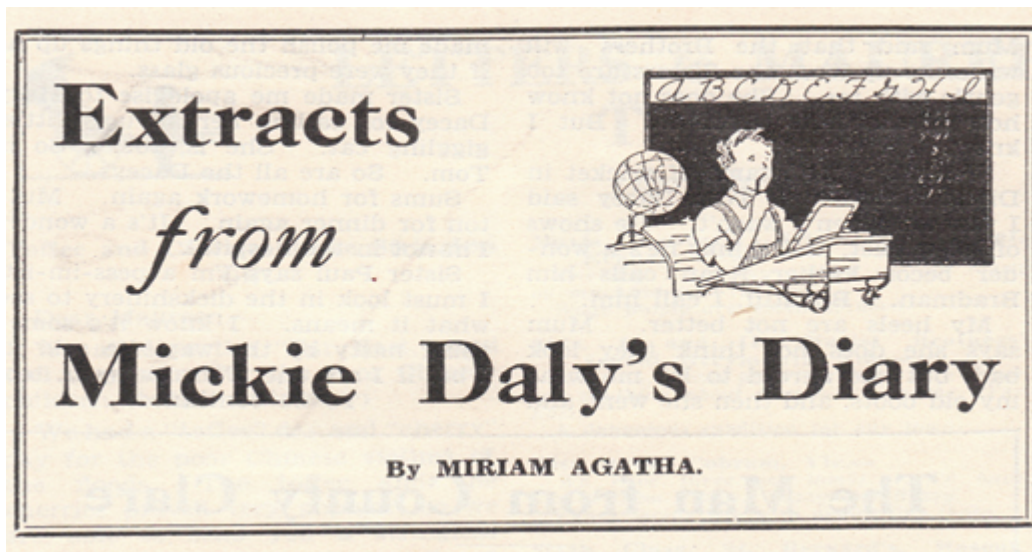


Extract 4 from Mickie Daly's diary, June 1932



Next Day.

Well - you should of seen the girls after the "Far East" after lunchtime, the whole ten of them in our class begging for the lone of my copy, to look at in the lunch hour and to take home at night.

"Let me take it home to-night, please, Mickie."

"Oh, me, Mickie,"

"No! no! Me, Mickie."

"Oh, Mickie, I helped you with your sums yesterday."

"But I'll help you to-day - if you like."

"I'll help you every day."

"Our figs are ripe, Mickie. You can come into our garden on your way home this afternoon."

(She chased Dickie and me yesterday, just when we were trying to get some that hung over the fence. It's the law, too. You can have flowers or fruit that hang over the fence; it's not stealing at all.)

"Mickie, I'll lend you my blue and red pencil."

Such a fuss they made. You see, Sister Allerwishes read a little bit of the children's part of the "Far East" at Catechism time, and that made the girls anksush for more. But this time I took care it was not ladies first at all. I let all my boy friends have a good look first. They liked it, all right; you bet they did. I wasn't going to let Tom Dacey have a lend all to himself. I was just going to make him look at it while I turned the pages over. But I remembered my Acts

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book, and that I have seerius thoughts of being a missionary priest, so I gave him a good read all to himself. He read all the children's part and looked at the pictures all through. I think he is converted to it. He looked very seerius, and he made a visit at dinner-time. I saw him going along to the drink-shed, and the next thing I saw, he was disapeering through the little gate into the church garden. I watched in great surprise to make quite sure. Sure enough, it was Tom Dacey I saw going up the church steps. A most un-use-u-ill thing for him to do at dinner-time. I suppose he'll want to be a missionary priest. Anyhow, I thought of it first.

In the afternoon the girls begged Sister Paul to read some of the "Far East" to us. I did not think Sister Paul would. She never changes the lesson. If it's time for sums, we have sums; if it's time for spelling, we just spell like one thing, I can tell you, and so on et-cet-er-ah. You could beg all day for a story and you wouldn't get it, if it was not the time for it. You might as well talk to Mount Kos-ee-us-ko as to Sister Paul. Mother is a bit like that about mutton and green vegetibbles, and going to school every day, and getting up when you are called, and doing your Saturday jobs. Well, anyhow, when reading time came the new School Papers had not arrived, and we were quite finished last month's, so Mary Dacey asked again for the "Far East."

Mary told Sister I had a copy. Sister told me to get it. I nearly fell over! I flew out to my bag. I thought for a moment it's sure to be gone. That dog from the presbytery is always sniffing about our bags; perhaps he's chewed it. I'm such a stiffy. It's like what would happen to me. But no, there it was in my bag. The cover was a bit soiled because the boys were looking at it at lunch-time. Maurie had bread-and-honey and Dickie had sardeen sandwiches, and some-one else had jam. But, of course, I had tried to wipe all traces of their fingers off before I put it away. But now I gave it a good rub over on my coat.

Sister Paul looked at the corners a bit suspishusly and took it up a bit gingerly, but she did not say anything.

Sister read to us, and you could of heard a tin drop in the room. It was a hot day, but I didn't want a drink once, and no one else asked to get one. We just all stared at Sister Paul. I did not take my eyes off her, although I knew what she was going to say half the time, because I had read it three times. Then Sister let us all read out bits. And what do you think? That sivear Sister Paul smiled at some of the answers to the kids' letters. True. It is a try-umf for the "Far East," I can tell you. Because she never seems smiley and jolly like the other Sisters. Perhaps she is a Scotch lady. I've heard that Scotch people cannot see anything funny in this world because of the bag-pipes. I don't know if it is true. But, anyhow, Sister smiled at the letters, and we nearly fainted to see her do it.

When reading time was over Sister gave me back the paper. I was going to offer her a loan of it, but I did not know how to say it.

Didn't those girls clammer round me after school, begging to take the "Far East" home for the night! I was going to let Rosie Moran have it, not because she has a fig tree with ripe figs on it, but because she's a nice girl, that never smiles when I get a sum wrong. But I remembered in good time to do an act. So I gave it to Mary pacey to take home, although the Daceys are to me a very objectsishonal family. Before Mary took it, all the girls copied "Maureen's" address into their note-books, and they said they are all going to write to her. And they are going to ask their mothers to let them get the "Far East."

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Tuesday.

Dickie and me made our visit today. I talked very seeriously to Dickie about his futcher. He intends to be an airman. But I said what about his soul and the souls of the pagans? Dickie seemed impressed. I said a non-stop flight to Heaven would be the best to go after. You see, a missionary works hard for God, and then, if the pagans kill him, he goes straight to Heaven- no landing in Purgatory at all.

Wednesday.

I wonder do they get mutton to eat over at the mission in Han Yang. I hope they don't. But I must try to get over my avershin to mutton. I suppose they never have a jam-tart or an apple-pie. I expect the Chinese cook would not know how to make them. A good plan would be to learn to cook before you 'go there, and then you could make a tart for feast days. Sometimes, when Mother is baking, she gives me a small piece of dough, and I roll it out and bake it, and it's bonzer. But that's no help. The thing is to make the dough. But I suppose by the time you have studied for years, and left your family and gone away to China, you don't care much what you eat or drink. It is only what my father calls a side-ishoo.

Saturday.

I've spent all the afternoon writing a letter. I will put it in my diary, so that in the futcher, when I am old and grey, I can read it again. It marks a turning point in My Life. I have the dictionary beside me, because I want to spell all the words correctly.

Dear Father Mullany, -

My name is Michael Joseph Daly, and I want to be a Missionary and go to China. I am past ten. Will you please keep a place for me at St. Columban's? There's a boy named Tom Dacey,

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and another one named Dick Thorley. They might want to go, too. But I thought of it first because my Grandmamma sent me your paper.

I used to be a very lazy boy, but I am trying to do better. I stick to my homework now, and I get a few sums right every day. Sister Paul, who is a very strict teacher and never smiles, says she is pleased with my work this month. I can tell you, dear Father, that Sister Paul is hard to please. But she smiled at the letters in the "Far East."

I am very fond of pastry, and not of mutton or beans. But I am trying hard to overcome my appetite. In the years I have to wait to enter your College I have plenty of time to correct this greedy fault.

I am keeping it a Secret. I talked to Dickie Thorley about the Missionary life, but only to try and convert him. I have not told him straight out that I mean to go to St. Columban's if you will have me when I am old enough.

My father and mother will be very sad, I know. But they are very good and holy and will let me go.

I am going to the Brothers' school soon, and I will work hard and do my best. Tom Dacey in our class thinks he is very clever, but I am catching him. Sister Paul was amazed when I came second to him at Catechism. He was amazed, too. We nearly had a fight about it at lunch-time. But I managed to keep my temper. I promise to try my hardest to keep out of fights and all mischief.

Pray for me please, dear Father, and I'll pray for you. Do not tell anyone the Secret.

I am,

Your loving

MICHAEL JOSEPH DALY.

That's the letter.

I hope it will read all right to Father Mullany, and that he will not think I have a cheek wanting to book a place at St. Columban's. But you see, lots of boys will want to go, and I just want to make sure. Now I've got to coax Mother to let me go to the Brothers'. I don't just want the ride in the tram and the sport at the Brothers', I want to get into the way of a man's school.

I can hop on and off trams when they are going. I'm pretty snifty at it. But I'll promise Mother not to, and I'll keep my promise if she will let me go.

I wonder will she.

To be continued.