DEPRAVED SAVAGES.

A Thrilling Description of Their Manners and Customs.

Mgr. Vidal's Experience Among the Fiji Islanders—The Horrible Scenes in Cannibalism Witnessed By Him During His Residence There.

Mgr. Vidal, Vicar Apostolic of the Fiji Islands, in a recent letter gives a few facts concerning the depravity of the native islanders before the salutary advent of religion. Speaking of cannibalism, he very graphically tells how the inhabitants of five villages were led to devour each other through their diabolical passion for human flesh. On one side of the River Rena are three high mountain peaks whose towering heads are visible for miles around. Immediately opposite on the other side of the river are two more peaks whose frowning crests vie with the others in ruggedness. These five natural fortresses were inhabited by fierce and warlike natives, who like birds of prey were in the habit of swooping down from their rocky eyries upon those who were impudent enough to wander in the valley. Their thirst for blood was so great that not content with killing their victims they would devour their mutilated bodies with the most fiendish glee.

As a natural consequence, the surrounding valley was no longer frequented. Its evil fame spread far and wide, and all fled from its vicinity as if it were a place of darkness. The cannibals on the peaks, failing to secure their accustomed sustenance from the valley, began to devour each other. Bubu, one of the villages, worsted the two other villages near it, and Vaatia on the other side took its neighbor by assault. It is needless to say that the unfortunate inhabitants of the conquered villages were killed and eaten. Bubu and Vaatia now remained. The fight between them was deadly. Bubu at length was victorious, and the rites inaugurated at the capture of the fortress are too horrible to relate.

Let those who place no credence in the frightful realities of cannibalism come to Bubu. There is not an European resident on the islands who, before their annexation to England, has not seen such awful spectacles enacted before his own eyes. One of the most intelligent and influential colonists on the island told me recently that before his arrival at Fiji in 1869 he regarded cannibalism as a myth.

"Soon," he said, "I had occasion to be undeceived. Having gone into the interior as far as Baou I was, to my surprise, present at a repast composed entirely of human flesh. It was even offered me to eat. More than this, I came very near being devoured myself. I owe my preservation to the influence of a powerful chief, to whom I had made some presents." At Bubu, more than any other place, can one satisfy himself, even after ten years of suspension of these horrible rites, that cannibalism was once practiced on the Fiji Islands.

Let us ascend the peak where once the human vultures had perched their nest. We had made up our minds to visit the spot before sunset. Our native friends wished to dissuade us from doing such a rash act, but by telling them that the wicked practices had now ceased and that our time was limited, we finally prevailed upon the guides to accompany us. We arrived at the top only after two hours of arduous climbing over dangerous and difficult passes that continually inspired us with fear. At length one of the guides, pointing to a large rock, thus spoke: "Upon that altar were the abominable sacrifices offered us—on this spot were the mutilated bodies devoured; those rocky channels once ran red with human blood."

I wished to glean more facts as to the condition of the natives and following particulars from ed chief. He said in sub- rly if a Fijian was dis- he had no scruples eating her, if she tough. Every wed by great risoners were y some evil ppened to was soon

nfirmed fathers, follow- t La- three storm island rough ed to- waiting fering. who in- fter re- d them ect them

and see that they were sent home.

"I will hide you for a few days in a neighboring cave, where you will be safe from the villagers," said he, "for if they devour you."

The poor creatures, blessing their deliverer, allowed themselves to be conducted to a small grot in the mountain side. Here they received enough nourishment to keep them alive.

After a few days their pseudo saviour returned and said to them: "I will send you home one at a time—my boat is too small to hold two." The one designated to accompany him did as she was bid, but, instead of conducting her home, he brought her to his cabin, where he killed and ate her. After five days, in which he had consumed the body of his victim, he returned, took another woman, and again came back for the third. They met with the same fate as the first. Thus do they eat those of the same race as themselves. Their love for human flesh is so great that they will eat a dead body even after it has been buried three days.

To a chief no glory was greater than to have eaten more human bodies than his rivals. They wore knotted collars around their necks, each knot representing a body. I was told of one chief who had twenty-seven knots to his collar and of another who had eighty. The latter was the famous chief, Thakobau.

Thanks to the influence of civilization and the few zealous missionaries who have devoted their lives to the arduous work of converting the savages, these vile practices are becoming less and less frequent. By the grace of God this people, enlightened by His Holy Word, have the gates of salvation thrown open to them. There is a man among them who has already shown the strength and courage of a martyr against his persecutors. The Protestant chiefs of the neighboring valley ordered the chief of Bubu to come over to their faith, threatening to kill him if he did not comply. He answered that they might kill him, but that he would still remain a Catholic. The axe was even lifted above his head, but he did not weaken in his faith. At length he was sent as a slave to an island chief, where he was subjected to all manner of abuse, yet each day saw him the more sincere in his religious fervor.

And yet this man who would die for the true faith was not even baptized. I remarked to Father Rougier that he had already received the baptism of desire, and had been purified by sanctifying grace. For it is impossible for such strength and virtue to be displayed without grace from God. We were most cordially invited to come to Bubu; the na tives eagerly desired a priest, and to show their regard presented us with whales' teeth.

The persecuted chief made an address that was so filled with heartfelt emotion that it drew tears to the eyes of all of us. He told us that he had once gone down to the shore, more than fifteen years ago, and while there had assisted at a religious ceremony in the church at Verata. He went away convinced that the Catholic religion was the only true religion. From that day he began to lead a new life. Henceforth he took no part in the pagan sacrifices or the ceremonies of the Protestant creed. This abrupt action on his part was the sole cause of all his persecutions. He procured a pair of beads which he wore continually around his neck and which he recited every day.

The jeers and scoffs of the villagers were the greatest proof of his sincerity. They were accustomed to taunt him, saying: "When will you have a priest of your religion? Are you foolish enough to believe that Catholic priests will leave the shore to come and inhabit these mountains? You will die and we will die before they will even come to visit us."

"Sometimes," the pious chief of Bubu added, "my heart was filled with grief and I became sorely discouraged after awaiting your coming for fifteen long years. But to-day my wishes are more than realized, since before me I see not only a priest but a bishop. Oh! blessed be the holy God for having heard many prayers and preserved my life that I might behold the light of this glorious day. To-day my most fervent hopes are realities—my village is now entirely Catholic—this, indeed is more joy and happiness than I could ever expect on this earth." Saying these words he advanced and presented us with a beautiful whale's tooth.

With the Lepers.

The "Annee Dominicaine" states that on All Saints' Day his Grace, Archbishop Flood, O. P., of Trinidad, visited the leper establishment at Cocovite. He gave First Communion to sixteen lepers, and administered Confirmation to twenty-two.

A Novel Presentation at the Vatican.

One of the most interesting presentations at the Vatican this long while back was seen last month when the Holy Father received Mgr. Couppe, Vicar Apostolic of New Briton, in Oceana, who presented two savage children, the first who have ever been seen in Europe from those regions. There was also present at the audience the Rev. Father Jouet, Procurator-General of the Society of Missions of the Sacred Heart.

AN ODD CELEBRATION.

St. Louis Italians Carry Out a Custom They Learned at Home.

The Feast of the Blessed Virgin Celebrated By a Procession Through the Streets After Midnight—Grand Devotion to the Church.

A weird procession, such as was certainly never seen before in St. Louis and probably not in any other city in the United States, took place between the hours of 2 and 5:30 o'clock on the morn of Dec. 8, the occa ion being the celebration of the Feast of the Immaculat Conception by the Italians, says a correspondent of the "Freemen's Journal.

Half a hundred torch bearers were in the front. Then followed a bugler, who at intervals sent his clarion notes resounding along the well-nigh deserted thoroughfares. Behind him came a dozen stout, stalwart Sicilians bearing on their broad shoulders a wooden platform. On this rested a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, decorated and adorned with gold and silver and precious stones, and surrounded with wreaths of fruit and flowers. On all four sides burned sacred candles, the reflections from which sent dazzling scintillations of light from the diamonds which bedecked the figure.

The statue was of plaster of paris and was molded in this city by an Italian. It was slightly more than two feet high and was a model of beauty and grandeur. The face was that of the Virgin represented as expressing in its way all that was sweet and pure in the Blessed Mother. The hands were crossed upon the breast and between the fingers had been placed a slender stem of snow-white lilies of the valley. It was in the decorations, however, that they eye found a source of almost unconquerable fascination. Strung together on many colored ribbons and cords the jeweled rings and golden ornaments were wound around and around the maze until the outlines of the figure were wholly lost to view. Gold and silver chains had been linked together and hung in graceful folds from the shoulders and arms, while a pair of the most beautiful solitaire drops glistened in the ears. A jeweled crown of solid gold rested on the brow, on the top of which was a small cross of the same metal. An admirably constructed representation of the halo, made of silver and set with gems, surrounded the head.

At two o'clock the procession formed in a court surrounded by tenement houses. It was a bitter cold night, snow on the ground and a sharp north wind blowing. Fully 200 men, women and children were in line.

After going about two blocks from the starting point, and just before Morgan street was reached, a stop was made and the music ceased. Carefully the precious statue was lowered to the ground and slowly slid into one of the narrow passageways which form a bewildering labyrinth throughout the entire Italian quarter. After going perhaps a dozen feet the passage widened into a court, upon which fully half a hundred doors opened. Porch after porch arose in tiers on either side to the height of five stories. This was an Italian tenement house, and a strange sight it was. At the sound of the music so near at hand the residents had poured out from the crowded quarters in perfect swarms, and a bewildering sea of eager faces was presented to the observer as he gazed up from the crowd below. But a more remarkable scene was yet to follow. As if imbued with the spirit of the zealots below, dozens of the residents began climbling down flight after flight of the rickety stairs, to fling themselves weeping and praying in the snow at the foot of the image of the Blessed Virgin. Pale-faced mothers pressed their pretty babies' soft cheeks to their own, and chanted a prayer for the safety of their precious little ones. Black-bearded and bushy-browed men elbowed their way to the sacred shrine and crossed themselves reverently in the presence of the representation of the Madonna, which had brought back to them memories of the Sunny Italy they had left.

After an interval of half an hour the statute was again lifted and the march was resumed south. Across Morgan street went the procession and into Chambermaid alley, on the opposite side. There a short stop was made, and th same scene, on a somewhat smaller scale, was repeated by a new band of devotees. Then the journey was renewed to the Franklin Building, one of the most densely inhabited tenement houses in St. Louis. The building is occupied by Italians, and a demonstration of more than half an hour's duration was held in the wide court facing the row. Here again poorly-clad women and children ran heedlessly into the snow to pay homage to the memory of the Blessed Virgin, while flowers and perfume were scattered

head. The procession then wound around in the maze of passages for another half hour, stopping at the doors of the principal men of the vicinity. Carr street was reached, and a long halt was made in the alley between Eighth and Ninth streets.

As the procession left the place, fully a score of the residents of the row, both men and women, followed for more than two blocks, trudging along barefooted through the snow without even a murmer or complaint.

It was almost 6 o'clock before the journey was over. The line of march had included every little court in the city, in which the Italians had their homes.

TOO SELDOM PRACTICED.

The Beautiful Custom of Visiting the Blessed Sacraments.

The custom of visiting the Blessed Sacrament is a most beautiful one, but unfortunately it is one too seldom practiced by Catholics. Were our Saviour to appear as a man in some church, how great would be the desire of every Christian to go to that church to see Him. Should He remain there for any considerable time, it matters not where the church was located, great pilgrimages would be organized, and thousands would leave their homes and cross oceans and continents to see Him. We all know that He is as certainly in the tabernacle of the altar as He was at Jerusalem nearly nineteen hundred years ago; and yet so many who believe that fact seldom think of visiting Him, except when forced under pain of sin to attend the celebration of Mass.

We know that the Holy Eucharist is an evidence of the intense love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for man; and yet do we show even in a simple way our appreciation of that love by entering the churches as we pass by to say a short prayer?

The Massacre of Chinese Christians.

Letters received in England from the Vicar-Apostolic of Eastern Su-Chuen give some details of the recent massacre of Chinese Christians. It appears that on August 4, during a Buddhist festival, an anti-Christian riot took place at Ta-tsin. Several Catholics were ill-treated by the mob, but no lives were lost, and next day it was supposed that all danger was over. But on August 11, towards evening, an organized body of 200 men attacked the houses of the Christians and killed twelve of them, the Catholic missionary in charge of the place having a very narrow escape. Next day a still larger mob attacked and wrecked the houses of the Catholics in the adjacent town of Ma-pao chang. The local militia tried to quell the tumult but were put to flight, and before the mob dispersed they had sacked a large number of houses and killed and wounded several of the native converts. The exact number had not been ascertained when Mgr. Betterly, the Vicar-Apostolic, sent off his letter.

An Important Decision.

An important decision has recently been made by the Sacred Congregation of Rites relative to the numerous entreaties regarding the approbation of the Mass and Office proper of Our Lady of Lourdes, which up to the present time has been invariably answered by the formula "dilata," which may be understood as a month, or as years to come. Finally, however, a decree has been issued appointing the feast of the Apparition to be finally celebrated on February 11. The importance of this decision lies in the fact that the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in thus approving the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, sets the seal of the recognition of the Church to the truth of the apparition and of the miracles which took place daily in that Grotto of Benediction.

Devotion to Mary.

Devotion to the Mother of God commenced, apparently, at her very tomb. The Jewish doctors preserved a historical fact, which shows the antiquity of this devotion. A tradition of the Temple, recorded in their Toldos, relates that a hundred Christians were put to death for having erected an oratory over her tomb, and that a violent persecution was waged by the Jewish prince against those who came to pray there. We know from tradition that devotion to Mary dates from the time of the Apostles. St. Peter, it is stated, dedicated an oratory to the Blessed Virgin in one of the ancient cities of Phœnicia. St. John, the Apostle, placed the beautiful church of Lydda under her patronage. St. Barnabas, the Apostle, dedicated the first church of Milan to Mary.

The New Order of St. Peter.

An international Order of Chivalry has been instituted by Leo XIII. at the instance, chiefly of the Bishop of Grenoble, Mgr. Fava. It is called the Order of the Servants of St. Peter, and is designed by the Holy Father as a reward for services to his own person and to the Church. The order will include Chevaliers, Com-

ANDREW J. NICKEL.

Cured of a Kidney Disease and Catarrh by Dr. C. M. Freeman, 106 Franklin St.

A few years ago, when Andrew J. Nickel, of 26 Hanover street, came from Germany to America, he was the very picture of physical manhood. No work, however severe, seemed too hard for him to perform. A change soon came. The moist climate and repeated colds soon developed catarrh in its worst form and affected every organ. He describes his case in the following words: "I began by having headache, pains in the chest. I was continually hawking and raising thick yellowish matter from my throat and lungs. I could not keep anything on my stomach. The smell of food made me sick and I felt like vomiting after every meal. I was in constant pain and misery. I could work only a day or two at a time. My shopmates said I could not live, and no doctors could cure me. My kidneys now became diseased, and then the bladder; the desire to relieve them constant and could not be satisfied. I had lost much flesh and felt hardly able to crawl around. Several doctors tried but failed to relieve me. Several of my friends had been treated and cured by Dr. Freeman and I decided to try him as a last resort. On October 12th I consulted the doctor, at his institute, 105 Franklin street. I knew he had been long established there, and made a specialty of chronic diseases, and had published testimonials from hundreds of grateful patients who gave their correct names and addresses. His prices were so very low, I began treatment at once. I began to feel better immediately, and now I am happy to say I am well, and I feel that I owe my life to Dr. Freeman. I live at 26 Hanover street, and would be pleased to have those interested call and see for themselves what the doctor has done for me.

"ANDREW J. NICKEL."

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