

Catholic Missions in Africa.

THE Right Rev. Dr. Hanlon, Vicar-Apostolic of the Upper Nile district, delivered a lecture recently at the seat of the Sodality of St. Peter Claver, Rome (writes the correspondent of the *Catholic Standard and Times*).

The subject of his lecture was the progress of the Church in his own vicariate and then throughout Africa generally. The Sodality of St. Peter Claver is an association of recent foundation for the support and aid of the foreign missions of the Catholic Church. It consists of three divisions. The first of these is a number of pious women living in common under the guidance of the foundress of the sodality. This foundress is the Countess Ledochowski, the youthful niece of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, in whose family zeal for the propagation of the faith has now been a publicly displayed characteristic for three generations, which are represented, the first by the Countess Ledochowski, the mother of the Cardinal, the second by the Cardinal himself, and the third by his pious niece. Under the direction of the Roman community there exists the second considerable body of zealators, men and women, living in various parts of the world, and then the third order, as it may be called by analogy, consisting of promoters, men and women living in various parts abroad. By offerings of money and of material objects, by every kind of moral effort and by prayer all the members of this new but promising organisation work together on behalf of the foreign missions and fulfil a need which is both very real and not covered by other existing organisations.

Summarising his lecture in conversation, Mgr. Hanlon said: 'By far the majority of the Catholic missions spread throughout the African continent came into existence after 1840. Perhaps I might even say that the majority of them came into existence after 1880.' I thought of the bas-relief which is the symbol of the reign of Gregory XVI. (1831-1846), on the tomb of that Pontiff in St. Peter's. The characteristic of his pontificate was the expansion of the Catholic Church in missionary countries. Mgr. Hanlon took manuscript with the names, dates and parts of each vicariate in the African continent and read from it. A very few missions had had a past very much more remote. Such were the Jesuit missions by the Zambesi and that at Cape Town, but there had not in every case of the kind been continuity, so that the African churches of to-day might be said to date from 1840.

'Moreover,' he said, 'the early missions, those founded after 1840, did not make much headway. The new missions have made great progress. They are now, on the whole, making remarkable strides.' Their future is also of the best promise. The ending of the Boer war, for instance, will be the beginning of a new era for the Catholic Church. The Boers looked with contempt on Catholics and set obstacles in the way of the Church and, as you know, this is not the case with the British.'

'Are Protestant missions making notable progress?'

The Protestants are making good progress, but on the whole their success will bear no comparison with that of the Catholic missions. Nor is their progress equal to the outlay, while ours is unequal to the outlay made for it, but in the other way. Our outlay is a minimum to a maximum of achievement.

'The continent of Africa,' he went on to say, 'has been divided into three parts by the Congregation of Propaganda: the Northern, the Central and the Southern. In the Northern twenty societies are working; in the Central, nineteen; in the Southern, eight. Each society is a prefecture, or Vicariate Apostolic, and this fact gives a fair measure of the vastness of the organisation. It is true that some of the later or less progressive centres may not have many ramifications, and thus they count a fewer number of Christians, converts and catechumens, but, then, the older and more progressive centres have great development, so that it is as if you counted the forty-seven societies as standing for as many dioceses.

'Everything may be hoped for the future,' the Bishop said with ardor, 'because this great development of Catholicism in the African continent has been achieved against many and formidable odds. Until recently everything depended upon the autocratic and fickle humors of the native chiefs. There was no stability. Slavery and barbarism were prevailing conditions. If the organisation of the missions may be dated after 1840, the preparation of conditions favorable to Catholic missionary endeavor may be dated after 1880. The Berlin and Brussels conventions created eminently favorable conditions. They should be universally applied, and they will be applied, and fortunately they are being kept after having been applied everywhere under British protection or influence. In the proportion in which their enactments receive effect, the progress of Catholicism in Africa will be great.

'And as time goes on the European protectorates will become more efficient, and there will be more security. As things are, only the British allow within their spheres of influence the working of missionaries who are not subjects of the home country, but then France has Catholic missionaries of its own; so has Germany and Italy and Belgium. Slavery is being effectively put down and stability is being established nearly everywhere, so that a new era for Catholicism has set in, and a newer and better era has come into view.' So that if so much was done between 1840 and 1880, and so much more in proportion between 1880 and 1900, very greater results may be confidently expected hereafter.

The Vicar Apostolic admitted that Catholic progress in his district, Uganda, had been quite exceptional, but he read out the number of converts made in each mission of the African continent, and the figures were a demonstration of general and substantial progress. 'When I went to Africa, after my consecration seven years ago, I had but four priests, and now I have 30. I found only 200 Catholics, and we have baptised 8000 converts, and we have 24,000 altogether, the remaining 16,000 being catechumens. We had to live in tents at the outset, but now we have 10 regular missions.

Naturally, both the Holy Father and the Propaganda have been extremely gratified at my report. But I have a terrible financial difficulty, as I am obliged to keep the vicariate going as best I can. I receive no support from my missionary society of Mill Hill.' It is to supply this sort of aid, as well as to meet other needs not coped with by the existing societies, that the Sodality of St. Peter Claver has been founded.

Odd Things About Animals.

JUST as nations have developed from their savage state into civilised beings, so naturally dogs and cats and horses and hogs and other domestic animals are very different from the wild things that were caught in the forest and trained to usefulness, but there are some habits inherited from their far away ancestors which they still retain and by which they are distinguished one from the other.

We never question, for instance, why a horse runs so swiftly and has such power of endurance, but we must remember that his ancestors had to flee and defend themselves from wolves—their greatest enemies—and that their rearing and plunging was also a former means of defence if the enemy sprang on their backs. Their neigh was a watchword and call when wild horses went in droves and some sort of signal was necessary to keep them from straying.

Sheep when frightened always run to an elevation because their ancestors originally came from the mountains. They always follow a leader because in the dangerous mountain passes their ancestors had to go in single file.

Hogs grunt because their feeding grounds were thick woods where they could not see one another, and sound was necessary to keep them together.

Dogs have a way of turning round several times before they lie down. This looks very foolish now, but when they were wild things centuries ago they slept in the tall grass and turned around several times to hollow out a bed, and they have never outgrown this habit, but to this late day they will turn round on a rug just as if it were in the tall grass.

Cats have perhaps the most traces of old ancestral habits. Many things they do have some trace of the lion or the tiger very near the surface. Their uncertain temper, their purring and growling, their sudden bounds, their tendency to scratch, all come from the forest and the jungle.

A Wonderful Time-piece.

ABOUT a quarter of a century ago a poor German watchmaker undertook to make a clock that would be more wonderful than the famous one in the Cathedral of Strasburg. He has at length finished his task, and his masterpiece deserves to rank among the wonders of the world. But at last accounts he had found no purchaser for it—a very serious matter; for his years of toil have left him wrecked in mind, health, and fortune. He has his wonderful clock, and he has nothing else; and but for the kindness of his parish priest he would not have completed that.

The story of his trials and patience and triumph—for in spite of his trials his clock is a triumph—makes us (*Ave Maria*) think of the potter Palissy. There was the same perseverance, the same opposition. And there were afflictions which Palissy was spared; for our poor watchmaker was at one time put in a strait-jacket and shut up in a madhouse, so little faith was there in his endeavors. Finally he regained his liberty by promising to keep under police surveillance; but he was, in the eyes of his friends, more insane than ever; and after parting with almost everything in the house in the attempt to keep the wolf from the door while he brought his clock to perfection, he left his home and henceforth lived among strangers. Many helped him, and the German Emperor, although having little faith in his venture, sent him a considerable sum of money.

And now about the clock itself, which is imprisoned in glass, so that anyone can view all its movements. It tells the seconds, minutes, hours, days of the week, months, seasons, and all the movements of the celestial bodies, with wondrous accuracy; and its calendar will last indefinitely. It also gives the ecclesiastical calendar with Easter and other movable feasts. There are over a hundred movable figures and pictures. Angels appear and strike the quarters of the hours; and other angels advance with hour-glasses, scythes or trumpets, as occasion requires.

Allegorical figures represent the four seasons, and the reigning morning and evening stars are in place in the firmament. Five minutes before noon a cock appears, flaps its wings and crows three times. When the picture shows that spring has come, a cuckoo gives its call. At the beginning of summer a quail is the herald. A bull lying at the feet of St. Luke bellows to let us know that autumn's winds are near; and the lion of St. Mark roars to indicate his regret that winter has arrived. Whenever 12 o'clock comes Christ and His Apostles greet us, and a monk rings the Angelus. After the striking of the even hours a wonderful chime is heard in many melodies, each of which lasts a minute. The clock has 12 bells and 2200 distinct parts.

It is probable that the Wellington electric tramways will be constructed on the contract system, and alternative tenders will be invited for the supply and laying down of the plant and rails, either wholly or in sections.