

ABBOT DOM GASQUET WILL REVISE THE LATIN BIBLE

Has Arrived in New York in Preparation for Stupendous Work which will take Fifty Years to Complete—Is Singularly Fitted for Task.

Abbot Dom Gasquet, president of the English Benedictines, and chairman of the commission appointed by Pope Pius X. to revise the Latin Bible, or Vulgate, has arrived in New York and will visit the larger cities and explain the progress made by his commission during the past five years. Abbot Gasquet has been in America before, but not since he has undertaken the stupendous work of revising the Bible, which will require about fifty years to complete.

It was in May, 1907, that Pope Pius X. announced his determination to prepare for a most critical and painstaking revision of the Latin Bible, called the Vulgate. The crying necessity for such a revision had been felt for many centuries, but as the lifetime of a commission was not sufficient in time to accomplish the herculean task, and new members had to be grafted to the old, the work, though often started, was never completed. So it is that now for the first time since the year 371, when St. Jerome completed the first revision of the Latin Vulgate, the work has been undertaken in such a way that it will be carried to completion. Much has been accomplished in the past five years, but as the commission has found it self hampered for the necessary funds an appeal has been sent out to the world for aid. Abbot Gasquet himself wished to make that appeal direct to America, and for this purpose came to the United States. The Knights of Columbus have volunteered to bear all the expenses of his visit so that all returns may be used by him for his work.

Fitted for Great Task.

Abbot Gasquet is regarded as singularly fitted for the task which will occupy the remaining years of his life. He was the one among the many Catholic scholars of the world that was selected by the Pope to carry out the work. The greater part of his life has been passed in research work and he is a linguist of unusual ability. For years he has searched through the archives of England for manuscripts, and from sources of the kind had produced his reliable histories, such as "Henry VIII. and the English Monarchs," "The Eve of the Reformation," and others. It was with some burden some task, but despite the amount of hard work placed upon him he has found time to write a history of medieval England, which, when published, will throw a new light on the religious controversies of that country.

The work of Abbot Gasquet and his commission is expected to be of untold value to all readers and students of the Bible. Protestant as well as Catholic, as it will gather together the most complete collection of Biblical manuscripts now in existence. Besides this the commission will make a complete revision of the Latin translations, and give the world the most accurate copy of the Latin Bible since the fourth century, when St. Jerome completed the task originally, at the command of Pope Damasus.

Since the days of St. Jerome much has been added to the Bible for which there is said to be no authority. This was done by copyists before the invention of the printing press. These earnest and often overzealous workers frequently grafted old readings, words and phrases on to St. Jerome's scholarly text and in time the new copies of the Vulgate were much like the Itala, a pre-Jerome edition of the Bible. While these were not authorized by the Catholic Church did not consider them heretical, but made frequent effort to have them revised, however, without satisfactory success owing to the stupendous task.

One of the early revisions attempted was made by Aleuin, the learned Benedictine scholar and Abbot of Tours, in France. This revision was

made in the year 800 A. D., and was presented to his patron, Emperor Charlemagne. Of Aleuin's labors three codices have come down to us, as Codex Valladellanus, Codex Pauline and Zurich Codex.

None Ever Completed.

About the same period in history Theodulf, the famous Bishop of Orleans, made his revision, which, however, savors much of the early Spanish readings. Several other notable men undertook to make revisions of the Vulgate, but none was ever completed. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the text of St. Jerome had become somewhat obscure and the Council of Trent in 1546 called upon Pope Paul III. to revise the Bible. A commission was appointed, but no revision was made until 1590, when Pope Sixtus V. published his version. This edition was withdrawn shortly afterward, and only 41 copies are now in existence.

In 1591 a new commission was appointed, with Cardinal Colonna at its head. This commission finished its labors in nineteen days. That same year Cardinal Colonna succeeded Pope Gregory XIV., and published his edition in 1592. It is this Latin text that is in use today. It is called the Clementine Bible, after the Pope.

Even when this Bible was published it was conceded that it was not complete, and would have to be revised some day, but none attempted to undertake the work until Pope Pius X. ordered the work begun. His charges, though simple, were very severe. They were to determine the wording of the text of St. Jerome's Latin translation of the year 371.

Starting out with what appeared to be a stone wall in front of them, the commission, headed by Abbot Gasquet, prepared to scale it. That they have succeeded and their work will be carried on to completion is now assured. When a system of work was decided upon Abbot Gasquet sent Benedictine scholars to search the archives and libraries of Europe. These men traveled from the Mediterranean to the steppes of Russia. Everywhere they were received with welcome and vaults, secret chambers and libraries filled with dust-covered manuscripts were thrown open to them. Many of these had not been distributed for centuries, but all were now uncovered, and in the massive pile 14,000 Biblical manuscripts containing 30,000 pages have been brought to light.

Use Made of Camera.

As the commission could not borrow these, nor could they be bought any price, a modern way of gathering the material into its own commission was struck upon by the commission. This was to photograph each page, thereby getting an exact reproduction of the original.

A large camera, with a rectangular prism attached to its lens, was equipped for the purpose. By this method the picture of the manuscript was thrown directly upon sensitized paper which when developed turns out a black page with a fac-simile in white of the printed letters of the manuscript. As the camera does not lie the commission is gathering on its book shelves in Rome large folio pictorial volumes of every known Bible in the world—one to which scholars can resort and with the aid of a card index discover every change of reading ever grafted onto the Latin version of the Bible of St. Jerome.

The book of Genesis has been collated and printed. It is Abbot Gasquet's hope that he may live to see completed the revision of the Pentateuch and the Psalms.

continually raiding friendly tribes, so that a new punitive expedition became imperative. It is estimated that he has cost Great Britain over \$15,000,000 in unsuccessful expeditions during the past fourteen years and much as the present government may dislike spending the money, his latest exploit looks like costing several millions more.

When in 1910 the present government announced the abandonment of the interior of Somaliland and the withdrawal to the coast there was the usual outcry against the Liberal policy of "scuttle and trust to luck" on the outskirts of the Empire, but the most ardent Tory could not honestly say that the millions expended on chasing the Mullah had been profitably spent. That the retirement to the coast was a tactical error, if Great Britain intended keeping Somaliland, has been proved by the state of chaos and bloodshed that has reigned since the Mullah has been allowed to rove around without let or hindrance. But, as usual in such cases, Mullahs has overthrown the wrong people—the gallant but all too scanty soldiery left to garrison the country and the friendly natives who committed themselves to England's cause.

In 1910, when England shuffled off her responsibilities for the safety of Somaliland, she saved her conscience by supplying the desert tribes with rifles and ammunition, and pretended to believe that they would be able to defend themselves against the raids and massacres of the truculent Mullah. The weapons have merely been an additional incentive to his attacks, with the consequence that large numbers have been falling into his hands. Further, large numbers of Somalis who had enlisted in the King's African Rifles were disbanded and turned adrift to join the Mullah as they pleased. Practically the whole country was handed over to the tender mercies of this triumphant ruffian and his thousands of well armed and ferocious followers.

England can no longer disregard the fact that the Mullah is no mere predatory chieftain. He is the leader of large and remarkably well-trained forces, and a continued assertion of his Mullahship by armed activity against the infidels and their allies, the friendlies, is indispensable to the maintenance of his prestige and the allegiance of his adherents. Naturally the latter are very largely influenced by the degree of immunity he is able to enjoy. Thus, for some four or five years after his power was broken at Jiddah he lay very low, but as soon as ever England showed a disposition to stay her hand his following reassembled, and he got to work on the wretched friendlies, again massacring and plundering all who refused to join him. Many, by the way, have joined him on terms of service under his banner or subsidies to his forces in the field.

Seeks Higher Game.

As the resistance of the friendly tribes has gradually weakened the Mullah has been forced for the sake of his prestige to fly at higher game. Hence, the recent attack on a British force, which may be the prelude to an onslaught on the coast positions. Hitherto the British forces have been far too small for any permanent effect, for not only can the Mullah get all the rifles and ammunition he wants through the French port of Jibuti, but large numbers of his men are surprisingly well trained and have also fought in up-to-date battle formations. Throughout his campaigns the Mullah has been assisted by several officers in the Austrian army, and an officer in the Austrian army, and he is well known in London. If report speaks truly, the Mullah has also benefited by the services of an English naval officer, who after his disgrace in the service sought a career in the midst of the Somaliland rebellion. Be that as it may, the British at Jiddah get a pretty big surprise on finding a large force of the African natives, instead of employing the old-fashioned Dervish rush, advancing to the attack in modern formations. It was the first time that such a thing had happened in African warfare, and it is a significant fact that the Mullah is the first to adopt them. His men have also learned how to take cover in the most approved fashion, and if the British losses were only 101 killed and wounded at Jiddah it was due only to the fact that the black riflemen had forgotten to put up their hind legs, so that their bullets mostly fell short.

Bravery of Deputy Commissioner.

The only comfort England can expect from this affair, which resulted in the loss of over fifty men of the Camel Corps—the only British trained and officered force available for patrolling the hinterland—is over the conduct of Deputy Commissioner G. F. Archer, to whose gallantry, paid a well-deserved tribute in the House of Commons. Mr. Archer, who is only 30, but who has been in East Africa for twelve years, was at Burao, one hundred miles from the coast, when he learned that the Camel Corps had been cut off by a force of between 1,500 and 2,000 Camols. There were no newspaper correspondents on the spot so we shall probably never have a full description of the desperate thirty-mile march he undertook.

In the words of his abrupt official report, Mr. Archer "collected twenty men and went to the rescue." Marvelous to relate, those twenty men managed to bring off the remainder of the Camel Corps, including their wounded, and the hero of the day contented himself with reporting in dry official language that he had successfully retired from the danger zone, and that the situation was "well in hand." To the pioneer of civilization, such exploits are all in the day's work.

An Inducement.

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In 1903 Maj.-Gen. Egerton administered a crushing defeat, which resulted in the Mullah being driven out of the British protectorate. He was then given a settled sphere, but the promise he made to keep the peace has not been kept. He adopted a policy of keeping Somaliland in a ferment by

Times of Civil Pursuits.

Originally he was a schoolmaster at Berbera, but, tiring of his efforts to instruct the youth of the locality,

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