

HEROES AMONG LEPERS

PRIESTS WHO MINISTER TO THE VICTIMS OF LOATHSOME DISEASE

Are Themselves Slowly Dying—Don Unia's Work in a South American Leper Settlement—Missionary Apostle of Japan Describes Affairs There.

Down in the South American Republic of Colombia one of these days a simple, pious man will die, and the world will call him a hero. The scales of leprosy cover his body, and he must present a very unattractive, perhaps a hideous appearance. News has reached New York that the dread disease had at last taken hold of him.

He is a Catholic priest and belongs to the order of Salesian Fathers. Like Father Damien, who laid down his life for the lepers of Molokai, this man, who is called Don Unia, went out to minister to the spiritual wants of a leper colony. For two years he has been among the 1,200 outcasts who compose the leper settlement of Agua de Dios. The last heard of him he was considered as being seriously ill.

The story of his life among the lepers has been obtained from his own pen, but nothing has been heard directly from him since he became a leper. Don Unia left Turin in 1889. He wrote to his superiors two years later from the South American Republic, saying that he longed to devote his life to the service of the lepers. He was then in Santa Fe de Bogota, from which the leper colony of Agua de Dios is about three days march. Without waiting to secure the desired permission to labor among the lepers he hastened to the lazaretto. There was great joy among the outcasts over his coming. This is the way Don Unia describes his reception:

JOYOUSLY GREETED.

"As we drew near about a hundred little boys in Sunday clothes and with shining faces advanced with many little banners flapping above their heads. These were followed by white-robed little girls bearing palms and flowers and singing hymns. It was a simple scene, and yet so touching that it drew tears from my eyes.

"But the sight soon changed for me when I visited those lying in the lazaretto. God help them!—breathing carcasses, in a long protracted putrefaction. One is without hands, another without arms, and another has no feet. Here is one whose flesh is dropping off piece-meal, and in this awful condition they drag out a miserable decade! My heart sank at first, but as I found these afflicted beings brighten at my presence I felt that ghastly smile a great reward for weakness overcome."

Don Unia was the only priest among the 1,200 afflicted ones in that outcast community. He looked after the ones who suffered most, celebrated mass, administered the sacraments and paid consolatory visits to those in the last stages of the disease.

"Taking everything into account," he said in one of his letters, "I think work won't be wanting, so my life will be a happy one."

EXPECTED TO BECOME A LEPER.

He did not expect to escape the disease, he said, but the fact that even as a leper he would be able to hear confessions and console the afflicted ones seemed to console him. He would do this, he declared, though he was covered with ulcers. The only thing he complained of was the heat, and all he said on this point was that the temperature was "unpleasantly high."

He described his quarters as a shed, divided into two little chambers and covered with palm leaves, through which the rain passes beautifully, but with the burning heat one suffers a little water will do no harm. "A fine little boy has been told off to attend to my wants. He brings me something to eat twice a day, just as the crow used to do by the old hermit."

It took two months for his letter begging to be allowed to pass his life with the lepers to reach the superior in Turin. Don Unia was almost heart-broken when he received from the superior an order to take charge of the Silesian house in the City of Mexico. He believed that this meant that his request had been refused, but the fact

was the order had been sent from Turin before Don Unia's letter had been received by the superior. Don Unia's request was granted, the superior wrote, "with tears and a heart full of zealous thankfulness."

BEGGED NOT TO BE ORDERED AWAY.

When the letter ordering him to go to the City of Mexico was received Don Unia at once made preparations to leave the lepers, and to the superior he sent a letter of urgent entreaty, in which he said:

"In order to render my departure less bitter to those poor, agonized souls I will not leave them without hope. I shall give them to understand that, after visiting Mexico, in the lapse of a few months, I shall be back again among them, to remain with them forever. My dearly beloved superior will not surely make me break my word. When all matters will be definitely settled for the Mexican house I implore you to send a rector with the necessary staff from Turin and allow me to return to the care of my lepers. The parting moment, I fear, will call forth a heartrending scene, but holy obedience will give me force to conquer myself and surmount every difficulty.

"On returning to Bogota I shall immediately set out for Mexico, but my thoughts and my hearts will always be with the poor creatures I leave in desolation behind me. My lepers—my poor lepers—that is my mission, that is what God has called me to. This is a consolation which your reverence cannot deny me."

Don Unia has lately been joined by other priests of his order. They are caring for him, and when he dies they are to continue the work he began.

JAPAN'S STRICKEN ONES.

While the heroic Don Unia is waiting to die among his lepers another priest who has given his life to the service of the stricken ones is stretching out his hand for aid from his friends in this country. He is the missionary apostolic of Japan and he has been laboring among a colony of lepers there for two years. In a letter recently received in New York he tells a pitiful story.

"Quite lately ten lepers presented themselves at our establishment, begging to be admitted. They all had heartrending stories to tell. There is one family, of which nearly all the members are stricken with the horrible disease, and unable, in consequence, to work or earn a living. There is another family who used up all their resources to effect the cure of one person, whom they were obliged to abandon at last on account of want of funds. I knew of a young man who went to take the warm baths at Kusatsu in the hope of recovering thereby. One day he received a letter from his mother as follows:

HIS MOTHER TELLS HIM TO DIE.

"I have nothing more, and I can send you nothing hereafter. Find, therefore, a way to put an end to your existence, and do not trouble me any longer."

"Another young man received from his family a similar letter. It was as follows:

"If you cannot find a means of earning your living, die, if it is necessary. It is needless for you to write. Your letters will not be received."—*Milwaukee Catholic Citizen.*

A MISTAKE OF THE FRENCH.

NO NURSES LIKE THE SISTERS.

There is one document published in the French Bulletin of the Academy of Medicine for the year 1893 which is of peculiar interest, in view of the substitution a few years ago of lay nurses for religious ones in the hospitals of France. During the typhus-fever epidemic last year the lay nurses were retained in the ordinary wards of the hospitals; but the fever patients were in every case placed in charge of the Sisters, who had been previously expelled from the hospitals. The mortuary record of the devoted religious supplies the interpretation of this action. Forty-three of the Sisters were stricken down by the fever at the bedside of their patients, and of this number no fewer than eighteen paid with their lives the penalty of their devotion to duty.

The laicisation of the French hospitals was, on the face of it, a stupid blunder inspired by anti-Catholic spleen; and a few more object-lessons such as the last epidemic afforded will probably result in a return to the old order of things.

Frenchmen may sneer at *les religieuses* in ordinary life; but when death confronts them on the hospital cot, they are not exceedingly averse to the attentive cares of the low-voiced, white-veiled Sisters; nor are the lay nurses—nurses for revenue only—likely to resent being spared immediate contact with infectious diseases of the deadly type.—*The Ave Maria.*

RELIGIOUS NEWS.

The Polish Catholics of Boston, some 2,000 in number, intend to have a church for themselves.

A secret consistory for the preconising of Bishops and for the Cardinals will be held in Rome, June 18. A public consistory, at which the new Cardinals will receive their hats, will be held June 21.

Rev. James G. Ryan, one of the pioneer Catholic priests of Nebraska, died at the priest's residence attached to St. Philomena's Cathedral, Omaha, last month. He had labored in Nebraska since 1861.

The Catholic Sun, of Port of Spain, Trinidad, records another death from malignant fever among the religious of that city. After only a few days' illness, Sister Angelique, of the Community of Dominican Nuns at the Holy name Convent, St. Ann's road, breathed her last.

The Catholic University has just received \$100,000 for the endowment of a history chair. The new hall of philosophy will be opened October, 1895. Dormitories for the lay students who may wish to attend the university, and one accommodating fifty students, will probably be erected this year.

In the little township of Lemoniz, near to Balbao, an English lady, *nee* Miss Lyford Cross, was baptized recently. The young lady some short time ago married a Spaniard, Senor Seronime de Andraca. The kind and charitable teachings of her husband made such an impression on his English consort that she requested to be received into the Catholic Church, which was done.

Cardinal Vaughan's reception in London last week was the only evening reception of the year at the Archbishop's house. It drew together a great crowd, in which the unionist element was perhaps a little more conspicuous than it was in the times of Cardinal Manning. The Duke of Norfolk, fresh from Rome, wore the blue ribbon, and there were, indeed, a good many Papal decorations in evidence.

The London correspondent of the Birmingham Daily Post says: "The number of converts to Roman Catholicity since the beginning of 1894 has been unparalleled within recent years; and one of the more prominent priests of the Pro-Cathedral at Kensington is authority for the statement that arrangements are being made for the reception of six other clergymen into the Catholic Church."

ROMAN NEWS.

(Gleaned from the London Universe.)

Queen Margaret of Savoy and her mother, the Duchess of Genoa, assisted at the ceremonies of Holy Week in Rome at the Piedmontese Church of the Sudario and afterwards visited many famous shrines and sepulchres.

The Abbe Prince d'Arenberg, Chamberlain to the Pope, has arrived at Brussels from Rome with the felicitations of Leo XIII. to Princess Josephine of Belgium and Prince Charles of Hohenzollern on their forthcoming marriage.

The Holy Father has sent his Apostolic Benediction, through the medium of Cardinal Rampolla, to Mgr. de Harlez the illustrious Professor of Louvain, for his contributions to the press elucidating Christian democracy.

Among the celebrated physicians summoned to the bedside of Cardinal Dusmet was Don Postiglione, Cassinese monk, who was especially brought from the Abbey of Monte Cassino, to which Order His Eminence belonged.

The Abbe Le Rebours, who had his renown as a gallant son of the Church during the Commune, has passed away after a precarious illness, aggravated by the shock caused by the attempt of Pauwels, the anarchist, who failed to launch his bomb except against himself. The abbe took to his bed from a collapse brought about by the dynamite outrage,

and was carried off by a violent pneumonia. He received the last sacraments with edification, bearing his sufferings with fortitude. He was parish priest of the Madeleine since 1871. R.I.P.

A pastoral from the Archbishop of Paris was read on Sunday last in all the churches under his control, recommending the faithful to assist in the celebration of the Joan of Arc festival on Sunday, the 22nd of April. Cardinal Richard will officiate in Notre Dame on that day, and a *Te Deum* in honor of the Maid of Orleans will be intoned in every Catholic house of worship in the archdiocese.

THE POPE AND IRELAND.

The Very Reverend Prior Glynn, O.S.A., of the Irish National Church of St. Patrick, Rome, in the course of the eloquent sermon which he delivered recently in St. Patrick's Church, Limerick, in presence of the most Rev. Doctor O'Dwyer, called attention to some facts connected with the attitude of the Holy Father towards Ireland not generally known. Prior Glynn reminded his hearers that:—

On the occasion of his Jubilee last year, of all the nations of the earth, England, Scotland, Germany, or the great Catholic countries, France, Austria, and Belgium, Ireland was the only one made the special object of the Pope's affection. The two great proofs by which the Pope himself declares evidence of his love for our country are that on the 21st July, 1886, by a letter addressed to a humble native of Limerick, he commanded that within the walls of Rome there should be erected a church in honor of St. Patrick, and on the 15th January of last year the successor of St. Patrick in the See of Armagh was for the first time in our history created Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. Now, my brethren, you will naturally inquire; Why does the heart of Leo palpitate with love for Ireland beyond that of any other Pope? The answer is that he possessed more than any of his predecessors a deep knowledge of our country. I inquired how he came by the knowledge, and his brother, the late Cardinal Pecci, informed me that their father having been an officer in the French army under Napoleon, in his travels met with Irish soldiers in the service of the French—the men of the Old Brigade—and they, like the other Irish exiles, were constantly speaking of the wrongs of their country. The father heard the recital of those wrongs, and when he returned to his mountain home in Carpineto, the birthplace of the present Pope, he told his children, and the father and children both learned to know and to love Ireland.—*N. Y. Catholic Review.*

SKIN DISEASES are more or less directly occasioned by bad blood. B. B. B. cures the following Skin Diseases: Shingles, Erysipelas, Itching Rashes, Salt Rheum, Scald Head, Eruptions, Pimples, Blotches, by removing all impurities from the blood from a common Pimple to the worst Scrofulous Sore. ...

CALLED DOWN.—He had given her his seat in the car and had not heard her say "Thank you," so he stooped down and said:

"Did you speak to me, madam?" "No, I didn't," she replied in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the car, "and I think a man of your age ought to be ashamed of yourself to try to flirt in a crowded car. I am a married lady."

Then he crept slowly forward, strap by strap, kicking himself as he went.

GENTLEMEN.—Two years ago my husband suffered from severe indigestion, but was completely cured by two bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters. I can truly recommend it to all sufferers from this disease. MRS. JOHN HURD, 13 Cross St., Toronto. ...

The most prominent paper in Tombstone, an Arizona town, is called the Epitaph. It is edited by an Englishman named Coffin, and the name of the publisher is Sexton.

BAD BLOOD causes blotches, boils, pimples, abscesses, ulcers, scrofula, etc. Burdock Blood Bitters cures bad blood in any form from a common pimple to the worst scrofulous sore. ...