



A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY ON THE SIERRA LEONE TROUBLES.

The Tablet.

The following letter from Father Tuohy, a Catholic missionary priest in the Sierra Leone Vicariate, dated Bonthe, May 8, throws light from a fresh quarter upon the deplorable troubles which have recently so seriously imperilled a West African dependency. It will be seen that in West Africa we have a second Uganda, if not worse: "The Timni and Mendi tribes, between the frontier of Conakry and that of Liberia, have revolted against the Sierra Leone Government, swearing to slaughter all men, women and children, white or black, who speak English, or dress differently to themselves, and to destroy every factory or house belonging to them. The cause of the rising has been the new law of 1896-7, abolishing the former powers of the chiefs in the HINTERLAND of the colony and substituting European Commissioners; abolishing all slavery, and imposing a hut-tax of five shillings per hut. This last clause is what has really caused the war. In the month of January the Government began to collect this tax, imprisoning those chiefs who refused to comply. Thus on February 22, when it was desired to seize a Timni chief, named Bei-Burah, on the Scarie river, close to French-Guinea, the latter appealed to his warriors. Armed with guns and ammunition, they not only resisted the companies sent to exterminate them, but even inflicted serious losses upon them. This war, which still continues, has cost the Government on an average £ 300 a day.

"Towards the end of April, the Timmanis ceased to fight and disappeared completely into the bush. At first it was not known why, but it has since appeared that they were organizing a new plan of campaign. So far, massed in the neighbourhood of Porto-Lokko and Karima, they had sustained alone the brunt of the contest with the English; but they now allied themselves with the Mendis, whom they had hitherto detested, to make common cause against the enemy. It was agreed that the latter tribe on their side should carry the war into the HINTERLAND of Sherboro, and on April 27 the insurrection broke out in Gambia, not far from the mouth of the Small-Boom river, about 30 miles from here. News was brought us the same night by some men who had escaped in a canoe. They told us the Mendis were slaying indiscriminately men, women, and children, often cutting them up piecemeal, and pillaging and burning the factories. Moreover, their plan was to sack

Bonthe, the seat of Government, at the same time that the Timmanis were to attack Freetown.

"It is easier to imagine than to describe the feelings of amazement and terror which seized our people, for the rebels intended coming in large numbers, and we had only some ten police, armed with guns, to protect us. We shall never forget the night of Thursday, the 28th. In the evening all the Catholics rushed into our modest presbytery to seek refuge; our neighbours, both Protestant and Pagan, did the same. The former house of the nuns gave refuge to many others, who thought themselves safer there than in their mud cabins. All we had to defend these two houses was a revolver, with a few bullets, which Eather Noirjean had had sent from Europe last year. Of course, we mounted guard all the night. And what a night! How often our poor people, the women especially, thought they could here the voices of the warriors or even see them coming. But, thank God, they never came. This, however, made us fear their arrival still more for the next day; we were all convinced of it. The agents and employes of the four European firms, and all the other inhabitants of the town, gave up all idea of saving their property and took refuge at the Government station with the few police, in order not to lose their lives without at least defending themselves. Under these circumstances, we could not do otherwise. After having heard the confessions of all the children and baptized those who had not yet been baptized, we locked up houses and chapel, and went to sleep at the Government station. During the night storm succeeded storm, during which we thought we could clearly distinguish the shouts of the warriors pillaging factories and houses; but when day broke, we once more saw that all this was imagination. We have since learnt that the principal reason why the rebels did not carry out their project was because they had not canoes enough to come in numbers to our island, and they thought, moreover, that we were better protected than we really were.

"Their plan of attack is skillfully conceived. It consists in carrying the war first of all to the mouths of the rivers. In fact it began almost simultaneously on the rivers Bagroo, Imperrri, Jung, Small-Boom, Big-Boom, Kittam, Sulima and Manoh. Once masters of the lower course, they intended to ascend the rivers, so that no one might escape them. The plan succeeded admirably. Of all those who, to our knowledge, inhabited these regions to the number of several thousands, barely thirty have made good their escape to this place. And of all the factories established in this dis-

trict, including six of the French West African Company, whose value was at least £7,000, not one has escaped pillage. We had a certain number of Catholics in these regions; only five have made their way here, after untold sufferings. We do not yet know what has become of our chapel at Bamauy, or of our devoted Catechist, Charles Tucker, and his wife, or of our little teacher, Edward Ashly. What consoles us, if they have been massacred, is that on Sunday, April 24, I had ministered to all three their Paschal Communion. On that day I had the happiness of baptizing ten of the Catechumens. Hence you see how narrowly I escaped myself, as I only returned to Bonthe on the Monday night, and the war broke out at Bamauy 36 hours later. Is it not also an evident mercy of God that four long journeys since December along these rivers, with the object of establishing ourselves upon them at any price, did not succeed? May God continue His merciful aid; for we are still much exposed, although a detachment of troops has come from Freetown to protect us.

"This state of things may yet last for six months. Our orphans during that time have need of food; and rice, already dear, will soon be impossible to obtain. Yet we cannot dream of sending them away: it would be to expose their lives; besides, they are so good and pious, and promise to make such excellent Catechists. Our Pro-Vicar came to visit us and has promised to do all he possibly can for us; but Freetown itself is now menaced by the Timmanis, and I fear is in great danger. I learn to-day (May 9) that at Mafurey, on the Big-Boom, all the traders except one were burnt alive in a house where they had taken refuge; the children of the Protestant school were also with them. We trust entirely in our Lord."

THE TREASURE OF POVERTY.

New World (Chicago.)

O blissful poverty!
Nature, too partial to thy lot, assigns
Health, innocence and downy peace
Her real goods!

The distinction between poverty and destitution is often lost sight of, and the terms are used so indiscriminately that confused ideas are given. Yet the conditions are widely different. The latter is often an unmixed evil, harming, both mind and body, but the former none need dread, as it possesses so many compensating treasures and is really the mother of virtues.

No one is, or at least should be, destitute who is in good health, and therefore able to provide the necessaries of life, which, after all are few and simple. Poverty was the first lesson our Lord taught us on

coming into the world, and He continued to teach it by example.

Unnecessary hardship is often suffered because many fail to discover either to themselves or others what they can best do. This generally happens through having received a superficial education, which invariably develops variety and discontent, which the possessors describe as ambition. Much that we persuade ourselves is necessary is not in reality so, and could as easily be dispensed with. Often suffering and disappointment is caused by people refusing to do what nature and education fitted them for. Young men disdain agricultural pursuits, choosing in preference long hours of unsuitable work in an office, and semi-starvation, for the sake of living in one of the over-crowded cities, and young women whose attainments fit them for domestic duties, aspire to be school teachers, artists or musicians. Out of the many evils in the world poverty is only one, and as money can only cure this one evil, and is powerless to relieve us of others, it is not so essential to our happiness as is often represented. Money is not required to obtain a single necessity of the soul, therefore why should we desire its possession above all else?

To lack the means to indulge our weaknesses cannot be considered an evil, as it will neither bruise the body nor render the mind less intelligent, but, on the contrary, both will be invigorated. Most frequently the qualities which bring success are due to a lot which forced a sense of personal responsibility and demanded effort. Temperance, self control, diligence and energy are oftener found among those who cannot afford self indulgence than among the wealthy. The great blessing of health is usually possessed by those who have acquired the above virtues. More illness is caused by excess in eating than in drinking, because more generally and frequently committed. Probably all, even the most abstemious among us, eat more than is necessary to repair waste and maintain strength. The rich suffer more frequently from want of nourishment than the poor, not by any means because the quantity is deficient, but because the quality and preparation in cooking are unsuitable, consequently the food is not assimilated. The industrious poor, become the possessors of the valuable things of life, which are priceless, easily and unconsciously to themselves, for we are so constituted that our faculties are developed and strengthened only by exercise, and the poor must make effort while others with more of the good things of this world languish in idleness. The eventful lives which the poor lead prevent stagnation, forcing them into the turmoil, where, by exertion, success,

failure and disappointment, following one another in continual succession, they are educated by experience, one stage instructing for that which is to succeed it, while developing the spiritual faculties of reason, knowledge and sympathy. Our Lord ranked the virtue of poverty first in the eight beatitudes, when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The promise is given in the present tense, no waiting or uncertainty expressed. That riches and happiness are not always found in combination is proved by the large number of suicides recorded lately of wealthy people and the richest man is not always the most successful, for the power to acquire wealth is not always linked with the highest intelligence. Those who possess much are usually covetous for more, and expose themselves to many dangers in their solicitude to preserve what they have and add to their store. The homes of the poor closely resemble the great model home of Nazareth, and in them we more commonly find unity, peace and unselfishness, because, realizing their daily dependence on God's providence, they recognize each grace and gift as coming direct from Him. This causes them to live continually recollected of His presence, and we see in their lives God's sweetness, charity and submission. Many blessings denied the rich are enjoyed by the poor, through learning to live independently of exterior consolations, and they find their deepest pleasures in the accomplishment of God's will. Liesure refreshes them mentally, as well as physically, and enriches them spiritually, there being no impediment of care or anxiety to distract, and seeing so repeatedly the indifference shown by those in power to the needs of those whose work has made them powerful, destroys confidence in men and strengthens trust in God. Poverty might be compared to severity and destitution to harshness, if we look to results. It is easy to see the difference. The best qualities of heart and mind often expand and flourish under severe treatment, but harshness produces resentment and defiance.

The enjoyment of rest is one of the privileges of the poor, one peculiar to them, for only those who have felt the strain of compulsory labor can feel the delights of repose. The idle cannot understand rest, nor distinguish it from stagnation. None like the poor follow the injunction, which brings so much peace, to live one day at a time, to take up only the "daily cross." This is only attained by those who depend with childlike simplicity upon the great Providence which can provide, did provide and will surely provide. Those who do not know the