

LEO THE THIRTEENTH.

Foundation of Ecclesiastical Seminaries
in India.

TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHERS, THE
Patriarchs, Primate, Arch-
bishops, Bishops, and other Or-
dinary in Peace and Commu-
nion with the Apostolic See
LEO XIII. POPE.

*Venerable Brethren, Health and Apo-
stolic Benediction.*

To the extreme shores of the East, discovered by the success and valour of the Portuguese, whither so many tend intent upon commerce, We, too, with the hope of far higher gains, even from the beginning of Our Pontificate, turned Our eyes and Our attention. Those immense regions of India, in which for so many centuries the work of so many evangelisers has been spent, are present to Our mind and arouse Our charity. The first figure that occurs to Us among their ranks is that of St. Thomas the Apostle, to whom is justly attributed, as to its first author, the spread of the Gospel in India. Another is that of St. Francis Xavier, who at a later period, laboured in the same praiseworthy cause, distinguished by a constancy and a charity so incredible that he converted one hundred thousand souls from the fables and impure superstitions of the Brahmins to a sound faith and worship. The example of the saint has been followed by many clerics, both secular and regular, who, under the guidance and mission of the Apostolic See, have striven to guard and promote those sacred institutions which Thomas founded and Xavier restored. Nor has the work to day ceased. Nevertheless in the vast tracks of that country how many men are at a distance from the truth, and plunged in the darkness of superstition, especially in the north, how extensive a field ready for the reception of the Gospel has not yet been fertilised?

These considerations have not, however, deprived Us of Our confidence in the mercy and goodness of God, Who alone knows the arrival of opportunities and occasions for imparting His light, and Who with an all-wise but imperceptible inspiration from on high, is wont to draw men towards the path of salvation. Yet at the same time, We too, as far as in us lies, wish and feel bound to undertake the work in order that so large a portion of the globe may be benefitted by our vigilance. For this end, We have carefully examined if We could not in some way organise and develop the action of the Church in India, and with happy success make many provisions well calculated to guard the Catholic name. First of all, with regard to the patronage of the Portuguese nation in the Indies, We have concluded a durable treaty with the Most Faithful King of Portugal and Algarve. By this document dissensions not light, which have for so long a time agitated the minds of Christians, have been set at rest. Moreover, We consider it prudent and wholesome to form out of the various Christian communities, which formerly were subject to Vicars and Prefects, real dioceses which should have their own Bishops, and be governed in accordance with canon law. Moreover, by an Apostolic letter, "Humane Salutis" given on the first of September, 1886, a new Hierarchy was constituted, comprising eight ecclesiastical provinces—viz, those of Goa, the Patriarchal See, Bombay, Verapoly, Calcutta, Agra, Madras, Pondicherry, and Colombo. In a word, We have constantly endeavoured to effect in that country everything that seemed to Us useful towards the spreading of faith and piety.

There remains for Us, however, one other great work upon which depends in a great measure the salvation of the Indies, and to its realisation we wish

you, Venerable Brethren, and all those who love humanity and the name of Christian, to turn more than ever your attention. The Catholic Faith in the Indies will never have a sure defence, its propagation in the future will not be sufficiently well guaranteed, as long as there is a lack of ministers chosen from the natives of the country and trained up to the sacerdotal office, who will not only be an aid to the foreign missionaries, but will also be able in their own cities to administer the Christian religion. It is handed down to memory that the same idea was present to the mind of St. Francis Xavier, who, it is said, was wont to say that the Christian religion could never set firm roots in the soil of India unless it were aided by the strenuous exertions of priests born in India. How clear was his judgment in this particular is quite manifest. For the work of those apostolic men who leave Europe and enter India finds many obstacles, especially a want of knowledge of the vernacular—a knowledge which is with difficulty acquired. Besides this, there is a difference of ideas and a manner of living to which it requires many years to become accustomed, in such a way that European clergy there seem ever in a strange land. Hence since the masses lead an unwilling ear to the voice of strangers, it is clear that the work of native priests will bear far greater fruits. They know the inclinations, bent, and manners of their own countrymen, they know the time for speaking, for silence—in fine, Indians among Indians are free from suspicion, an advantage which it were useless to explain especially in critical circumstances.

Finally, it is to be observed that the number of foreign missionaries is too small to suffice for the instruction of the Christian communities that now exist in those parts. The statistics of the Missionary Societies clearly prove this, the unceasing petitions of the Indian Missions made to Propaganda for the sending of more numerous preachers of the Gospel, confirm it. Now if at the present moment the number of foreign priests is insufficient to attend to the wants of the Catholics of India, what will take place in the future when their number is multiplied? For it cannot be hoped that the number of priests sent from Europe will increase in proportion to the wants of the Catholics in India. Therefore, if the salvation of the Indians is to be provided for, it is necessary to choose from among the natives, subjects who after a fit training may be able to fulfil the office and duty of priests.

In the third place, a fact must not be forgotten, of which, though it may seem unlikely, no one can deny the possible occurrence—namely, times may befall Europe and Asia of such a nature that foreign Missionaries may be forced to abandon the Indian Missions. In such circumstances how is the Christian religion to be guarded when no minister of the Sacraments and no teacher is at hand to do so? The history of China, Japan, and Ethiopia teaches us sufficiently clear lessons upon this head. More than once has it happened in China and Japan that during storms of hatred and persecution raised against the Christian name, when foreign Missionaries have been subjected to death or banishment, favour has been shown to native priests, who, on account of the knowledge of the language and customs of the country and of their connections and relations, have been allowed not only to remain in the country, but in all its provinces to exercise the duties that appertain to the care of souls. On the other hand, in Ethiopia, where the Christians were two hundred thousand in number, the absence of native priests, after the execution or banishment of foreign Missionaries, brought about the loss of the fruits of a long apostolate.

Finally we must turn our eyes to ancient days and religiously retain

what was then done with profit. The Apostles, in the discharge of their mission, first took care to fill the minds of the masses with the precepts of the Gospel, then they chose from among the faithful fit subjects, whom they initiated in the Sacred Mysteries, and afterwards advanced to the episcopal dignity. Such was afterwards the conduct of the Roman Pontiffs, who have never failed to counsel apostolic men to endeavour to find in all parts where there exists a sufficiently large body of the faithful, sacred ministers among the natives. Hence, in order that the safety and propagation of the Faith may be safeguarded in India it is incumbent that Indians should be raised to the priesthood, so that no matter what may be the condition of the times, they may be able both to administer to and govern their fellow countrymen.

For this reason, in obedience to the admonitions of the Apostolic See, the Prefects of Indian Missions have founded seminaries wherever permission was granted them. Moreover in the synods of Colombo, Bangalore, and Allahabad, held in 1887, it was decreed that each diocese should have its seminary for the education of native ministers, and if some of the suffragans were, through lack of means, prevented from doing this, they were to send their subjects to the seminary of the Metropolitan where they were to be educated at their expense. The Bishops, indeed, on endeavour, as far they are able, to carry out these wise decrees, but their good intentions are all but thwarted by the poverty of families and the lack of priests qualified to be the masters of study and education. The result is that there is scarcely a single seminary in which the education of its inmates is perfect, and this at a time when Civil Governors and Protestants in no small number spare neither money nor labour to secure the political education of youth.

Hence is it clear how useful and consonant with public order in India would be the founding in that country of various colleges in which young men, the future hopes of the Church may receive a finished education, and learn those virtues without which they cannot either holily or usefully exercise their duties. After having removed the causes of dissension by mutual agreements and after having regulated the administration of the dioceses by the establishment of the hierarchy, our object would be gained were it permitted to Us to see the foundation of colleges for the training of native ministers. For once that a seminary is founded, great hopes may be justly entertained that it will send out from its walls numerous fit priests, who will spread abroad the light of religion with skilful zeal. For a work so noble and so useful for the salvation of so many mortals, it is advantageous to call to your aid the co-operation of the inhabitants of Europe, the more so that We alone are unable to meet the necessarily heavy expenses. If it is the duty of Christians to consider all men, whosoever they be, as brothers, and consequently to exclude no one from their friendship, how much more are we not bound to do this when it is a question of salvation of our neighbour? Wherefore We earnestly ask you, Venerable Brethren, to aid Our plans and Our undertakings. Endeavour to make known to all the actual condition of the Catholic religion in those remote regions, let all know that it is incumbent upon them to do something to benefit the Indians, and let this be told to those especially who believe the best advantage of riches to be their generous use.

We know well that it is not in vain that We appeal to the assistance of your people. If the expenses necessary of the colleges of above spoken, we sha

devote the surplus to other useful and pious enterprises.

As an augury of celestial blessings, and as a pledge of Our Fatherly care, with all Our heart We grant to you, Venerable Brethren, to the clergy and faithful of your dioceses, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, the second day of June, 1893, in the sixteenth year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII., POPE.

Whether Pasteur and Koch's peculiar modes of treatment will ultimately prevail or not, their theory of blood contamination is the correct one, though not the original. It was on this theory that Dr. J. C. Ayer, of Lowell, Mass., nearly fifty years ago, formulated Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

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