

FATHER WERNER'S WORK

A Statistical and Geographical Survey of the Catholic Church

What Progress is Being Made in the Old Heathen Lands of Asia and Africa, and Among the New Nations of America and Australia.

How many Catholics are there in the world? In what countries are they to be found? What progress is the church making in the old heathen lands of Asia and Africa, and among the new nations of America and Australia? And how is this progress reflected in the erection of new hierarchies and bishoprics, and the sub-division of new Apostolic prefectures and vicariates among the missionary orders? These are the questions that Father Werner, of the German Province of the Society of Jesus, has set himself to answer. He has devoted some busy years to the study of what may be described as the statistics and geography of the Catholic Church.

He has had access to the mass of reports in the archives of the Propaganda and other Roman congregations. He has collected and compared the census returns of the various governments; the statistics to be found in the transactions of learned societies; the reports of missionary bodies. No source of information has been neglected, and the first results of his labors are now before us. Father Werner describes his book as "The Catholic World: a Statistical and Geographical Survey of the Whole Catholic Church in East and West." Very few people realize what an enormous work of reconstruction and reorganization has been going on in the Catholic Church since the beginning of the present century. The latter half of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth were a period of persecution and widespread ruin to the organization and work of the Catholic Church. The claims of secular rulers to interfere in her government, the destruction of the Jesuit missions, the practical suppression of nearly all the other missionary orders during the French revolution, and the ones that followed it, and the closing of colleges and seminaries cut down the supply of priests to a minimum even for Europe. The foreign missions were all but abandoned. Convents and monasteries saw their inmates dispersed. Cathedrals and churches were desecrated and turned to secular uses. Endowments were diverted from religious and charitable uses to meet the deficit of national finances and supply the needs of personal extravagance. Finally two Popes in succession were dragged from Rome to exile and imprisonment. When it is added to this that in France a whole generation grew up without Christian education, while in most other European countries the action of the Catholic schools was more or less paralyzed, one obtains some idea of the crisis through which the Church passed, and of the vast work of restoration, which the Popes of the present century have had to accomplish. The foreign missions, as they exist at present, are the work of the last fifty years, a noble structure reared upon the foundation of those few fragments of the work of earlier missionaries that survived through the dark days when the East, ripe as it was for the harvest, was left almost without a reaper in the field. The marvelous extension of the hierarchy, which numbers hundreds of sees that are not yet half a century old, is one more evidence that our age is a period of marvelous growth and expansion in the Church. And with all this the Holy See and the bishops and religious orders have had no time of perfect peace in which to do their work. There have been, now in one country, now in another, troubles, difficulties, persecutions, but they have only strengthened and drawn together the Catholic body. Father Werner gives an estimate which makes the number of Christians at the end of the first century not more than half a million. This was a great increase on the 5,000 of Pentecost, but still the sons of the Church were like a mere handful among the teeming millions of the Roman Empire. To-day, with better materials to make the estimate, Christians, Catholics, and non-Catholics taken together, number at the very least something more than four hundred millions. What proportion they bear to the whole population of the world is a doubtful point, for the estimates of that total population vary widely. Probably, one-fourth is not far from the mark.

The striking point, however, is that these three hundred millions of Christians belong, for the most part, to the races that are more and more widely possessing and peopling the earth. There are still three great masses of paganism left—Africa, with its unknown millions, China, with its three hundred, and India, with its two hundred and fifty millions. In all these three lands the

Catholic Church now occupies the vanguard of missionary enterprise, and in both India and China it counts more than a million subjects. The future of the world belongs to Christendom, and the future of Christendom belongs to the Catholic Church. For, incomplete as our statistics are, this much is certain, that the vast majority of Christians are even now under the leadership of the See of Peter, while the dissenting minority is split up into hundreds of sects, no one of which anywhere approaches the numbers of the Catholic body. More than this, there is no religious body even in the non-Christian world which has gathered to its standard anything like the number of the Catholics of the world.

We have said that Catholics are more numerous than any other body of Christians. Father Werner as the result of his own studies puts the number at 230,000,000, while to non-Catholic Christians (Protestants, Russians and Eastern schismatics) he gives the very liberal figure of 215,000,000. Of these about 90,000,000 would belong to the schismatic Russian-Greek Church. This is by far the most numerous Christian body outside the Catholic Church.

As for the local distribution of the Catholic population of the world, about 150,000,000 are found in Europe. In the Latin countries of the South, Italy, Spain and Portugal, only a mere handful appears in the census returns as Protestants or Freethinkers. In fact the only considerable body of Protestants on the other side of the Alps are the 14,000 Waldenses of Northern Italy. For the extent of the country the hierarchy of Italy is the most numerous in the world. There are 275 dioceses, with 20,435 parishes and more than 75,000 priests. The Catholic population is 28,000,000.

The Spanish census returns show upward of 18,000,000 Catholics and 33,000 priests, while Portugal has 4,000,000 and 6,800 priests.

There is nothing like a complete religious census of France, but of its 38,000,000 inhabitants the "French Reformed Church" only claims a little over 500,000 and, making a very large allowance for these-called Freethinking element, one may take it, there are some 30,000,000 Catholics in France. In Belgium, out of a population of 5,900,000, there are only 15,000 Protestants and 3,000 Jews. Holland is almost as Catholic as Belgium, and out of a little more than 4,000,000 inhabitants in the whole of Holland no less than 1,500,000 are Catholics. Whole provinces in Germany are thoroughly Catholic. The census returns of 1890 are not yet available, but those of the preceding census (1885) show a Catholic population of 17,000,000, considerably more than a third of the empire.

Austria has 21,000,000 of Catholics. Switzerland has 1,100,000 Catholics in a population of 2,800,000.

The reports to the Propaganda from Russia claim a Catholic population of 3,000,000, not including children who have not yet made their first Confession and Communion, and exclusive also of the 6,113,000 Catholics of Russian Poland. In Denmark, Sweden and Norway where the Church has only of late years begun the work of reconquering these the most Protestant lands in Europe, there are 5,703 Catholics, with sixty priests, secular and regular.

The Catholic population of Ireland is 3,815,000, England 1,489,831, and Scotland 342,000.

For America the returns are strangely incomplete, several dioceses of South America and Mexico giving no estimate of their Catholic population. But leaving out of account the dioceses for which there are no figures, South America reports 14,000,000 Catholics, and Mexico and Central America 9,000,000. The correct figures would, of course, be higher. Cuba and the West Indies have 3,000,000. Father Werner puts the Catholic population of the United States at 7,853,794. Some American authorities claim a higher number. For the Dominion of Canada the last census gives us 1,791,992 Catholics out of a total population of over 4,000,000.

Cardinal Lavigne organizing a French Society to Enter the Dark Continent.

Cardinal Lavigne, who has aroused the conscience of Europe for the suppression of the African slave trade, is not content with having secured the agreement of the political powers to co-operative action, but is organizing an order called French Sahara Brotherhood, who will penetrate the desert as engineering monks. They will reopen the old wells in the Sahara, sink new ones, and plant fruit farms in the redeemed districts. Already the Cardinal has received 1,780 offers of volunteers. He has shown practical judgment by accepting them but fifty as a beginning, and enlisting them but for five years. Whatever comes of the plan it is a splendid conception. It is nothing less than an attempted literal fulfillment of the vision of Isaiah: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for thee, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

ON AN OSTRICH FARM

AN AFRICAN INDUSTRY TRANSPLANTED TO CALIFORNIA

Ostriches Are Profitable Birds to Raise. Something About the Business—Popular Superstitions Exploited—Hatched by Means of Incubators.

There are at least half a dozen ostrich farms in southern California. They have ceased to be a curiosity there, and each now represents a commercial enterprise. Americans buy one-half the millions of ostrich feathers produced annually. It is estimated that this country exports \$3,000,000 a year for these ornaments. Each ostrich when full grown yields a feather income of from \$200 to \$300 per annum. The elegant, long black and white plumes sell for \$1 each at the farms, and readily bring \$10 each at retail in New York or Chicago.

Every feather has a value. If it is sufficiently large for use it is worth at least 10 cents. The very small ones, otherwise useless, makes up into cheap souvenirs and are eagerly purchased by visiting tourists at prices varying from 10 cents to \$1. The plumes produced in southern California are fully as valuable as those from the far away Cape Colony. The eggs, if fertile, sell for \$25 each, and generally from 75 to 80 per cent of all eggs produced will hatch. If not fertile the shells are in demand at from \$2 to \$5 each as curios and ornaments. A young ostrich just out of the shell is considered equivalent to \$50, and his value increases until he is full grown, when \$500 is a low market price.

The expense of maintaining an ostrich farm is comparatively slight. The birds in this country are usually healthy. Their appetites are appalling, but they are satisfied with alfalfa, cabbage and crushed bones for a regular diet. On occasions they expect large and small pebbles, bits of iron, old shoes, tin cans and such delicacies. A hungry ostrich is not particular about his food. It is merely a question of deglutition with him. If what he eats will go down—or rather up—his somewhat elastic throat (for he eats and drinks head downward), he feels safe to trust his digestive organs to do the rest.

The ostrich has long been maligned. In our schoolboy days natural history taught us to despise the ostrich, first, because of its lack of sense, and second, for its want of parental instincts. We were told that this great, ungainly bird, when chased by a native South African upon the back of a fleet horse or a tame ostrich, would hide his weary head in the sand, under the impression that if he could not see his pursuer the pursuer could not see him. This fable is no more true, at least of the domesticated bird, than the other, which actually says that the mother ostrich lays her eggs in the hot sand and leaves them to the tender care of the sun and the Hottentot.

The ostrich egg shell is sometimes one-sixteenth of an inch thick. It is fully twenty-four times the size of an ordinary hen's egg. Incubation requires forty days, during which period the male and female alternate in the domestic duty of keeping the eggs warm. Most of the hatching is now done by incubators. A 300 egg incubator has a capacity for but 27 ostrich eggs.

At the farm near Santa Monica I saw the birds on the nest, however, and the young ostriches after they were removed from the nest. The eggs at this sitting nearly all hatched, and as I visited the farm frequently I grew very much interested in both parents and children. The nest consisted of a pile of sand in the center of the field assigned to the two breeders. The male bird manifested the utmost interest in the business in hand, and devoted more than fifteen hours a day to the maternal duty of sitting on the eggs.

When his mate was on the nest he would shield her from the excessive heat of that semi-tropical sun by extending his ample wings over her. The two ostriches were models of parental affection. The exemplary conduct of the male specially won my admiration, for he was ever on the alert to render assistance to his patient spouse, and when the little fellows pecked their way through the hard shell he kept vigilant watch over them. The old story of neglect of its offspring is clearly disproved. There are no feathered animals more dutiful.

The old birds are not awkward, but the young ones have no sense whatever, and so it is necessary to remove the latter as soon as possible after they escape from the shell to prevent them from wandering into danger. It requires skillful coaxing and no little maneuvering to entice the fond parents from the nest, but this accomplished the young ostriches are transferred to a sand box in the sun, where they must have close attention all day long to keep them from mishaps which their utter lack of discretion and extreme awkwardness would certainly bring upon them.

Although they are placed in an incubator. Until they are several months old these absurdly headless and tender things require very great care. After they pass from infancy, however, they generally thrive. The losses usually occur within the first month.

When the birds are seven months old the first plucking occurs, and from that time forward they give up their feathers twice a year. The females begin laying eggs at three years of age, and produce from thirty to ninety eggs each annually.

In South Africa, until about thirty years ago, the natives killed the ostrich for his plumes. Since that date the domesticated birds have furnished most of the feathers of commerce.

Each bird when fully grown has twenty-five plumes on each wing, with two rows of five feathers underneath. Above the white plumes are a row of long feathers and under them are a smaller size. In the male these are black and in the female drab. The tail has also a tuft of feathers similarly arranged. The first feathers are not usually as fine in quality, as large in size or as great in quantity as those of subsequent pluckings. — Cor. Chicago News.

Gen. Butler's Hat. In the United States district court in the Federal building no lawyer is better known than Gen. Butler. The court officers hear of his appearance with much the same feeling that they receive the announcement of the arrival of the judge.

As soon as his ponderous figure, swaying from side to side, appears bearing down toward the court room they scurry about arranging the chair at the counsel's table and assist him in removing his outer garments in a manner that shows their regard for him. Gen. Butler's hat is a curious article. It is just like one that Buffalo Bill would be accused of wearing out on the plains. It is probably the most abused of the general's belongings. The manner in which he jerks it off his head, slaps it down on the counsel's table and drops his heavy stick upon it determinedly, makes one wonder why it does not disappear suddenly some day out of spite. It has stuck by him through for years, just like his faculties of mind, and perhaps will be buried with him. — Boston Advertiser.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

How He Recovered a Precious Bible Carried Off By a Novice.

When St. Anthony of Padua was Superior of the Monastery of Limoges, it happened that a novice, tempted by the evil spirit, ran away one day, taking with him a Bible, belonging to St. Anthony, and transcribed by the saint's own hand. In addition to the Holy Book, the manuscript contained various meditations and passages from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. It comprised the fruit of long and toilsome labors, his various sermons, and the material of the instructions which he delivered to the members of his order.

As soon as St. Anthony discovered the loss of the Book, without hesitating a moment to think of what had become of it, he flung himself on his knees, at the feet of the crucifix, full of child-like hope, and besought the beloved of his soul to restore to him the missing treasure. How could such a trustful, child-like prayer remain unheard? When the fugitive novice had gained the open country, with the stolen Book, a horrible monster suddenly appeared to him and threatened to devour him. Terrified at this apparition, his conscience was awakened; he immediately returned to the monastery, and casting himself at the feet of St. Anthony, confessed his sin, and begged earnestly to be taken back.

The child-like confidence evinced by St. Anthony on this occasion, God was pleased to glorify and reward, through the special gift with which he endowed him from that day forth, of restoring lost or stolen things to their owners.

St. Pierre's Book.

When St. Pierre wrote his touching story of Paul and Virginia, he asked the opinion of his learned friends as to its merits. They politely discouraged him, and said that although the story had its good points, it would be useless to publish it, for no one would read it. Not at all discouraged, the author read the MS. to his old housekeeper, an uneducated woman, who praised it and wept. Considering her opinion the better one, St. Pierre published his book, which is ranked among the classics, and will be remembered when the tiresome productions of his learned friends are forgotten.

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