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Fifth Year No. 5

QUEBEC

MAY 1913

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A-211

THE AFRICAN MISSIONS

OF THE

White Fathers



Our Lady Redemptress of Slaves. • Pray for us.

37, Ramparts Street, - Quebec.

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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4.—A Requiem High Mass will be said every year, in the month of November, for all our deceased Benefactors, Subscribers and Promoters.

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Fifth Year, No. 5.

QUEBEC

May 1913

The Catechists in the White Fathers' Missions

—
(Continued)

III

Story of a Catechist related by himself.

—

One may perhaps be inclined to believe that the different anecdotes related above, and gleaned here and there, however interesting they may be, do not give a fair idea of the exact and original features of our Catechists.

We shall end this short sketch with a brief biography of one of them ; it is thus related by Father Lafleur, a Missionary in the district of Nkolé (Northern Nyanza).

Do you wish to become acquainted with my best Catechist? John Kitagana is his name.

His age ? He could not exactly tell. All Pagan Negroes,

and those who received Baptism when they were adults, do not know how old they are. The only information they give on the subject is the following : "I was born during the reign of such a king, or during such a war !" This is very indeterminate, as one can see !

Our John, according to his own statement, was an adolescent at the time of the White Fathers' coming to Uganda ; this was in 1879. He must thus be over forty years old now.

The Missionaries' arrival left him indifferent. The poor fellow owned a few goats, that was sufficient for him. Besides were not these White Men called men of prayer coming to conquer the country ? They had to be distrusted.

Nevertheless he felt ashamed to remain in his unsociableness and paganism ; he started to pray with Mahometans.

Mahomet's religion, rather accommodating, was the fashion of the day ; its followers had for them riches and honors ; the King himself was one of their disciples.

But I leave it to John to relate his story :

—"In order to do like everybody else, and especially to save my life, I also prayed with the Arabs. I could learn easily, and they expected much from me. Really I was only praying for the show of it, for never I have been a Mahometan in my heart.

One day, I met the White Fathers. Their kindness and their gentle words attracted me ; and I wished to pray as they did. I soon started to learn catechism. I was very anxious to receive Baptism. Every word of Christian Religion pleased me, except one nevertheless ; the one that forbids polygamy ; for I had several wives. Unable to make up my mind to keep but one wife, I stopped for a time to go to the Mission.

But I was soon ashamed of my conduct, and I went back to the Fathers ! I told them I was ready to do anything, and I rather go to Heaven with but one wife than to fall into Hell with several.

Then I received Baptism, and as I had dispositions for teaching, I was named a Catechist."

And this is how it came to be that John Kitagana is to-day the oldest Catechist in Bounyarougourou, one of the most important stations in Nkolé Mission.

The Natives respect him as much as they do a Missionary ; he is doing an immense good.

His strength is in prayer ; the rosary is his favorite weapon. He was saying lately to Father Superior :

—"When I meet people a little hard to convert, I do not discuss with them ; I go to church, I recite my rosary, and I am sure to meet with a fair success. It is by means of my rosary that I convert the most obstinate."

Such words are sufficient to convey a good idea of our man.

This portrait would not however be perfect, should we not give here the letter he wrote to Canadian Seminarians, in order to thank them for what they had done for his Patronage of young neophytes, by sending foot-balls and different sports.

A letter from John Kitagana to the pupils of Montreal College.

To my elders in Faith !

To those who gave the foot-balls ! Hail ! Many thanks for having prayed for Nkolé. Without God's blessings and the Blessed Virgin Mary's all-powerful intercession, what would this country be ?

We expect everything from Mary ; we hope God will hear Her prayer and that through Her, He will make of this nation His Chosen people.

Nkolé is over-joyed, for it has just had its first Christians. Those who believed in God and received Baptism during the month of March last are 84 in number.

We, Baganda Catechists, baptized long ago, have rejoiced exceedingly at seeing brethren thus drawn by God's mercy from Satan's slaevry. Pray give thanks, with us, Our Elders, to the Virgin Mary.

Beg of Her that she may keep on praying for us. Yes, may, thanks to Her, these newly baptized Christians, be by

their holy life and their virtues, as salt to their fellow citizens !

When I came to Nkolé, with the White Fathers, Protestants had, alas ! come before us. They were telling the village people :



Three Arab slave-merchants.

“Let every body come and learn. We want it to be so. Those who shall refuse to join our religion will be driven out of all positions !”

These words scared the Pagans. They then started to

pray with Protestants, not through conviction, but through fear ; not to save their souls, but to save their cows and goats which would otherwise have been stolen from them.

A few chiefs, not knowing of the laws on the liberty of conscience, consented to be baptized by heretics. But when they had been told the Government compelled nobody to pray, they told their people :

—“Stop going to the Protestants’ meetings ; when they have nobody to teach, they will not be long before going away .”

On the next morning, the teacher (Protestant Catechist) having beaten his drum as usual, found his temple empty ; nobody had answered his call. On the following days, new drum-call, and the same desertion. At last, tired of drumming, our man packed his belongings, and the kanisa (church) left to itself, pretty soon fell in ruins.

As for me, at the first lesson of catechism I gave, in obedience to the Fathers’ command, at Mbarara, capital city of Nkolé, I had an attendance of eighty Pagans. That was not an extraordinary success ; and still many had come only because they wrongly feared the Fathers.

These Pagans were saying to each other :

—“Let us pretend to pray with the Catholics because those White People will take our goats from us.”

To reassure them, I told them :

—“My Brethren, drive away your fears ! The Fathers have been created by God as all of us have been. They came here to procure God’s glory and to save your souls. They have been sent by God’s mercy. They baptize those who believe ; he who does not believe is not baptized by them. Bear this in mind ; they do not steal goats. The only thing left for the stubborn to do, is to settle his case with God, who punishes with fire whoever refuses to believe in Him. Then let those only who love God come and pray here !”

My word had a wonderful effect !... On the following day, instead of eighty hearers, I had... ten ! Amongst them was the old man Burundi, now called Joséfu since he

received Baptism. But I preferred to have these ten hearers who were sincere, than all the others who were not.

Here, in Bunyarugugu, after teaching for a whole year the children of the place, I started visiting Pagans in the neighboring villages. All refused to listen to me. They told me :

—Go and teach the children in Bunyarugugu ; we have too much common sense to pray !”

But God who changes as He pleases the hearts of men, made use of a particular means to convert my Pagans.

In a family of five persons whose mother was sick, there was a young child coming to my lessons. One day he thus addressed his mother :

—“John told us that God alone is the Master of life, which He gives or takes away as He pleases, and that our wizards are liars.

—Well ! go and tell John that if I recover through his prayers, I will follow his religion.”

The child then came to me and told me what his mother had said.

—“God, who is infinitely powerful, can in fact cure your mother ; but if He wishes her to die, she certainly will. So let it be as God pleases ; I can do nothing to it : God alone can do all. Go and tell your mother to believe in God !”

The woman believed, consented to burn her amulets and renounce to all witch-crafts.

The Pagans, seeing that, said :

—“If your gods have not killed her in a month, we also will study catechism.”

The month went by, and the woman instead of dying, completely recovered. Several Pagans then attended catechism with the intention of becoming Christians.

But all these new recruits were young men. The girls had not joined in.

The Pagans said :

—“Well ! pray, boys ! but where shall you find wives ? Never will we consent to give you our daughters in marriage.”

These threats troubled many of my recruits and lessened their ardor in learning catechism, I encouraged them the best I could.

—“Have confidence ! said I ; God who created men and women, will surely find wives for you, if you serve Him well.”

Thereupon we had a neighbor whose daughter was the victim of an accident which occasioned an awful wound, I went to visit the sick girl and told her :

—“Promise to learn Religion. Do not mind what others may say. If you are laughed at, be steady. God loves those who suffer for His sake.”

The young girl followed my advice. Little by little she recovered. Her father, seeing that she seriously intended to learn catechism, refused at first his consent. She insisted, and was soon followed by several of her friends.

I was told not long ago that a young girl's father was waiting at the door to kill his daughter because she attended catechism. I went to him and I saw that he was concealing a knife under his lubugo (a coat made of the bark of a certain tree).

I stopped him ; and he told me :

—“Why do you teach my daughter ? Why are you thus the cause that she refuses to marry a Pagan ?”

I took the case to the assembled chiefs. The girl gained her suit ; the judges having decided that she was free to marry a Christian and that her father had no right to compel her to become a Pagan's wife.

That chiefs' decision had the good effect of leading several girls to catechism. And now my young men are no longer uneasy as to their marriage.

This is the way, my friends, things are going on in this place.

Once more, thanks for your prayers you have given us, May God watch over you ! May the Blessed Virgin protect you ! I, Johanna (John), Catechist.”

Are not the above lines worthy of a Christian of the primitive Church ? So we must not wonder that such a Cate-

chist has acquired an extraordinary influence over the Natives for many miles around.

That influence manifested itself in a remarkable way in the month of October 1909.

Several chiefs of section, coming from Uganda, had recourse to severe measures towards their inferiors in Bunyarugugu, and these naturally came to hate all Baganda, and to establish their abode in the midst of their forests.

John, thinking only of his duties as a Catechist and wishing to fulfill same the best he could, thought it was his duty to go, though he was of the same nationality as the oppressors, and visit and console those who thought they were the victims of over-taxation. He could perhaps succeed in convincing them it was better for them to bear patiently those supposed injustices ; that it was in their interest to go back to their villages and keep on tilling their lands rather than wander so in the forests ?

One fine morning, he took his walking stick and set on his journey. Following is how he related his rather bold excursion to his Superior :

“After walking for two or three hours, I came to a glade, and I met a first group of children playing under the trees.

They recognized me from afar at my beard and ran to me in order to greet me and inquire of news.

Almost every one of them had a medal of the Blessed Virgin hanging on their breast ; they showed it to me and assured me that they had not ceased to pray. More than that, they had taught catechism to their companions who had not gone to the Mission.

I was pleased with them and told them :

—“That is right ! my friends ; but I also wish to see your parents. Lead me to them.”

And my young friends started through the under-growth so as to open a road for me.

We had been walking for a quarter of an hour, when on a sudden, I heard awful screams of alarms. Men were coming from every direction, armed with swords. I even saw several women arming themselves with spades ; and every one

of them came rushing towards me. I understood they intended to kill me ; they had recognized a man from Uganda. No use to try to escape, they were too numerous.

I stopped, and when they were but at a few steps from me, I told them :

—“My dear friends, you are armed with lances and spears, and I have but my walking stick. You are over five hundred, and I have to protect me but my Guardian Angel. Why so many lances ? If you want my life, take it. But know that I am coming to you for the sole purpose of bringing God's word. I came to see those children who are yours, and who are also mine, because they pray with me. Will you, their fathers, kill me on a account of that ?”

—“Ah ! John, they answered, it is you, John, the good Catechist ! it is a good chance we have recognized you ! Any other Muganda who would have dared coming, would not have gone back on his legs. But who could pierce with his lance or arrows so good a man as John the Mulegu (the beardy). Really, you are not a Muganda like the others ; you are only God's man. You love our children, and our children love you as their second father. Go in peace ! We shall not do you any harm ; but go out of this forest. Others who do not know you, could kill you ; we would be grieved at such a happening !”

John started safe and sound, accompanied by a group of joyous lads whom he had to promise that on the following Sunday they would attend his catechism and recite their prayers.

The work done by our Catechists is therefore beautiful and consoling, since it is through these young men's cooperation that the Missionary succeeds, not only in maintaining the work accomplished in souls regenerated by Holy Baptism but in harvesting every day new sheaves, in that immense field called Africa.

Unhappily the resources at the disposal of the Right Rev. Apostolic Vicars of those remote regions are all required by the works already existing.

It is at the price of the greatest sacrifices they have suc-

ceeded in providing for those catechists heretofore established in the most important places, and their distressing poverty does not allow them to increase the number of these efficacious cooperators.

And in the mean time heresy redoubles its efforts, and Mahometanism throws its snares around the poor Negroes of Soudan and of the Great Lakes, living in a multi secular ignorance.

We therefore hope that our dear Benefactors will kindly answer the Sacred-Heart of Jesus' call, inviting them to console Him, by allowing Him to superabundantly shed the merits of His Precious Blood on so many thousands souls exposed to perdition.

They will generously give their mite. They will increase the number of those powerful though humble voices for consoling the afflicted, instructing the ignorant, preaching the Gospel of peace and saving the world.

In the Maissai's Country.

A letter from F. Gass, of Iraku (end)

During the second day, we crossed the hill range that shuts on the North the Waniraku's country. Gradually we were leaving the cold regions behind us and beginning to enjoy the life-giving rays of the sun. We passed near Barau forest, measured and registered as a State forest in order to protect it from the vandalism of the inhabitants who, under pretense of culture, devastated vast areas of it.

We stopped, after a six hour walk, at the place called Rhinoceras Camp. Two huge rocks gave us a shelter for

the night. Twenty steps in the dried bed of a torrent, we found a miserable hole full of water. We had no right to be particular, for we were in an immense wilderness : *In terra inviã et inaquosa*. The night went peacefully by. Our men were sheltered by the rock and protected by four fires that prevented wild animals from approaching.

The third day was the worst of all, for from morning till night we had to tread the monotonous path, if we except a two hour halt in order to cook at noon some food, just enough to keep us from starving. We reached the camp, all broken down by fatigue, in the darkness of night, after having lost our path and having, with difficulty, opened a passage through the weeds that were blocking the roads on all sides.

With all that, we came near being met with a shot. Two soldiers, sent from the fort of Umlulu, to overtake marauders, were in the camp. Hearing noise in the thicket, they jumped on their guns, thinking they were in presence of those they had been sent after. The word Mzungu (White), falling from my guide's lips, reassured the soldiers, and very politely they came to welcome us, then they fixed our tent and they graciously gave us some of their fire wood. We were on the banks of the little Anzi River and at the entrance of the virgin forests.

My companions were so tired that they did not even think a lighting a fire, either for cooking their food or for protecting themselves from the coolness of the night.

And nevertheless, in spite of fatigue and cold, they talked and laughed till late in the night. As for me, in spite of the noise, I succeeded in falling asleep.

All on a sudden, I was awoken by awful screams and quick steps. Almost at the same moment my tent was tossed and my field-bed overturned. Thinking a lion was near at hand, I grabbed my gun and ran to inquire what was the matter. The noise stopped and here is what I heard :

"Waniraku look on the boa as on a sacred being."

That serpent, they say, leaves in peace people that are spotless, but surely attacks those that are contaminated



A young girl, slave redeemed by the Missionaries.

either by small-pox or by the mark of any kind of wound.

Now, on the previous day, one of my men had hurt himself with a knife, therefore blood had been shed and this called for vengeance. Dreading, my man and his neighbor fancied they saw amongst the brambles and bushes surrounding us an immense boa coming to them. Then, hollownig : "Behold he is catching us," they ran out of the camp, frightening every one of their companions, I reassured these poor people the best I could and we went back to bed, but, I must say that our sleep was more or less troubled by dreams about serpents, so great had been our emotion.

We were up early. On that day we had to climb the mountain range that shuts on all sides, the immense Ngorongoro plain, before the rays of the sun had become too warm. But just as I was about to give the signal for setting on our journey, I was called upon to act as a judge.

On the preceding night, one of my bearers was preparing the stakes for fixing my moveable chapel, when the axe he was making use of got out of the handle and struck a man on the arm. Great commotion. The wound was immediately bound, but nobody told me about the accident. On the next morning when we were about to start, the injured man, with my bearer, came to me.

—See, White Man, said he, my arm is in a bad plight.

—Do not exaggerate, friend, I can see.

—In our country, added he, for such a wound, a calf is given. But because you are travelling...

—Tell me, did my man wound you on purpose or not ?

—Not on purpose.

At that moment one of the soldiers came along ; thinking it was very out of season to contradict a European whom he looked upon as an important personage, he said aloud :

—Silly fellow ! Did he do it on purpose ?.. That word hushed the complainant and the affair was settled.

Soon after, my bearer came to me :

—Father, you have saved me doubly : first from being whipped by the soldier and then from paying a fine to his servant.

Towards ten o'clock, we had reached the top of the mountain from where we could throw a glance on the immense plain spreading at our feet as far as we could see. Nothing could clearly be seen ; here and there some dark-green spots ; the rest is of a reddish hue. Pretty soon we started going down through a winding path, here amongst rocks, there through thickets, and we reached a barren plateau. From that spot, the scene was really fairylike.

We could then discern the least particulars :

In front of us was the crater of an extinct volcano ; not far from there, a second volcano in activity called "Mountain of the Divinity." Smoke was coming out and from time to time, an underground noise could be heard. The Natives, understanding nothing of those phenomenons, thought it was a god's abode, Kirim's ; and this god they said, had a numerous court to wait on him and great riches. Some pretended they had seen him with his herds. During the night, he was supposed to hunt for young men who were sent to increase the number of his servants after he had plucked out their bowels.

Let us go back to our contemplation in order to bless our Creator for so many wonders. Not a spot did we miss to contemplate. From the mountain slope, many rivers were flowing into a small lake. Below the extinct volcano, in the East and on the West, our eyes rested on a fine forest of thorny trees with gigantic trunks. Afar, on the North, near the last counter forts of the range was the brothers Sudentopf's great establishment (1) ; nearer by, a Massai hamlet, with its small houses, forming a circle around the field reserved for cattle. In a depression, an immense meadow where antelopes, zebras and gazelles were roaning about by the thousands, an ever-set table for the king of animals, a fortunate spot where Divine Providence seems to have abundantly thrown Nature's riches and beauties.

The climate was mild and free from marshy noxious exhalations. After addressing our thanks to the Author of all those wonderful beauties, we kept on going down the hill

(1) German settlers fixed amongst the Massai.

directing our steps towards the nearest village. On the suburbs, we found large herds of big and fat sheep, an honor to the pastures feeding them. Without exaggeration, each of these was well worth three of the small kind we had on our Irakou mountains.

At the entrance to the village, were seated a group of old men, wrapped in large skins. The only difference between them and the Natives of our country, was their long bored ears and the artistically ornamented bamboo-tube hanging from their neck on a double wire or copper chain, which they used as a snuff-box.

I went to the group and saluted them. The old Sofia explained whom we were and what was the purpose of our coming. Léokadya was immediately recognized by one of the assistants who said he was his uncle. Visibly moved, the old man arose, and pressed the child's chin with his shaking hand. He could answer him but with his tears, so impressed he was himself. Pretty soon, the good old man went to the nearby huts and brought back a big calabash full of milk which he presented to me. A second one was offered to my companions who were not slow accepting it : Wanirakou are so fond of milk !

I left the Massaï men to the first joys of "seeing each other again", and I directed my steps towards the spot chosen for our camp. During the afternoon, we were offered, as a welcome gift, a fine sheep with milk.

The Christian women asked me to be allowed to spend the night in the camp, in order to be free to recite their prayers and to hear Mass. For the bearers it was an absolute rest. For several days, they enjoyed a sweet farniente, slept at their leisure and ate very much ; corn was excellent and meat abundant, thanks to the game so numerous in the plain and on the mountain.

On the day following our arrival, I visited the villages : nothing was more miserable than the Massaï's abodes. Picture to yourselves an immense upset kettle, and a very little yard. The frame work consisted of slender branches planted in the ground the small end being in the atr, these were

bound together at their midst and covered with barks. The whole was covered with cow manure.

The cattle : goats, sheep, oxen and donkeys were in the space surrounded by these huts. Lambs, kids, calves alone were allowed inside.

Early in the morning, the women wrapped with large skins bearing their baby on their back, went to milk the cows and ewes. Milk being the only food of the Natives, with, from time to time, a little meat from an animal that dies by itself, it is easy to understand that even ewes are milked, which is not done by other Negroes. I was told that it is forbidden for Massai people to eat meat and to drink milk at the same meal. It must be one or the other.

In the cattle field, some kinds of essences are placed in order to insure the prosperity of the herd. So they do not like strangers to go there. They are always careful to have these go around the field.

People of the same age, men and women, greet one another by shaking hands. When two persons of different age meet, the younger one has the other to impose his hands on him, a habit which exceedingly pleased me. So I was called upon to impose my hand on the young folks of the village that crowded around me to receive that kind of a blessing. Old people were encouraging the children and reassuring the most timid, saying : "Do not fear, that man is one of ours."

I spent the four days of my stay in Ngorongoro, making visits, now to Siedentopf's farm, then to Massai villages, apart from one another by an hour's walk. At night, we all met in the camp.

One day, during my absence, a delegation come to our camp. Our Christian women alone were there. For two hours, by means of all the arguments paternal or fraternal love could suggest, the delegates besought our Christians to remain in the country, promising to give me herds, even ivory, if I agreed to leave them there.

When I was back, Juliana told me what had happened, I

suggested then to my good Christians a few answers to add to those, very nice also, they had already given.

As for me, I went to the tempters and told them I could not sell to them my children's souls, even for all the Massaï's herds, for all the ivory in Africa ; a voice was speaking louder : conscience !

At last we left Ngorongoro, where we left friends. Henceforth, the Missionaries are called by the Massaï by the name of "Aleizoumgou sidein" (the good Europeans).

May this favorable impression remain and prepare for us a kind welcome when we can announce them the Good Tid-
ding.

Mission of Kabylia

In a Mohammedan country, if we take account the number of baptized people only, our mission work may seem stationary. Statistics showing the number of Catholics to have increased but by a few individuals, will give but little encouragement ; but it has already been said : Nothing is as deceiving as statistics. One thing there is, which figures cannot express, it is the interior change wrought in souls. Between the avowed hatred for Catholic Religion and a more welcoming inclination towards that same Religion, a Mahometan's soul has to go through several stages : Take notice that figures are powerless to express such an ascension. Even those working at it, cannot fellow such a change being done around them.

Dispositions to-day look the same as they were yesterday. And nevertheless, something has changed. An incident, a conversation sometimes a serious determination will reveal the work that has been done in souls in favor of our Religion.

Following is an account of a few of these facts, and we

will take the same from amongst the latest. Remember that these happening are occurring in the heart of a Musulman country, in places where, but a few years ago, it would have been impossible openly to preach the word of God.

STORY OF THE YOUNG SAID.

During the year 1910-1911, our young neophytes could, not without being bothered by their companions, declare themselves Christians. Things were so when towards the middle of July, the Devil, seeing his power decreasing and his kingdom threatened, took on himself to set fire to powders.

Amongst our catechuments, was a young boy of 15, belonging to the first family in the village. How had he come to be one of ours ? The story would be too long to relate, though exceedingly interesting, for it would show the admirable and delicate attentions of Providence to those favorite souls whom the Good Shepherd wishes to bring back to His fold.

Suffice it to say that, like St Paul, he had at first persecuted his Christian companions and that several times the Missionary had had to protect the young neophytes from his cruel treatments. His conversion was begun by the perusal of a catechism which happened to fall into his hands. His mind and heart were captured at the same time, and telling of his wishes to those whom he had persecuted, he was by them presented to the Father that was teaching catechism.

The latter had soon won that soul's confidence ; one month after, the spirit of prayer and sacrifice had so much changed him, that the Missionary was almost afraid, at the thought of what would be the wrath of this young neophyte's fanatical family when they would be told of his conversion. The Missionary could not help telling him about it, and advising him to be prudent and to hide a little the wonderful change that had been wrought in his soul. The child answered but with these words :

"I know that my father is very wicked ; if he happens to

to play with his companions, he called one of them in whom he had placed his confidence, and they both went to the chapel where they remained for two hours praying. The child whom we will call Saïd had perhaps an intuition of what



Blessing of a tomb (Sahara)

hear I gave up Mahomet's religion, he will kill me ; but I fear nothing, for God has filled my heart with courage."

In fact, God's action was visible on his soul. On July 17, the child came as usual to the Mission ; but instead of going

was to happen. He never told us about it. But on that night, as he went back home, one of his cousins told him :

—“Somebody told me you are a Christian ! It is true that you go to Catechism and pray in the chapel ?

—Yes, it is true.

—If such is the case, I will tell your father about it.”

One hour later, Saïd, who had gone to the *tajmaït*, came home and found his family assembled.

—“Is what I just heard about you true ? said the furious father.

—Yes, it is true.”

Hearing this, the Musulman, in a fit of anger, jumped on his son, struck him with all his might, insulted him, spat in his face, whilst his mother, brothers and sisters laughed at him saying : “That’s good for you, dirty Christian, you have dishonored us, behold your reward.”

Saïd silently bore this cruel treatment ; but what was more painful to him was to hear his father forbid him to enter his house. On the same day, profiting by a moment when he was alone, he wrote to the Missionary telling him what had come to pass and ended his letter with these words of Faith and Hope : “You know very well that I am not alone ; I am with God and I have Our Lord Jesus-Christ in my heart. My courage is strong and I think it will grow stronger, for I pray and I will pray ; but you also, pray and have others to pray for me !”

The whole village was soon acquainted with the event, for all had taken place in full *tajmaït*.

At once, the question was clearly set forth : “How, said a few Natives, heretofore we had been under the impression that the Fathers were there to help us, care for our sick, receive our letters, pray our Post Orders, and here they are now trying to take our children away from our Religion !” And they added : “We will write to their Superior General to have the Fathers forbidden that.”

The Misionaries were for nothing in all this, since God Himself had brought that child to them ; but appearances were against them, and for four long hours Saïd’s family

had a grudge against them. Young Saïd was strictly forbidden to go to their house, even to get remedies, and he was severely watched over ; let me relate here a fact that shows his ardent faith.

It was during the first part of September, when figs were ripe, one evening Saïd came back home with a purulent ophthalmia, that caused him an intense pain. Seeing him come in, his mother told him laughing ; "That's all right, you will suffer a long time, for we will not allow you to go to the Fathers' for remedies." Saïd answered nothing, but when he was about to go to bed, after having blessed himself with Holy Water (he was always carrying some in a carefully sealed vial), he thought it would be good to rub his eyes with it ; then, full of confidence in God, he fell asleep. On the next morning, there was no sign of ophthalmia left. Everybody knows that this affection, even well attended to, lasts sometimes for a long while. Who wondered the most ? Saïd's mother. She told him about it, but he, through prudence, answered nothing.

The news of what their young companion was suffering, stimulated the zeal of our young Christians or Catechumens. It was a league of prayers, of sacrifices, and good works in favor of the poor persecuted child and their own perseverance in the Christian Religion. We admired these dear children going across the *tajmaït*, fearlessly braving the satiric smiles, and gladly accepting the epithet of "*amitourni*" (apostates) that was addressed to them.

But what consoled us still more, was to see a certain number of children come to us, learn their catechism and improve their behavior ; it was towards the end of December 1911. Saïd's family had become reconciled to us, and the child was allowed to come to the Mission to play ; but he was forbidden to go to the chapel and to attend religious instructions. Till the end of April, all was smoothly going on ; our young catechumens were making progress, but the Devil was watching, the parents were amazed at the wonderful change wrought in their children, and as a mother told her child : "I prefer you to be not so obedient and so good,

provided you remain a Mahometan!" Two or three left us ; some others concealed a little their coming to catechism and then calm reigned once more.

At present every Mahometan knows why we are in Kabylia. Also the most fanatical amongst them keep a close watch on their children. That will be useless, for what can man do against God and it is evident that Divine Grace is being given to the Beni-Yenni.

A few items concerning our Neophytes' Life.

This year, our neophytes have but little increased in number : a whole family, consisting of four persons, went to live with another tribe, and this reduces our Christians to 6. On August 15, 1911, we baptized a young man of 20, whom our Regional Superior placed as monitor in Beni-Mengallet : there he displayed all what an ardent zeal can do to spread the good around him.

The spirit of proselytism with which he is animated is not rare amongst Beni Yenni. Our two youngest Christians, one of sixteen and the other of fifteen years of age, are following in the footsteps of their elder brethren. Both have, during last year, been a great help to the Father teaching catechism, by leading their little companions to the sermons or instructions, acquainting them with the spirit of prayer and sacrifice, and giving them good examples of a Christian life. And what they are doing outside, either in school or through the village, they are trying to do in their own families. Already one of them has the joy of teaching our Holy Religion to his brother and sister-in-law.

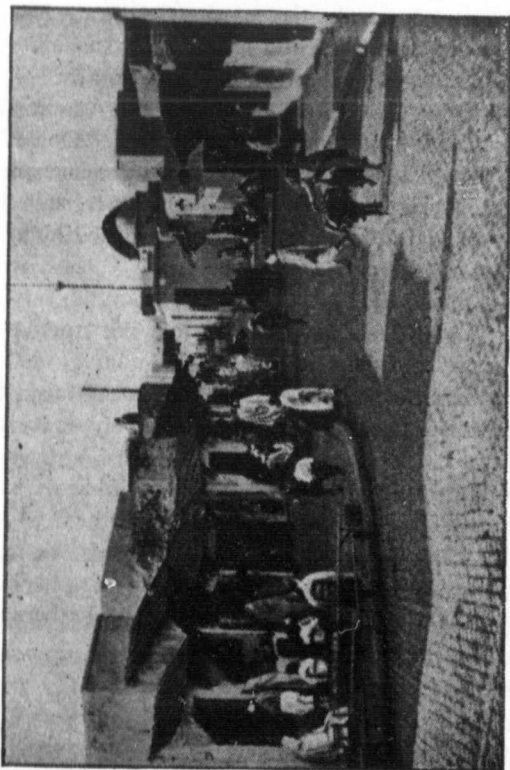
Let me be allowed to relate here two facts that prove that those children are not afraid of showing themselves Christians. The taller one was one day going to the school in Taourist Mimoun ; there had taken place a distribution of reading books, and our pupil, happy for having been given an interesting book, was reading it on his way there. Some men, coming from the market, met him ; one of these, more of a fanatic than the other, Akhouni and chief of the Khouan, seeing the book, told the child ;

—“What is that book ? I bet it is a Bible History.

—Do you know, answered the child, what is a Bible History ?

—It is the Bible, and the Baylek forbids us to take such a book to school.”

At these words, a pupil that was following the group, and who had received as a reading book, the “Life of Ma-



An Arab street, Sidi-el-Bechir (Tunis)

homet,” came near and said : “Look at my book, that one at least is good ?”

Our bigot took the book and looking it over, saw a picture of Mahomet ; showing it to the Christian, he said : “Behold, the true Son of God is not Jesus-Chrstst ; who is the Son of God, but Mahomet ; kiss his picture.” And so saying

he placed the book close to the child's lips, but the latter stepped back and taking a crucifix from his neck, told the man : "First kiss that cross." So much courage astonished that fellow. He went away, finding nothing to answer but these words :

—"Go away, you are but a Christian.

—Sure, I am, simply answered the child."

The other fact is very recent, and the younger was the hero of it. It was on the day of the Certificate Examination at National-Fort, the child had succeeded in his written examinations and it was his turn to answer orally.

The Examining Committee comprised the Administrator, his wife, and a few other officials of the place. One of them asked our young Christian a few questions in geography and history ; and abruptly, wishing perhaps to ascertain if the child knew the date of the Arab invasion, asked him.

—"Of what religion are you ?

—I am a Christian, Sir.

—How ? You are a Christian, but it is not true.

—Yes, sir, I have been baptized."

The examiner, astonished, turned himself towards the others and for a few minutes, a pretty lively conversation went on.

The Administrator then addressed the child :

—"To what tribe do you belong child ?

—To the tribe of Beni-Yenni ; my village is Aït-Larba."

Hearing this answer, the Administrator said to his companions : "All that may be true, for the White Fathers are in that village."

And turning to the child, he added :

—"Do you know Father X. ?

—Yes, sir, I know him very well."

The child went away.

He had hardly disappeared when the Administrator told the examiners : "That is a brave child, he is as courageous as a man."

And in fact, that child had to be courageous, as he was naturally timid, to confess his Faith, before a pretty nume-

rous assembly, composed for the greater part, of learned Natives ; but as your young Christian afterwards declared : “Father, I have no merit in all that : Our Lord simply fulfilled the promise He made in the Holy Gospel ; I felt it was He who inspired me what I had to answer. If they had refused to believe me, I would have shown the medal on which are written the dates of my Baptism and of my First Communion.”

If our neophytes are courageous, it is because they draw their courage and zeal from daily communion which they receive with a respect and a fervor that edify those who are the witnesses thereof.

From February 2nd 1911, date of their First Communion, and except when they were sick, they have not failed a single day to receive Him whom they call by the name of “Our Great Friend.” During the winter, in spite of snow, rain, mud, and darkness, they come to the Mission early, before their parents are up, in order to serve Mass and receive Holy Communion. During the summer, and during the vacations they sometimes have to go to the fields with their families even before sun-rise ; but on their return, they come, sometimes towards 10 o'clock, to one of us in order to receive Holy Communion ; they fast, depriving themselves of the fruits of the season and specially not drinking in spite of heat and work.

One of them even came, in the middle of August in a real *siroco* day, and awoke a Missionary during the latter's afternoon nap at half past 1 o'clock to receive Holy Communion. He was just coming back from the fields where he had been working hard. The Father, on placing the Holy Host on the child's dried tongue, felt tears coming to his eyes at the thought of the colloquy about to take place between the Divine Savior and his young friend.

How consoling for the Missionary to witness such happenings ; what a stimulant too to his piety and zeal ; and after that have we reason to wonder at the marvelous fruits of these young children's apostleship on their companions ?

STORY OF DAHBIA.

We sometimes meet very beautiful souls amongst children. I will quote now the example of a little girl who, thanks to a kick from a mule, became acquainted with the Missionaries. She was then six years old, but she was as intelligent as a child of fifteen. The poor girl had a severe wound over her eye-brows.

Father Justrobe, "*never-to-be-forgotten*" in this country, cared for her, succeeded in sewing the wound and a few days after, Dalbia came to thank her benefactor.

Four years had gone by. Father Justrobe had left Tagmount. Two Missionaries were one day passing through Tagmount-Oukerrouch, where lived Dahbia whom they did not know. At dusk, after a day of hard labor, they started, following the road leading to the Mission, when, at a few yards from the village they had just left, they saw a young girl, 10 years old, coming out of the bushes, and running towards them to kiss their hands. She clapped her hands, laughed, seemed out of her senses for joy. Then she inquired: "And is Si Yahia (F. Justrobe's Kabyl name) still there?"

Then one of the Fathers remembered the young wounded of yore, about whom he had often heard. A slight scar on her forehead had her recognized. The Missionaries had Dahbia promise to come and see them with Euphrasia, a good Christian woman of the village. She kept her word and she spent the Sundays at the Sisters' charming us with her lovely manners.

The Devil set himself to work; for after a few days, Dahbia's parents forbade her to go to the Missionary; but she did not forget us.

During another visit we paid to Tagmount Oukerrouch, she came to meet us and spent the whole day with us, accompanying us into the houses and acquainting us with the villagers.

At night, as we were getting ready to leave, she told me: "Father, how my heart longs for you! how much would I

like to see you every day! Every morning I go to tend my sheep on the hill ; from there, I see your house and I start weeping.”

—“My dear child, said I, from this on when you go to the hill, and you look at our house, you must say : “My God, I love You with all my heart ; Lalla Mariana, keep my dear Fathers who are in that house.”

She did as she promised, Jesus and Mary heard that dear child's requests.

One Sunday, the interdiction was raised : she came with Euphrasia. When in front of our house, she left her companion, rushed in our residence, and heedless of everybody, she reached our refectory where we were taking our breakfast. She joyfully hollowed “Good day, Fathers !” and according to the habits of the country, went around kissing our hands as is done for a venerated *marabout*.

After High Mass, she was shown an illustrated catechism. She was delighted with it. Euphrasia's little daughter told us all at once that she was often told to recite the Mahometan's formula, but that she always refused in spite of treats. “O my Father, cried Dahbia, I also, I never recite the *chaada*.”

Every difficulty has not disappeared. Will Dahbia be entrusted to us by her parents to be brought up at the Sisters' according to our ardent wishes ? We fear she will not. Nevertheless, a child who loves God and his Missionaries, and who, even if she is to be married to a Mahometan, will always be a Christian in her heart, will not die, I hope, without receiving Baptism. The conclusion of all this is : Happy kick of a mule, happy bodily cares, happy suture which have wrought the salvation of a soul.



VARIETY

Father Michael Larbi.

Though it is not in our habits to include in the "African Missions" necrological sketches of our confrères, we will nevertheless make an exception for Fathers Michael Larbi and Roch Ser'ir.

It would be a bad thing, do we believe, to allow these two missionaries' life to be forgotten, for in every particular, these lives are edifying, and present,---which is worth much---a victorious refutation of the generally admitted opinion,--even amongst Catholics,--that Musulmans cannot be converted, since those two Natives were not only converted from Mahometanism, but they became apostles amongst their brethren.

Amar Ben Larbi was born towards 1854 in the tribe of Beni-Messaoud. He belonged to the Kabyl race, and Berber was his maternal language. Nevertheless his family was not slow in coming to live amongst the Arabs, at Oued Blida.

Of his first years, F. Michael remembered but two events.

The first had relation to his mother, of whom he spoke but with veneration. "She was, did he use to say, a very righteous soul, who, though unlearned, had brought up her sons in the fear of God and the horrors of theft and lie."

The second event was about marabouts whom he sincerely had in aversion all his life. "My father was one of the most fervent believers in amulets ; therefore he was literally loaded with them. Of course marabouts had their



A Northern-African School-boy. Type.

free entrance in our house and they profited by that to rob us. One evening when I was coming back from the fields with my herd of goats, I was astonished at the good smell coming from the house. On coming in, I saw my mother Halima preparing a good *couscous* and, what was unusual for us who were not rich, a big rooster had been killed.

—Is it a holyday, to-day, said I ?

—No, my son, answered she.

—Then, why that banquet ?

—It is not for us, but for a marabout who promised your father to have him find a treasure.

In fact, the man took the dish away. Angry, I started weeping, and then I went after the man. My hatred for marabouts has increased ever since."

In 1868, a great famine fell on Algeria ; goats or sheep, tended by young shepherds, were either killed or sold. Then his mother died. In order to save his life, the father left the tribe with his two children. Hearing that Kabylia Mountains had been spared by the plague, he went there. He had also there a few friends to whom, in better days, he had loaned a few *douros*.

He thus set on his way, with his two sons. Amar and Mohammed, one 14 years old and the other, 9. Begging on their way, the three wanderers directed their steps towards the Djurdjura mountains. But on reaching the village of Beni-Aïcha, now Menerville, Larbi Ben Ali fell sick with yellow fever ; he still tried for a day or two, to drag himself along, but, exhausted, he was forced to stop in a village. He laid down on the floor of the djemaa whilst his two children went begging for him a little milk and coffee. When they came back, the sick man was pretty near dying. Just then, three Native travellers came to the djemaa, and mad to see there was somebody there, those brutes, heedless of the dying man and of the exhausted boys, took their places. The poor children slept during that night I do not know where, and on the next morning, the village people bade them go away. Their father had died during the night ; they

were not even allowed to see him once more, and they never know where or how he had been buried.

Nevertheless, they felt hungry. The poor orphans resolved to beg from door to door. As Amar was entering the yard of a house belonging to a marabout, a big dog, excited by its owner, rushed to the child, tore his *gandura*, and bit him so hard that the beast took the piece of flesh away. The child cried for help, but Kabyls present, only laughed at him.

On that day, the two orphans had just a handful of wheat to eat. That was their only meal that day.

Amar's wound got worse so that he could not walk. Mohammed placed him the best he could in a heap of straw in the neighborhood and went on begging alone. He succeeded in moving to pity a good old woman who gave him a little home-made sugar which he spread over the wound, and the latter was soon cured.

(To be continued)



RANSOM OF SLAVES

WE beg to call the attention of our kind readers to a Work of Mercy extraordinarily meritorious, that is to our AFRICAN RANSOM WORK. It is true the European Powers have abolished slavery in Africa, at least the most horrible phase of slavery. Those human meat markets of Tabora, of Ujiji, etc, have been done away with. However, slaves are still numberless in Central Africa and elsewhere. Thousands of children and even adults, men and women, kidnapped during wars out of revenge, or given away from motives of superstition are to be daily seen by Missionaries. They belong to heathens or to cruel Mahomedans, whose cruelty eye-witnesses alone can understand. Every week, nay every day, Missionaries would redeem those poor creatures had they money enough to do so.

The ordinary price of ransom is the sum of **twenty dollars**. Those who send \$20.00 for a ransom become the adoptive parents of the one they free, and may choose the Christian name to be given them when they are baptized.

GIFTS TO THE MISSION.

Cancelled Stamp Work :

1o Ransom of Mary.....	\$20.00
2o Ransom of Joseph.....	20.00
From Belleville, ransom of a girl.....	20.00
From A. M. W. ransom of Mary.....	20.00
From Rockaway, ransom of Francis.....	20.00
From Glace Bay, ransom of Patrick.....	20.00
From New-York, for a Man-Catechist.....	15.00
From Philadelphia, for a Man-Catechist.....	15.00
From Baltimore, for a Woman-Catechist.....	10.00
From Spencer, for the Mission.....	10.00
From San Raphael, or the Mission.....	10.00
From San Francisco, for First Communion.....	3.00
From amount of smaller gifts.....	43.25

DECEASED

Mrs. Michael Long, Collingwood.—Mrs. John O'Reilly, Toronto.—Mr. C. C. Custance, Toronto.—Mr. Thomas Tobin, Lindsay.

Requiescant in pace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22 conversions.—11 vocations.—27 spiritual favors.—42 sick.—18 temporal favors.—16 thanks-giving.—18 intentions for friends who promise to get subscriptions to *The African Missions* if their prayers are heard.

Prayers have been requested with the promise to secure help for the ransom of slaves.

Missions of the White Fathers in Africa.

The Society of African Missionaries called the **White Fathers**, was founded at Algiers by Cardinal Lavigerie.

Last June, the Society had charge of 105 Stations belonging to 7 Apostolic Vicariates, and one Prefecture. The Missionaries then working in the Field were 463, besides a great number engaged in the general administration, or in the Novitiates the Society maintains in America, Asia and Europe. **At each Station there must be at least three Missionaries.** The Fathers are helped by lay Brothers who are also members of the Society, and by an order of Sisters founded likewise by Cardinal Lavigerie.

The Society has two Missionary fields. **In North Africa**, we are working among Mohammedan population ; **further South**, among the colored tribes of the Soudan and of the Equatorial countries. These Missions combined cover an area almost as large as the whole Dominion of Canada or the United States, that is about **two million five hundred thousand square miles or one fifth of the "Dark Continent"** As for the inhabitants of these immense countries, they approximate **more than twenty millions**, about one seventh of the whole population of Africa.

What are 460 Missionaries for 20,000,000 Heathens ?

" Missionaries ! Send us lots of Missionaries ! " Such is the continual cry of our Confreres in their letters.

" Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into His Harvest. "

In the name of all our Missionaries we earnestly beseech our Readers to remember this injunction of our Lord and help us by fervently complying with it.

15 JUN 1902
BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

THE WHITE SISTERS.

Our Missionaries find zealous and valuable assistants in the Mission Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters). These Sisters devote themselves particularly to the instruction and training of the women and young girls and to the nursing of the sick. Owing to the lack of funds for the expenses of voyages, founding of houses, etc., the sum of one hundred and twenty dollars a year is absolutely necessary for the support of each one.

Anyone who charitably contributes the above sum will materially aid both Sisters and Missionaries in their labors, and share in all their merits and good works.

NOTICE.

The date on the printed address of subscribers is to let them know when the time of subscription expires. **It serves Also as a receipt.** For instance : **Jan. 14, Aug. 13** etc., means that the subscription runs up to January 1914, August 1913. etc. If one month after renewal of subscription the date on the address has not been changed, subscribers should kindly inform us and we will at once make correction.

CANCELLED POSTAGE STAMPS

The work of Cancelled Postage Stamps, though apparently a very small one, is in reality the source of much good in our Missions—the ransom of slaves.

So, dear Readers, if you can send any considerable quantity to us, they will be valuable and we shall be most grateful to you.

The Post forwards them at the rate of **one cent for each two onces** or fraction thereof, as **Third Class Matter**. Larger quantities should be sent by Express or Freight.

In order to reduce the cost, they should be neatly stripped from the paper by means of cold water, and dried.

We get the paper off in the following easy way :

We put them over night in a pail of cold water. The next morning we take them out, lay them by in little heaps, and let them dry for two or three days. When perfectly dry, we blow the stamps off the paper without the least trouble and without tearing them.

Ask your friends to help you in this good work by saving their own cancelled stamps and collecting from others.

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Commercial Printing Co., Quebec.

17 JUL. 1975

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