

## THE "WHITE FATHERS OF AFRICA."

From the *Literary Digest*

The "White Fathers of Africa"—*Peres Blancs d'Afrique* organized by Cardinal Lavigerie for the "redemption of Islam," have already accomplished a work very different from that of the ordinary or extraordinary mission. As far as practical results are concerned the greatest work done by the great Cardinal and his White Army is that directed against slavery. William Sharp, who has an article on the subject in *The Atlantic*, August, says that Cardinal Lavigerie "did more than any other single individual, perhaps more even than any ruler or Government, to mitigate the horrors of slavery and put an end to this fearful traffic." another very interesting fact is that Germany has recognized the good work of the "White Fathers," for while the Jesuits are denied admission, the "White Fathers are allowed, if they so desire, to establish themselves in Germany.

Mr. Sharp, who made a journey last year from the frontier of Morocco to the Eastern Tunisian littoral, tells us that he took particular note of the great work done, and being done, by the "White Army." In referring to the death of the Cardinal, and its probable effect upon the "Army," he says:

"There seems to be an idea current that with his death the 'redemption of Islam' lapsed from a grand crusade to a disorganized, casual and generally futile missionism.

"As a matter of fact, the 'White Fathers' are to day a better organized, better directed, and more influential body than they were in those first years of hardship and fiery ardor which were the outcome of the passionate eloquence and not less passionate zeal and enthusiasm of the Archbishop of Algiers. It is true that visitors to Algiers and Tunis and it is surprising how relatively small is the number of those who go further afield in Algeria or Tunisia than to these picturesque and popular cities, and their hundred smaller towns along the Barbary coasts, from Oran to Susa—may see little or nothing of the 'Army of the Sahara', perhaps, unless at Carthage itself, even hear little of the doings of the White Fathers. But the moment the Sahara is reached, even that latter portion of it called the Ziban, to the south of the province of Constantine, the most casual visitor must have his attention drawn to these Catholic missionaries who have done, and are doing, so important a work in Northern Africa."

In Tunis there is a small chapel, Notre Dame de la Melilla, for the use of Maltese residents. In connection with this chapel Mr. Sharp relates the following incident which he heard in Tunis:

"One day the Cardinal, overborne by mental fatigue, anxiety and disappointment, went into the chapel to rest and pray. There was no one else present, and after a time his head fell forward on his breast, and he was sound asleep. Waking suddenly, he beheld an extraordinary light upon the painted window representing St. Augustine, his mother, St. Monica, and St. Cyprian. This light did not come from the glow of the sun, but was full upon them as though cast from a great lamp. He turned and beheld, standing in front of the altar, a figure which he recognized as that of St. Nymphonion, the first recorded martyr of Carthage. The saint spoke; but all he said was, 'Mon frere en Jesus Christ notre Seigneur.' That, however, meant that the first martyr of the Church in Carthage hailed one who also was to die there in martyrdom, though not a martyr under direct tyranny, but beneath the weight of toil and anxiety and long endurance and the sickness of ever deferred hope. The weary Cardinal arose, either to

advance to do obeisance before St. Nymphonion, or to assure himself of the verity of his vision, when the Saint, turning and pointing to the South, and making a gesture with his arms as though embracing all from the East and from the West, suddenly disappeared.

"Lavigerie went forth deeply impressed. He believed that he had been vouchsafed a vision that portended not only his death during the carrying out of his schemes for the Church in Africa, but also the success of his great mission for the redemption of the Moslem world—all that vast world which lay eastward and westward and away to the limitless South from Carthage. . . . The incident is one that well might have happened to enthusiasts of a nature different from that of Cardinal Lavigerie. . . . He was a dreamer, it is true, but he dreamed along the line of his temperament; and that temperament was an essentially Latin one, direct, logical, unmystical, untranscendental. . . . One dream of the Cardinal's, not hitherto made public, was to establish a series of cathedral churches all along the African coast from Carthage to Ocherchel (the ancient Iol of Juba) and to Tangiers itself, and to dedicate them severally to the great men and women associated with the early history of the Church in Africa. . . . Again, he believed in a vast extension of his White Fathers' brigade, so that among his missionaries should be men of all races, including Africans born, Pagan or Mohammedan, Europeans, Maltese, Arabs, Kabyles, Soudanese, Negroes—ay, even Bedouins, if practicable. But perhaps the dearest scheme for fulfillment in his own time, though one to which, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no one of his biographers or commentators has devoted much, if any, attention, was the redemption of Arab Africa through the conversion of the Kabyle nation—that original Berber race which is now practically restricted to the mountainous regions of Algeria. The Kabyles are to North Africa what the Celtic Highlanders are to Scotland, an unmixed and indigenous, if not probably autochthonous, people; distinct from the dominant race in communal rule, in social habits, in language, in appearance, in character, and even in religion. . . .

"It was with this unpromising material that Cardinal Lavigerie hoped to create a nation of missionaries, a native army of the Cross. 'Let loose Kabylia,' he would exclaim, 'and in a few years Mohammedan North Africa will be Christian.' . . .

"From what I saw in Kabylia, I feel sure that the good work inaugurated by Mgr. Lavigerie can hardly be overestimated. That unfortunate and ungenerous tendency to depreciate all his efforts, and to discount even his apparent success, which has done so much harm to a good cause, and in some quarters imposed itself upon the minds of responsible governmental officials, is not easy to be refuted on paper. To all statistics, arguments or statements, his adversaries, far less active now, reply by affirming that he and his emissaries have been firebrands to excite a conquered but forever irreconcilable race; that Christianity is unsuited for the Arab, with his inherited fatalism, and his domestic, social and communal habits and instincts, and that an amalgam of the Arab and the Christian ideals is as impossible as a racial blend of Arab and European. . . .

"I asked a Protestant missionary in Flemcen—an important town in the extreme west of Algeria, near the frontier of Morocco—why it was that, apart from the question of statistically greater success on the part of Catholic missionaries, there seemed to be so radical a difference in the way in which the White Fathers, for example, and the equally indomitable Protestant missionaries got at the

Arab, Moorish and Soudanese populations.

"My informant frankly admitted that the difference is radical.

"We lack that particular quality of imagination, or sympathy, call it what one will, which enables some missionaries literally to be all things to all men. We are, broadly speaking, always ourselves; always English or Scottish, or American; always conscious of our Protestant calling, our Protestant arrogance, our Protestant aloofness. Naturally, I believe that in the long run our compensating qualities tell and predominate; but at first, and for long, we are handicapped. Now, the White Fathers, for instance, are not primarily French, or Catholic priests, or missionaries of this or that lord spiritual or temporal, but are men preoccupied by a burning zeal as heralds of a message of vital importance—a message independent of anything save its immediacy and paramount value. To a great extent, this magnificent abnegation and discipline are due to Cardinal Lavigerie, who never failed to impress upon the missionaries whom he sent forth that the first thing they had to do was to conform in all reasonable respects to the manners, customs and habits of the Moslem people among whom they were to sojourn; to feel with them, see with their eyes, as much as possible judge with their minds. To this end, he made the Fathers adopt a white robe similar to that worn by the Arabs; to this end he not only made them learn to speak Arabic fluently, and to be familiar with the Koran and the chief writings upon it, but insisted upon their adequate physical training in horsemanship and all kinds of exercise. So that when a White Father goes among the Arabs he is, in a way, already one with them. This wins their confidence, to start with. Then when he expounds the faith that is in him, he lays little stress upon anything save the fundamental truths of Christianity: that is, of course, as he considers them.

"Above all, in what he teaches and in what we teach concerning the oneness of God—or rather, the way we teach that living doctrine—is a difference where the advantage is all on his side. The Arab, with his intense faith in the absolute unity of Allah, more readily follows one who does not confuse his hearer with different arguments regarding the Trinity, but speaks clearly and logically of God and Christ and the Virgin—more readily than one who dwells upon a mystery which is altogether beyond the Moslem comprehension or sympathy. Moreover, the priests do not, as a rule, say much against Mohammed; rather, they accept him frankly as a minor prophet, but one whose faith became perverted even in his life time, and whose influence has been mainly a harmful one."

"From what I saw and heard throughout the length and breadth of French North Africa, I am convinced that one of the greatest works of contemporary Christianity is being fulfilled there in divers ways and through divers agencies, though mainly through the instrumentality of that famous prelate whose name will henceforth be linked with those of Cyprian and Augustine as among the foremost glories of the Church of Christ in Africa."

In the year 1800 there were only 120,000 Catholics in England and Scotland. In 1840 the number was 400,000; in 1860, 1,620,000 and in 1890 it was 1,692,090.

The great lung healer is found in that excellent medicine sold as Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. It soothes and diminishes the sensibility of the membrane of the throat and air passages, and is a sovereign remedy for all coughs, colds, hoarseness, pain or soreness in the chest, bronchitis, etc. It has cured many when supposed to be far advanced in consumption.

## A Precious Relic.

Under this head "Credo" writes in the *St. Catharines Journal* of the 14th instant:

811—On Sunday last, in St. Mary's Church, a most imposing ceremony took place. During Father Allaino's stay in Quebec he obtained from the Cardinal Archbishop through Rt. Rev. Mgr. Marois a precious relic, a part of the relic of Ste. Anne de Beaupre, through the instrumentality of which so many wonderful cures are daily reported. At the close of an eloquent sermon on the wondrous workings of grace through the intercession of the saints and a very interesting description of his recent and former visits to the shrine of St. Anne, the Father exposed on a temporary altar the sacred relic, encased in a rich golden reliquary, for the veneration of the congregation. All eagerly pressed forward to the altar railing to the Mother of Immaculate Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven and earth.

It was a most impressive sight, never to be forgotten. The Rev. Father and the congregation of St. Mary's are to be congratulated on the possession of such a treasure. Some people pride themselves in being the possessors of some trifling trinket once the property of a great general or statesman. Catholics, to whom the words of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints," have not lost their meaning prize infinitely more relics of great servants of God whose bodies during their mortal career were the living temples of the Holy Ghost.

I understand the relic will be exposed during certain feasts of the year for the veneration of the congregation.

## Solemnly Blessed.

The corner stone of the new church in Norwich was solemnly blessed Wednesday, the 15th inst., by Rev. Father Brady. A very large congregation attended service in the old church, at the end of which Rev. Dr. Flannery of St. Thomas delivered an appropriate discourse from the text: "How terrible is this place—this is the house of God and the gate of Heaven."—77 Gen., 28th chapter, 17th verse. Rev. Father Corcoran of La Salette was present in the sanctuary. The Rev. Father Brady explained the reason of Bishop O'Connor's absence on this solemn occasion, and told how he was delegated to fill the Bishop's place. After a procession around the church foundations and the reciting of appropriate Psalms the corner stone was solemnly laid and blessed.

The church is of Gothic design and will accommodate 500 worshippers. The architect is Mr. Fred Henry, the young talented artist of London, Ont., who last year completed his architectural studies in Europe. The contractors are the firm of Beattie Bros. & Co., Norwich, who have agreed to finish the work by the 1st of November. Rev. Father Brady's efforts and zealous enterprise are worthy of all commendation, the new church of Norwich being the third sacred edifice in this district under his able and judicious administration.—*Woodstock Sentinel Review*, August 17.

Inventor Edison, at a great scientific seance, had a large globe of goldfish whose anatomy was distinctly outlined and every action of each organ was plainly seen. This the "Wizard" accomplished by making the fish swallow minute incandescent lamps and by invisible wire conducted the electric current. The fish apparently were not incommoded by their diet of electricity.

A SHORT ROAD to health was opened to those suffering from chronic coughs, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, lumbago, tumors, rheumatism, excoriated nipples or inflamed breast, and kidney complaints, by the introduction of the inexpensive and effective remedy, DR. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL.