

Preface

“Born equal and free !”

One day a friend of mine told me the following story about David and his friend Stephen. David had visited Stephen and they both went to the cemetery because David wanted to pay his respects to the parents of Stephen whom he knew very well and who were now resting in that cemetery. Upon arrival in the cemetery, David was struck by one thing. Only the name on the cross distinguished one grave from the other. All had the same shape and style. When he marvelled and asked his friend Stephen why, the answer he got was the following: “in our town we took the decision to offer the same type of grave to all our citizens because we are born equal and at the end, before God, we are equal. We are all God’s children in need of love and understanding. In the same row as my parents are a policeman, a mayor, a priest, etc. You would not know if they would not tell you.” Approvingly David said “born equal and free, that is our challenge!”

Our Founder, Fr. Lavigerie was not eavesdropping on this story but his ardent commitment to participate in the campaign against the anti-slavery campaign in the nineteenth century certainly helped many attain the dream that we are born equal before God and that we should be free, not enslaved by anybody. However, what could one person do? Not much we might be tempted to say. But let us recall that one voice less in an election can mean the loss of an opportunity to serve others with a certain vision! Each voice counts and every eye, mouth and brain all the more so! If you think your contribution is not important look one day at how a team of ants work together to gather food into their granary. None is strong enough to carry anything but through working together they are able to roll enough food into their granary for the lean season!

The commitment to invest in fighting against Slavery went beyond our Founder and stimulated others to participate in the way the Spirit was moving in the Church and in the world. Pastoral agents, beginning with Pope Leo XIII down to the common person in the distant villages in Africa, decried the injustice of forcefully removing thousands of Africans from their home and sending them elsewhere.

As we celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Lavigerie’s participation in the anti-Slavery campaign we are spurred to action too against the different forms of slavery and discriminations that deprive people of their equality before God and each other and of their freedom.

Knowledge is good but when it leads to meaningful action it is still better. May the present booklet, raise our awareness about the past but especially open our ears, hearts and eyes to the situations of slavery around us today so that we can courageously announce that as Missionaries we have a different message for God’s people who are all born equal and free! May we, like the Biblical Prophets and like our Founder be able to denounce today’s forms of modern slavery and commit ourselves eradicating them!

“United we stand, divided we fall”. If our actions during this year are to bear lasting fruit, we need to network with other Societies, Congregations and groups engaged in fighting for the rights of the slaves of today who are counted more in terms of economy than for their equality in dignity and freedom as children of God and as our brothers and sisters.

The Historical research Team of the Missionaries of Africa has produced this booklet that will help us better know the context of our Father’s action and thus inspire us to act today. I hereby express the Society’s heartfelt gratitude to the team (Frs. Jean-Claude Ceillier and François Richard). May we use their booklet with joy and purpose.

Fr Richard K. Baawobr

Superior General

Foreword

This number 11 of the History series is different from the previous ones.

First of all, it responds to a specific request to contribute to the 125th anniversary of the Anti Slavery campaign. In the minds of the two General Councils, it is not only the matter of a simple commemoration but a general mobilisation to fight against the present day forms of slavery. This booklet makes its contribution to this project in reminding us that our charism comes from Cardinal Lavigerie, whose vision ought to be a source of inspiration for us in the present time.

Rather than publishing a detailed history of the Cardinal's campaign, we chose to collect some texts from different sources. We have, above all, wished to highlight the texts from the time, either of the Cardinal himself or of the first missionaries. Nevertheless, it seemed necessary to add some narrative in order to introduce the campaign itself and the commitment of the White Fathers and White Sisters.

The first chapter traces the sequence of events of the campaign from 1888 to 1889. To do this we have reproduced the second chapter of the fourth part of the biography of the Cardinal written by François Renault in 1992. It was translated into English by the late John O'Donohue. We thank Fayard publishers for permission to use this text.

The second chapter, the most important, presents an important selection of texts by Lavigerie. The purpose is to allow us have direct access to the very words of our founder in order to understand better what inspired him so profoundly. We thank Richard Calcutt and Michael Targett for having translated these texts into English.

The third chapter focuses on the actions of our predecessors, in trying to show how the first members of our two Missionary Institutes put on lot of effort in fighting the scourge of slavery. It was translated into english by Sr Felicia Nowak and Fr Ian Buckmaster.

The final text has been edited by Jacques Poirier.

Jean Claude Ceillier

François Richard

Chapter I

The Slave Trade

Lavigerie was convinced that the slave-trade presented a radical obstacle to development of any kind in Africa. He had read on the subject even before the first missionaries left for Central Africa, but it was only when their reports started to come in that he began to realize its true extent. He raised the alarm in a number of publications, but these reached only a limited public. He also sought to persuade the Holy See to intervene to alert public opinion, and tried to convince countries in a position to do so to put pressure on the Sultan of Zanzibar. These efforts were unsuccessful, but Lavigerie was not the man to give up when so much was at stake. It was not only East Africa that was involved. West Africa was also afflicted, as well as vast areas of what is now Southern Sudan. Each year, tens of thousands of human beings were being enslaved, many of them carried off to North Africa, to the dependencies of Zanzibar, to the Middle East, and even to as far away as India. The number of these exported victims can be to some extent calculated, but it is impossible to say how many more were killed during the raids or died on the slave routes before they reached the coast. The words of the explorer Cameron were no exaggeration: "Africa is bleeding from every pore."ⁱ

The abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888 provided Lavigerie with a further opportunity of denouncing the evil. Brazil was the last European-type country to abolish slavery, and to celebrate the event Leo XIII addressed an encyclical letter to the Bishops of Brazil. When Lavigerie heard that the Encyclical was in preparation, he suggested that, in his comments on slavery, the Pope should not give the impression that it no longer existed. After giving a long description of the horrors of the slave-trade in Africa, Lavigerie recommended that the Pope issue an urgent exhortation to competent persons, in various fields, to help to put an end to it. The missionaries could be encouraged to do everything possible to ease the sufferings of the slaves and bring about their liberation, while "Christian governments" should be encouraged to take genuinely effective measures against the leaders of the trade. These suggestions were accepted and incorporated in the Encyclical *In Plurimis* of 5 May, 1888.

These urgings of Lavigerie corresponded to what the Pope had already said in 1885 in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei* about the place of Christians in all fields of human endeavour. Lavigerie had used the opportunity of that Encyclical to repeat similar directives of his own. Since the earliest days of his priesthood, one of his principal interests had been to prepare the way for reconciliation between the Church and modern society. This preoccupation faded somewhat into the background during the 1870's, but it reappeared with the election of Leo XIII, and in response to growing attacks on the Church as hopelessly reactionary and opposed to all contemporary aspirations towards progress, freedom, science and culture. The best way of meeting these attacks was for Christians to enter the field of their adversaries and outclass them in what these too easily regarded as their own particular sphere. It was this kind of thinking that led Lavigerie to propose to the Pope an anti-slavery campaign. Here was an area of great humanitarian need where the Church could take the initiative and confound the critics who accused her of indifference to human welfare in this world. This Roman Catholic apologetic element in the campaign probably alienated some who were opposed to slavery but were not willing to fight against it under the banner of the Holy See. It was, they might think, not disinterested enough. Nevertheless, the essential point was the humanitarian aim which deserved the support of all men of good will.

After the publication of *In Plurimis* in 1888, things began to move more quickly. This was also the year in which Leo XIII observed the fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination, and among various demonstrations organized to mark the occasion there arrived in Rome a pilgrimage from North Africa, led by the Archbishop of Algiers, and including a group of Arab Christians and some of the young African ex-slaves from the house of the White Fathers in Malta. Their presence gave the Pope an opportunity to

speak of the slave-trade and of the place of the Church in Africa in a solemn audience on 21 May. Having recalled some of the recommendations contained in his recent Encyclical, he addressed Lavigerie directly: "We are counting on you, Monsieur le Cardinal, for the success of the difficult mission and works in Africa."ⁱⁱ The public audience was followed by a private conversation between the Pope and Lavigerie. We have no independent account of what they talked about, but Lavigerie said afterwards that the Pope had vigorously condemned the African slave-trade "and summoned all Christians to a crusade to put an end to its horrors,"ⁱⁱⁱ while he, Lavigerie, had been given the task of preaching the crusade in the Pope's name. He now proceeded to put aside all other work and devote himself exclusively to this task. Before he had decided on the actual details of the campaign, he issued a description of the general programme in the vibrant rhetoric he liked to employ on such occasions: his aim would be "to say at last what I know of the nameless crimes which are desolating the interior of our Africa, and to issue one of those great cries which pierce the soul and stir up everything in it that is worthy of the name of man and of Christian".^{iv}

He finally envisaged a campaign covering the whole of Europe. The purpose was not simply to enlighten a public opinion which too easily believed that, because the slave-trade had been abolished in the colonies, slavery no longer existed anywhere. Lavigerie wanted to provoke action, concrete and practical action, to wipe out this infamous traffic in human beings. As for the kind of action required, he revived again his earlier scheme for an Association modelled on the old Military Religious Orders of the Crusades. The task of these new Knights would not be to launch aggressive military action, but rather to set up secure settlements, like Joubert's little settlement at Mpala, where people could live in safety from the slave-raiders. If these settlements could be multiplied, they would bring peace to whole regions at present devastated by the slavers.

Lavigerie exposed this plan in the speech given in St Sulpice, in Paris, on 1 July, 1888, when he fired the opening shot in his campaign. He described to the crowded church the methods of the slavers, and the sufferings endured by the victims, both during the raids and while they were being carried off to be sold. He then asked for volunteers to follow the example of the devoted Joubert. At the same time, always conscious of the importance of publicity, he asked the journalists present, whatever their personal religious position, to bring the anti-slavery cause to the attention of the public and to give it all the support they could. The appeal to the press was successful, for the speech in St Sulpice was reported in the secular as well as the Catholic press. An editorial in *Le Temps* said that the Cardinal "had practically destroyed our naïve views on the state of the African slave-trade".^v In *Le Matin*, the former Minister, Jules Simon, was enthusiastic: "For a simple priest, over sixty years of age, to take on what kings, with their armies and their treasure, have not been able to achieve: I hope, in God's name, that he will be successful."^{vi} Only the radical newspapers ignored the event at St Sulpice.

By coincidence, on the day before the St Sulpice speech the Pope had issued a "Brief" addressed to the Knights of Malta, and it seemed natural to conclude that these ancient Christian soldiers were being invited to take part in the anti-slavery mission in Central Africa. Lavigerie had met with a rebuff when he contacted the Order four years previously, and he wished now to make some clarifications. He wanted an Association animated by the original spirit of the old Knights, long since lost by their latter-day successors. A group of benefactors came forward and offered to buy the island of Porquerolles, one of the Hyères, off Toulon, to give the proposed community a base and a certain international independence. Meanwhile volunteers began to present themselves.

Plans began to take firmer shape when Lavigerie went to England, where he met a public much better-informed about the slave-trade than people on the continent. The "Anti-Slavery Society", the only such organization in Europe, had existed since 1839, and it had been active in rallying public opinion behind the British government's efforts to bring the slave-trade to an end. In England too however the suppression of the transatlantic trade in slaves had created the impression that the task was more or less complete. The promoters of the new campaign sought to arouse public opinion again. They had read in *The Times* of the

“great impression” made by the conference of Saint Sulpicevii and they hastened to make contact with the Cardinal. The ground was therefore already prepared when Lavigerie arrived in London.

It had been decided to meet in Prince’s Hall, one of the most important places of assembly in the capital. The meeting took place on 31 July under the chairmanship of Lord George Granville, Gladstone’s former Foreign Secretary, who had been responsible for imposing on Zanzibar the treaty of 1873 banning the export of slaves by sea. Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, was also present, along with notabilities from different religious denominations. Lavigerie acknowledged the special role played by Britain in the suppression of slavery, but went on to urge that much still remained to be done. The general picture of the slave-trade was presented with some new features, but the same remedy was proposed, namely, an Association modeled on the Military Orders of the Middle Ages.

In some ways the composition of the London audience which gathered to hear Lavigerie was even more remarkable than the occasion which brought them together. The presence on the same platform of religious leaders who had for generations regarded each other as enemies was a sign of movement in men’s minds. As for the slave-trade, there was unanimous agreement that it was absolutely necessary to bring it to an end. After a violent attack of neuralgia had obliged Lavigerie to leave the platform, a number of other speakers offered their views; none referred to Lavigerie’s suggestion about a Military Religious Order, and the final motion made no mention of it. The Anti-Slavery Society itself said that it was opposed to any such scheme. It wished to pursue its traditional policy of putting pressure on governments to persuade them to take action, and it would have nothing to do with an organization involving the use of force, even in self-defence.

If there were differences of opinion in England over the best way to stop the African slave-trade, these were minor compared to the difficulties Lavigerie had to face in Belgium, the country he visited next. He sent Leopold II a copy of his Saint Sulpice speech and told him of the impending visit to Brussels: “I believe that what I said in Paris will be of interest to Your Majesty, for nearly all the facts I recount refer to the region of the Upper Congo, next to Tanganyika. My practical conclusions have the same reference.”^{viii}

Undoubtedly His Majesty found Lavigerie’s script of great interest. But it also aroused in him great anxiety. After the international recognition of the Independent State of the Congo in 1885, the new sovereign had taken a map and drawn the limits of his new territory almost at random through regions for the most part unknown. His major preoccupation had been the effective occupation of this immense territory before some quick-moving competitor began to query his right to it. He was still far from achieving the desired occupation. There were scattered stations and military outposts in the western half of the territory, but the rest was quite unoccupied. The real masters of Central Africa were the Arab traders from Zanzibar who were continually extending their operations in search of ivory and slaves. Leopold II was incapable of controlling these raiders, so he sought to come to an understanding with them by naming one of their most powerful representatives, Tippu Tip, as “governor” of “Stanley Falls”, now Kisangani. Royal propaganda presented the latter as a high functionary, effectively exercising the authority of the State and doing everything in his power to stop the slave-trade in the areas under his jurisdiction.

This purely fictitious presentation probably convinced no one, but its public refutation by a well-known Cardinal with access to eye-witness reports would be highly damaging to the King’s prestige as well as to his plans. Especially unwelcome was Lavigerie’s project for “refuges” under the control of military monks in the principal areas affected by the slave-trade, which included the eastern half of the State of the Congo. Leopold did not hide his displeasure: “I am very anxious to put a stop to the mischievous interference of the Cardinal in the Congo”^{ix}

He could not however be seen publicly to oppose measures designed for putting down the slave-trade, and his fertile mind produced an ingenious formula. The danger of the military monks, from his point of view, was that, being international, they would be beyond the reach of his own authority. Why then

should he not seek to bring them under his control and turn them into an effective occupying-force of his own in areas he had not yet managed to reach? So would a difficult objective be finally achieved, and at someone else's expense: "If Mgr Lavigerie, thought the King, raises the money by his crusade, I shall be interested in absorbing it."x

Lavigerie did not have access to the secret workings of Leopold's mind, but he had known the King for a long time and he suspected that something was afoot. He realized that the King would never consent to the presence in the Upper Congo of volunteers who were outside his own control. To go over his head in the matter would be both diplomatically hazardous and offensive to Belgian public opinion, which it was precisely Lavigerie's intention to woo. Nevertheless, he could not allow his initiative to be stolen from him by the Belgian King, and it was with the intention of seeking for what was possible that Lavigerie met Leopold at Ostend on his arrival in Belgium. The plan was to hold a great conference in Brussels, similar to those which had already taken place in Paris and London, during which the ravages of the slave-trade in the Upper Congo would be described. Lavigerie had spoken of Tippu Tip in Paris, but the King now insisted that no further mention should be made of him, to avoid more polemics about his functions as "governor". Lavigerie greatly regretted the omission, but he thought it best to accede to the request. As for the hoped-for volunteers, it was agreed that they would operate in respect for the sovereign power of the state. This formula was evidently open to different interpretations. Leopold envisaged an armed force directly accountable to him, while Lavigerie's intention was rather to form a body of "knights" exclusively at the service of the anti-slavery campaign and free from any royal manipulation. The campaign itself, at the insistence of the King, was to lose its international character and come under the direction of a national committee. Only Belgian nationals would be sent to the Upper Congo.

Lavigerie and Leopold thus reached, not exactly an agreement, but a compromise, which left each of the partners with mixed feelings about the intentions of the other.

The conference finally took place in the biggest church in Brussels, St Gudule, on 15 August, 1888. Lavigerie's fame had preceded him, and a great crowd came to listen to what he had to say. The whole of the diplomatic corps turned up, together with three members of the government, including the Prime Minister. Leopold II however was absent, having left for England two days earlier.

Lavigerie explained to his hearers that they had a special responsibility for supporting the anti-slavery campaign because the regions most afflicted by slave-raids were regions over which their King claimed sovereignty. No mention was made of the military monks, but he recommended the formation of a national anti-slavery society which would send a hundred or so men to the Congo. Immediately after the conference, a committee of representative members was formed, and a subscription fund was opened for the collection of resources for what was bound to be an expensive enterprise. Practical difficulties, including quarrels about personalities and political opinions, delayed the formation of the society envisaged by Lavigerie.

Lavigerie had in the end been obliged to abandon his plan for an International Military and Religious Association. It was a period when colonial rivalry was at its height, and all Leopold's objections about possible infringements of his "rights" in the areas in which he claimed sovereignty would be raised equally by the other states involved in the "Scramble for Africa". Meanwhile the Holy See had its own reservations about Lavigerie's project, and its author himself came to see that, while the work itself could not wait, the plan he had initially proposed for carrying it out would inevitably involve long delays. The alternative to this original plan would be to form independent committees in each country, united only by the same aim, namely, to recruit and train volunteers to continue and extend the work accomplished by Captain Joubert in Mpala. There was clearly a risk, in the volatile situation of the time, that humanitarian projects would be used by governments as a pretext for seizing new colonies, but Lavigerie came to accept that this was the only practical formula. He formed a Belgian committee and, when he returned to Paris, a French committee.

Lavigerie had been obliged to accept important modifications to his plans, but he had at least succeeded in arousing European public opinion. His audience extended beyond the countries he actually visited. While in Brussels, he received an invitation from the annual general meeting of German Catholics meeting in Freiburg to come and speak to them. His first instinct was to accept, but he finally declined, on the grounds that his activities over the last months had left him very tired. He was no doubt tired, but his real reason for rejecting the invitation was the hostility of French opinion to any kind of friendly approach to what was still regarded as an enemy nation. Lavigerie had to be satisfied with sending a long report to the German Congress, and asking the Archbishop of Cologne to set up an anti-slavery committee, which was quickly done.

The effects of the Cardinal's campaign were felt too beyond the confines of the Catholic world. He received strong support from two explorers who had seen the growth of the slave-trade for themselves: Georg Schweinfurth, in what is now the Southern Sudan, and Hermann Wissmann, in the centre of the continent.

Even if fatigue was not the real reason for postponing the visit to Germany, Lavigerie was in fact exhausted after all his exertions in 1888, and he spent the month of October resting in his native region. The rest did not however last long, for he was soon thinking about how he could follow up the campaign he had started. He made contact with leading personalities in Spain, Portugal, Austria and Holland, and arranged for the setting-up of anti-slavery societies there, and then went on to Italy. This Italian visit was a very different matter from the annual visits he was accustomed to pay to the Vatican, for he was now confronting, not Curial Monsignori, but the great Italian public. Lavigerie was not a popular figure in Italy, for to many Italians he was seen as the principal actor in the events which had led to their eviction from Tunisia. He therefore thought it prudent to use his visit to express support for the Italian occupation of Tripolitania, an adventure then being prepared. There was more in this than simple crowd-pleasing. Lavigerie was thinking especially of Cyrenaica, an area outside the control of the Ottoman Empire, and run by the Senussi, a Muslim confraternity whose influence extended as far south as Wadai, where the transport of slaves was a major activity. It was this section of the slave-trade that Lavigerie wished to combat through Italian influence.

The subject was however politically sensitive, and the claims and counter-claims in the Italian press led to considerable confusion. When Lavigerie arrived in Rome, he found himself the target of virulent attacks from the radical press and it was impossible for him to hold any kind of public meeting. He therefore proceeded to Naples, which proved much more welcoming. The consequences of the slave-trade were already known in that city through an institution formerly established there for the education of young ransomed African slaves. Lavigerie found in Naples a receptive audience, and one sensitive to the attraction of his warm personality. The general attitude towards him began to unfreeze and eventually public opinion turned completely in his favour, so that he was able to return to Rome and give a conference at the Gesù on 23 December, 1888, which was as well attended, and as well received, as those he had given in the other capitals of Europe. He made a final effort in Milan, and the visit to Italy, which had begun badly, ended with success and sympathy, and there too the foundations were laid for anti-slavery committees.

So concluded a great European progress which successfully brought the problem of the slave-trade everywhere to public attention. It was the slave-trade that was Lavigerie's target, the traffic in human beings, with its raids, slave-caravans and slave-markets. He was not attacking the institution of domestic slavery as such. In this institution the individual might live a reasonably stable and decent life, though bound to the service of a master. Lavigerie recognized that in Muslim countries the lot of the slave was not excessively hard, except for the special case of eunuchs. One had to take account of existing social structures, and Lavigerie recommended prudence in any effort to change them:

“No doubt, the Qu’ran does not make slavery obligatory. It only permits it. However, it places the liberation of captives at the head of the works of mercy by which the faithful can merit heaven. The abolition of slavery would not therefore in itself shock the Muslim conscience. But long custom cannot be simply ignored. Slavery is a very ancient custom, and that gives it an almost sacred character, so that it cannot be abolished at a stroke. This has always been the attitude of the Church towards slavery. She left it to time, to the evolution of morals, to gradual enlightenment, to do their work and bring to maturity the solution to a grave problem in due course. We may therefore have to be content to leave things as they are for a while, lest we compromise the very cause we are seeking to advance. But at the same time we must resolutely oppose all extension of what is certainly a bad thing.”^{xi}

The slave-trade however was an unmitigated evil and demanded immediate action.

One may ask why Lavigerie’s plea proved so effective. He was not after all the first to denounce the slave-trade and its expansion. His words carried exceptional weight, it seems, because they bore the stamp of his personality, of his whole style. He had the facts at his finger-tips, based on well-documented evidence. He also adapted himself to his different audiences, taking into account the parts of Africa, and the personalities, more familiar to each. Further, he moved people because he was not content with descriptions but urged action. His own burning convictions gave fire to his words and set his audiences too alight. People were struck to see a Cardinal forsake the strictly religious domain to take such a passionate interest in a humanitarian problem and seek to recruit the co-operation of men of every sort. His style too impressed, for he spoke with a simplicity and sincerity which was in refreshing contrast to the inflated style commonly affected by churchmen at the time. He also made full use of the press, sending articles to newspapers and giving interviews to journalists of every tendency. All these things distinguished Lavigerie from the typical ecclesiastic of his day. At the same time, his European tour cut across all nationalistic divisions in urging common effort for a wider good.

It was very unusual for a Cardinal to acquire fame and prestige beyond the Catholic world and outside his own country, and Lavigerie’s reputation gave rise to various comments. Here is one from *Le Nord*, a Brussels newspaper:

“Cardinal Lavigerie would probably be himself a great Pope if he were to be called to ascend the throne of St Peter...People are tired of controversy, and they are looking today for new and fruitful ideas, they want laws which will achieve something. Even the spiritual government of the Roman Pontiff cannot escape from these demands. The crusade undertaken by Cardinal Lavigerie has made him, unknown to himself, a candidate for the succession to Leo XIII.”^{xii}

Similar comments were made elsewhere, and journalists, in their blunt way, asked Lavigerie if he thought he would be the next Pope. He had no difficulty in showing that the election of a non-Italian could not be considered a possibility for a very long time. It was in any case, he thought, a matter of no importance.

Needless to say, the anti-slavery campaign did not produce unanimous choruses of praise. Many people were doubtful about the practical measures proposed by Lavigerie. There were after all powerful forces in the interior of Africa, and how could one expect these to react to the presence in their midst of Lavigerie’s volunteers, even if they restricted themselves to the “armed defence” of the people? Other, more theoretical, objections were also raised. Radicals, both Protestant and atheistic, were opposed on principle to anything coming from the Catholic Church. Others thought that there were welcome signs that the Catholic Church was evolving, but they remained cautious, for ancient suspicions could not be dissipated in a day. As for Lavigerie, he tried to make sure that the direction of the anti-slavery committees he founded remained in Catholic hands. Some possible partners were disappointed by this denominational attitude and withheld co-operation.

A complicating factor in the anti-slavery campaign was the fact that the slave-traders were Muslims, so that an attack on them looked like an attack on Islam. Was Lavigerie then really proposing to revive the mediaeval Crusades? Some of his over-zealous supporters interpreted him in this sense, while his opponents were only too pleased to do the same. Lavigerie said that when he heard of these accusations, he "leaped up with indignation",^{xiii} conscious as he was that he had always spoken out against any violence towards followers of other religions. Nevertheless, the polemics continued and spread beyond Europe. In the Ottoman Empire, the anti-slavery campaign was regarded in the press as no more than part of the strategy of colonial conquest which was then in progress and which, it was confidently hoped, would be stopped by the action of the Muslim faithful. Three years earlier, in 1885, the followers of the Mahdi had triumphed over the colonialists in the Sudan, and the same thing seemed to be happening in Buganda in 1888 where the Muslims had seized power and the Christian missionaries had fled, along with many of their converts.

Political questions were inextricably mixed with those of religion and ideology. Even more important were the economic factors involved in the slave-trade. It was clear that the essentially humanitarian task of stopping slavery had to be undertaken in a context with many complicating elements.

Lavigerie was aware of all this, and he came to accept that he would have to abandon his original idea of an international association. But he continued to attach great importance to the role of public opinion. Only governments possessed the resources necessary for the effective suppression of the slave-trade, but experience had shown that, whatever their public professions, governments never acted simply out of humanitarian concern. Government action is always interested, that is, always bound up with a government's own immediate goals. Public opinion is however more easily moved by altruistic concern, and it can be used to put pressure on governments to take action which they would not spontaneously contemplate. It was for this reason that Lavigerie sought to appeal to the general public in his efforts to bring an end to the slave-trade. It was a large task, and it involved persuading people to unite across national boundaries for the sake of a cause which transcended any purely national interest:

"Never have governments seemed so insensitive to generous and disinterested causes," Lavigerie wrote in a note. "But in every country, those in power, however absolute their authority, must respond to public opinion when this is active and persistent. And opinion in turn will respond to those who are prepared to devote themselves to the service of what is just.

"The justice of our cause in the present case is not in dispute. If it does not win over public opinion, the fault is with those who present it. Our principal task is to arouse a contagious pity in the hearts of the public by spreading knowledge of the facts. Once we have won the public conscience, the rest will follow. When we have convinced the people of Europe and touched their hearts, we shall have raised an army sure of victory. Political leaders will do what public opinion orders them to do. To wipe off the face of the earth one of humanity's most hideous iniquities, it will not be necessary to engage in any kind of bloody war. It will suffice for seven or eight diplomats to put their governments' signatures to an honest agreement."^{xiv}

What was needed was agreement between all the nations involved. "And when I speak of the nations concerned," added Lavigerie, "I do not speak of Christian nations only. I am thinking also of Muslim nations, especially the more powerful among them, like Turkey and Morocco"^{xv} Slavery had in fact been banned throughout the Turkish territories, except in the Arabian Peninsula, since 1857.

Collaboration between governments began to take shape. The Foreign Secretary in London studied reports of Lavigerie's campaign and concluded that something had to be done. Britain had a tradition of anti-slavery action, and the government foresaw that Lavigerie's visit was going to give rise to awkward questions in Parliament. It would therefore be wise to have an answer ready. After various discussions, it seemed that the time was ripe for convening an international conference to draw up agreed measures.

Britain, with its world-wide interests, did not seem to be the best place in which to hold such a conference, and it was decided to offer the chairmanship to the King of the Belgians, as the sovereign of a neutral country. While negotiations were taking place to this effect, a revolt broke out in the coastal regions of East Africa, now under the control of the German East Africa Company, soon to be officially replaced by the German Empire, after an agreement between Bismarck and Lord Salisbury. To prevent arms from reaching the rebels, Britain and Germany had established a naval blockade. This action was presented to the European public as part of the struggle against the slave-trade, which had become a popular cause, and the first stage of international action to bring it to an end. It was in this context that plans began to be drawn up for an international conference.

Even in the most favourable circumstances, an international conference could not do everything. In 1888 the circumstances were not favourable, since the conference would bring together representatives of governments which were in active rivalry with each other, and it could not hope to produce much more than an ineffective compromise. To prevent such an outcome, the anti-slavery committees sought to awaken "the public conscience". Each of the committees had a central office and local branches; each published a periodical, organized conferences and kept in touch with the press. Lavigerie had reduced his activities by now, but he continued to intervene, and he suggested the staging of public demonstrations which he would be happy to attend. This suggestion led to accusations of theatricality and publicity-seeking, but Lavigerie's thought was rather that the subject of the slave-trade had to be continually kept before the public if the emotions raised by his "crusade" were not to fade ineffectually away. Journalists prefer to report sensations, and if Lavigerie could help to stage "sensational" anti-slavery demonstrations, and so achieve publicity for the cause, he was willing to do so.

Putting pressure on governments was insufficient, since the European powers did not yet exercise effective control over the regions of Africa they claimed and could hardly carry out police operations in the interior. It was here that volunteers could help by creating islands of security in regions devastated by the slave-trade, and Lavigerie thought that the anti-slavery societies should recruit such volunteers and send

them where they were needed. In this respect however the societies did not all meet Lavigerie's expectations. The Belgian and French societies took an interest in recruiting volunteers, but the Germans and Italians preferred to use the resources they collected to help missions which were already working for the slaves.

In spite of certain differences, the various anti-slavery societies shared a common aim and there was a measure of co-operation between them which led to the suggestion that a congress should be held to determine practical steps to be taken. This project was elaborated during the early part of 1889 when the prospect of an early international conference began to seem more and more remote. On the East Coast of Africa the Germans, in addition to maintaining the naval blockade, were also engaging in difficult land operations in an effort to establish their authority. If they now proclaimed their readiness to participate in actions to curb the slave-trade, it would be hard to believe that they were not using a humanitarian pretext to consolidate their position in East Africa. In general, the political position in East Africa was such that united humanitarian action was hardly possible, and it was decided to postpone any international conference on slavery until the political climate was more favourable.

The question was, how long could the problem wait? If an international meeting of the European Powers was inopportune, could not the anti-slavery societies do something to prevent the whole matter from dropping out of sight? Finally it was decided to call a meeting of the anti-slavery societies in Lucerne, in neutral Switzerland, on 3 August, 1889, and hold a week-long Congress. A preparatory commission was set up to report on the actual state of the slave-trade and on how to keep the matter before the public and collect the necessary resources. A second commission considered the means to be taken to put an end to the trade. There would be peaceful means, such as support for religious missions, the substitution

of honest trade in goods for the infamous traffic in human beings, control of arms-sales; there would also be the possibility of armed intervention, both on the part of governments and of private militias.

The summoning of this Congress caused anxiety in political quarters. It was feared that some very awkward subjects would be discussed, and perhaps some guilty secrets revealed, in a Congress not constrained by tactical political considerations. Moreover, it would be too much to hope that all nationalistic feeling could be banned even from the Lucern Congress. Each delegation would be tempted to defend the honour of its own nation and blame others for shabby compromises. There was in truth no shortage of such compromises. The sovereign of the independent state of the Congo, for example, had not only made the notorious Tippu Tip a "governor", but had also placed with him important orders for ivory, whereas it was well-known that ivory-hunting and slave-raiding went hand-in-hand. Both the British and the Germans, for their part, flattered the Arab traders in the hope of gaining commercial profit; the British urged the troubles on the east coast as a reason for bringing the Arab caravans to Mombasa, while the Germans sought to persuade them to continue to use the traditional route through Bagamoyo, which they themselves had hastened to re-take after the uprising. France on the other hand was under suspicion because of her refusal to cede the "right of search".^{xvi} Further, she allowed Arab dhows registered at Mayotte, in the Comoros Islands, off Madagascar, to use the French flag, although she lacked the means of controlling their cargoes. As a result, these boats could transport slaves more or less with impunity. As for Portugal, she had long been criticized for inadequate administration in her colonies, which often made her practically an accomplice in the slave-trade.

One could foresee that these various quarrels and grievances between different nations would come to the surface during any international congress on slavery. This did not mean however that such a congress would be impossible. But there was a further and more serious obstacle, and this was religion.

Lavigerie had always placed his campaign under the patronage of the Pope. This patronage had been confirmed by a papal "brief", largely composed by Lavigerie himself, of 17 October, 1888, and given substance by a donation of frs.300,000 to be divided between the different anti-slavery societies. The Cardinal proceeded to divide up this handsome sum, and included in his beneficiaries the long-established English Protestant "Anti-Slavery Society". At the same time, he was anxious that the societies founded under his patronage should remain in Catholic hands, and he was afraid that others would move in and take the credit for the Church's work. He perceived such a danger in the preparations being made for the Lucerne Congress. Bishop Mermillod of Fribourg, in whose diocese Lucerne was situated, warned him about the German-speaking Protestants. Their missionary publications had judged Lavigerie's initiative severely, declaring that the Catholic Church was incapable of solving the problem of slavery, and that only the Evangelical Missions possessed the required competence.

This same Evangelical group had announced that it was sending an important delegation to the Congress, and the Cardinal began to be uneasy. He wrote to a number of Catholic countries, urging them to increase their participation lest they find themselves outnumbered. When he arrived in Lucerne two weeks before the announced date of the Congress, he was disappointed to find that his appeals had gone unheeded. About four hundred delegates from Germany and Austria were announced, but very few from other countries. Moreover, a number of Catholic Swiss asked to come as part of the delegation from a Protestant anti-slavery committee recently formed in Geneva. Lavigerie was so disturbed by this turn of events that he suffered an attack of angina which would have made it impossible for him to chair the discussions. He discussed the matter with Bishop Mermillod, and finally, fearing that the Catholic party at the Congress would be swamped, he decided, on 24th July, that it would be postponed.

This brusque, last-minute cancellation of a meeting which had been eagerly awaited caused stupefaction. There was not a little bitterness, and dissatisfaction with the clumsy explanations offered by Lavigerie was widespread. It was a serious blow to the anti-slavery movement which, after arousing so much interest, now lost much of its support. The Pope showed his displeasure and kept his distance, and the Roman

Curia was likewise cool. The members of the latter body had not been pleased at Lavigerie's behaviour in appointing the Pope as patron of the anti-slavery campaign without consulting them first; they also felt that the skill he had shown in publicly presenting the problems of the day reflected badly on themselves. So it was that he who had been so recently spoken of as a possible successor to Leo XIII now found himself under a fairly thick Roman cloud.

The question of the slave-trade was not however forgotten. After some hesitation, the project of an international conference to decide on the measures to be taken against slavery was resurrected and on 18 November, 1889, the conference finally opened in Brussels, with sixteen countries represented. Lavigerie used the occasion to compile a volume of "Documents Concerning the Foundation of the Anti-slavery Campaign". He sent a copy to each of the participants in the Brussels meeting to remind them of the existence of private anti-slavery societies which, he thought, should have the right to rely on governments for protection, when necessary, for their activities in Africa. Some months later he composed a long letter to bring a particular problem to the attention of governments. The troubled situation in Buganda brought a real danger that the slave-trade would be extended, and Lavigerie urged the necessity of a common policy to meet this peril. This request aroused the suspicions of the British delegate, Sir John Kirk, the former consul in Zanzibar.

Buganda had become an object of competition between Britain and Germany, and Kirk observed that there was a German among the Catholic missionaries there and that another German national, though from Alsace, had just been appointed Vicar Apostolic. He had long been suspicious of the presence of the overwhelmingly French White Fathers in an area which, in his view, belonged to the British sphere of influence, and he viewed Lavigerie's letter in the light of that suspicion. For Lavigerie to appeal to an international meeting in Brussels implied, in Kirk's view, that he, Lavigerie, was ignoring the British position and this, he thought, could only be to the profit of Germany. Failing perhaps to perceive that the logic of his objections made them equally relevant to Germany, he issued a warning to Sir William MacKinnon, a businessman deeply involved in East Africa: "The Cardinal has an enormous influence in the whole of Europe and can count on the support of the Roman Catholic world. If he makes up his mind, he will be a more dangerous enemy than the Germans."xvii The press took up the story, and the Morning Post denounced an agreement between Lavigerie and the rival power, claiming that it envisaged the expulsion of the British from Buganda. Lavigerie issued a formal denial of the charge, but this did not prevent the newspaper from repeating it.

Kirk's nightmare was banished by the Anglo-German agreement of 1 July, 1890, which placed Buganda in the British sphere of influence, but his suspicion of Lavigerie and his intentions was not allayed. When the conference was due to hold its final session, the delegates agreed to send a message of respectful recognition to the Pope, and most wanted to mention the name of Lavigerie as an outstanding figure in the anti-slavery campaign. Two countries however categorically refused to have his name included: they were Great Britain and Turkey.

These petty suspicions and manoeuvres did not affect the substance of the work, and the Conference passed a series of useful measures. Lavigerie regretted that nothing was said about the so-called "free labourers" recruited by Europeans in Africa in conditions hardly distinguishable from slavery. He did however recognize that the Conference had dealt competently with the substantial question, and he encouraged the Pope to recognize the fact by a public endorsement of its decisions. The Pope hesitated. He had let it be known that he wished to be represented at the Conference, and was disappointed that he had not received an invitation. He now thought of showing his displeasure by ignoring its conclusions, but he allowed himself to be persuaded otherwise and he endorsed the measures proposed by the Conference in a "brief" addressed to Lavigerie.

Lavigerie considered that the abortive congress in Lucerne had been postponed, not cancelled, and he now wished to re-convene it. He was anxious however to maintain what he felt was a proper balance by

ensuring that the anti-slavery societies enjoyed equal representation, and that in the commissions set up to study various aspects of the problem these societies should act on the basis of reports received from their principals. Finally the congress was summoned to meet in Paris. The programme foresaw the organization of public demonstrations, and the first of these took place on 21 September, on the eve of the opening, in the church of St Sulpice, attended by the Cardinal with full pomp. His speech recalled what he had said in the same church two years earlier at the start of his campaign. The congress itself took place on the following two days. The public sessions were intended for a large audience, but the real work took place in the commissions, on which were represented the seven anti-slavery societies founded in Europe on the initiative of Lavigerie and of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Recent international agreements on Africa involved changes in the perspective of the anti-slavery movement. After the Anglo-German agreement on East Africa, there followed an Anglo-French agreement on West Africa. Some of the participants in the congress thought that it would now be more appropriate for each of the national societies to restrict its activities to the regions under the control of its own government. Most however favoured a more international approach, and it was finally agreed that each committee would be free to decide for itself its mode of operation. When it came to the "armed volunteers", it was clear that none of the new colonial authorities could allow any kind of foreign armies to operate in their territory, and these would therefore have to be organized on a national basis. The congress did not confine itself to considering the national complications of recruiting "armed volunteers". It insisted rather on "peaceful means", and it mentioned especially "the moral action of missionaries" which went beyond the boundaries of any nation. It was important to sustain public interest in Europe, and the congress suggested the elements of an appropriate strategy. Whatever action was eventually taken, it was evident that resources would be needed, and the hope was expressed that the Pope would prescribe an annual collection in the Catholic world to support the anti-slavery movement. The "Anti-Slavery Society" abstained from voting on this resolution. Finally the question of the "free labourers", left undiscussed in Brussels, was debated, and the delegates demanded legislation from the governments concerned to ensure that recruited labourers were in fact "free".

The Paris congress, in spite of its relatively limited scope, attracted attention, and was commented on by different newspapers in various countries. The congress had no powers of decision, and it might be thought that it could hardly make an impact on a vast problem demanding long-term and enforceable measures. Its contribution however cannot be dismissed as negligible, for it analyzed the different aspects of the problem and provided a stimulus for a solution. The best judgment came perhaps from the French *Journal des Débats*: "The Paris Congress tackled a limited number of questions and took them a step further." xviii The delegates must have felt the same. The journey ahead was long, but they had taken a first step, and it was decided to hold a second meeting after two years.

The proceedings of the congress were summarized in a number of "decisions and resolutions" which Lavigerie took to Rome to present to Leo XIII, intending to discuss with the Pope the future development of the anti-slavery movement. The file was however passed on to the Commission of Cardinals dealing with the matter, for the Pope had other and more urgent matters to discuss with Lavigerie. He wanted to see if some solution could not at last be found to the century-old problem of the relationship between the Catholics of France and the Republican government.

Notes

i V.L. Cameron Across Africa, London 1877, I, p.209

ii Observatore Romano, 25 May 1888

iii Letter from Lavigerie to Brincat, no date (25 May 1888) Document sur la Fondation de l'Oeuvre Antiesclavagiste Saint Cloud 1889, p.42

iv Same as preceding note p.44

v Issue of 3 July, 1888

vi Issue of 1 August 1888

vii Issue of 2 July 1888

viii Letter from Lavigerie to Leopold II, no date (15 July, 1888); draft, AL, A17/165(7)

ix Letter from Leopold II to Lambermont, 20 July, 1888; Archives of Affaires Etrangères, Brussels, Papiers Lambermont, n° 861

x Letter from Leopold II to Thys (early August, 1888) quoted in P. Daye Léopold II, Paris 1934, p. 309

xi Conference given in Rome, 23 December, 1888; AL B1/329

xii Le Nord, Brussels, 25 August, 1888

xiii Note by Lavigerie, undated (September 1888,) AL T 983

xiv Note by Lavigerie, "L'œuvre antiesclavagiste", October, 1888, AL, A 17/84 (77)

xv Letter from Lavigerie to the Revue Allemande, January 1889; draft, AL, A17/194(55)

xvi The "right of search" meant that in time of war a ship belonging to one of the belligerent nations had the right to search neutral ships to make sure that they were not carrying a cargo which would be of use to the enemy. In the nineteenth century, Great Britain extended this "right" to peace-time, by concluding bilateral agreements with other countries giving each the right to examine the ships of the other suspected of carrying slaves. In practice however the size of the British navy meant that the system operated almost completely in favour of the British. Countries like Spain and Portugal were obliged to submit, but France refused, except for a period during the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830-1848) when an effort was made to make the "right of search" genuinely equal.

xvii Letter from Kirk to Mackinnon, 30 May, 1890; Mackinnon Papers, School of Oriental and African Studies, London Box 25

xviii Issue of 24 September, 1890

Chapter Two

The Texts of Cardinal Lavigerie

In this second chapter, we introduce an anthology of quotations from Cardinal Lavigerie. Sometimes, it will be necessary to overlook a certain pomposity of language, that was usual at that time, if we are to capture the spirit which underpin these texts. We have chosen a variety of quotations that allow us to understand the different aspects of his commitment. Nevertheless, this is the place to emphasise that what inspired him so deeply was expressed in one word on his episcopal coat of arms; 'Charitas'. Deeply touched by all suffering and revolted by all signs of disdain, the Cardinal proceeds methodically: he brings fresh and accurate information on the (slave) trade; with a view to sparking off an indignant reaction; that would lead to a pledge for action; for which he suggests a well thought out programme. As in many other fields, Lavigerie shows his visionary and strategic gifts. We, also, see how he raised public awareness and used it in the service of his apostolic plans.

Before the anti-slavery campaign

1. Letter to the Director of the Holy Childhood Society about the work among native orphans. Algiers, 15th April 1869

Shortly after his arrival in Algiers, Mgr Lavigerie welcomes orphans who are victims of famine. Very soon his gaze and his heart look toward the countries of the south where slavery reigns. Already, he is thinking of doing something about it.

...The Holy See has just, as you know, created an immense apostolic delegation which includes the Sahara, and the north of Sudan, that is to say, countries as big as half of Europe, and the Pope has deigned to place them under my direction. Faced with this new mission, the Diocese of Algiers, indeed the whole of Algeria, disappears, or rather better to say, becomes an open door, by which, through the mercy of God, the centre of Africa can be reached. However, in these still unknown regions part of which have been Christian with the rest plunged in barbarism, slavery still reigns with all its cruelties and its horrors. Children are sold there by auction, and I would if I could remove them from this bad treatment and perhaps from death, by bringing them up in Algeria and then returning them to their own countries with our missionaries – the Society is already in existence. Nothing would be easier.

Only one thing is missing: and that is money to cover the expenses involved in the education of these children, who would be freed naturally once they were in our care.

2. Speech given on 20th June, 1879

Speech given on 20th June, 1879, in the Cathedral of Algiers, on the occasion of the departure of the second caravan for Equatorial Africa. After receiving the reports of the missionaries of the first caravan, his heart is again fired up and he charges the missionaries of the second caravan with the duty of fighting the scourge of the slave trade.

"O my children! You are blessed because you have heard from afar the cry of your Father! You who find in your faith enough strength in your love for these poor Black people whom you have only heard of through the telling of their sufferings, and for whom you are ready to sacrifice yourselves in the work of their freedom!

I have just told you that the powers of this world have come together to work for the abolition of this inhuman commerce which covers Africa with blood – but in vain. Their efforts are ineffectual. The scourge continues, what more can I say? The scourge spreads its devastation. Either the measures taken are insufficient because they do not reach those who are selling the slaves or they are not addressed to those

who buy them, or the evil is too deeply rooted to be cured by man's hand. The fact is, slavery still exists and the reports coming from recent explorers in the equatorial regions are filled with these horrors. And it is not just foreigners who are responsible; the black people themselves, who, brought up to despise their fellow human beings, become the artisans of their ruin...

It is important, then, to make these people (alas debased) understand that all are brothers, that God, in creating them has given them freedom of body and soul; that Jesus Christ has freed them for himself, (and this at a time when the world was weighed down under a universal slavery), and that Christ did not think it too dear a price to restore this freedom in paying for it by the price of his blood.

Go, my sons, go to teach them this doctrine. Tell them that this Jesus died for them on the cross, in order to carry all these freedoms to the world: freedom of souls against the yoke of evil, freedom of people against the yoke of tyranny, freedom of consciences against the yoke of persecutors, freedom of body against the yoke of slavery.

It is this freedom that St. Paul proclaimed in Rome where Nero was ruler and where two million slaves were kept in irons. Paul said: "Among you there are neither Greeks nor barbarians, slaves nor citizens; you are all brothers, you are all free with the freedom which comes from Christ".(Cf. Gal 3:4)

Following the great Apostle and in the midst of so many people weighed down by their burdens, you will proclaim the holy freedom which comes from Jesus Christ. Your voice will resound like a thunderbolt, or rather hope and love will rise up in the darkness. Yes, I bless you in the name of the faith which you are going to spread far and wide; in the name of the charity which by your hands must cure so many wounds; in the name of the holy freedom which you are going to preach and which will bring about the end of so many evils; in the name of the light which you are going to carry into the darkness; and so as to destroy all these evils, in the name which sums up and which sanctifies all these great things, I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ, your master and mine; for Jesus Christ is the faith, the charity, the freedom, the light, all these good things which people look for with so much ardour and which they do not find, because they look for them outside Him!"

During the anti-slavery campaign (1888-1891)

3. Conference given at Saint Sulpice, 1st July 1888

On the 21st May 1888, the Pope asks Lavigerie to embark on a project against slavery. He gives up all his other projects and launches his campaign. On the 1st July, he is in Paris for his first lecture.

"Where there is no distinction between slave and freeman... there is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything:" (Col 3:11)

Recently, our great Pontiff, Leo XIII, borrowed St. Paul's words in his Encyclical to the Bishops of Brazil.

By virtue of the Apostle's teaching, he condemned slavery saying that its very existence among Christians is a crime. Since all humankind are born in the image of Jesus Christ, they are new Christs, and hence, brothers. To oppress one another and to deprive people of their freedom is a sacrilege, because this freedom is "nature's most precious gift". Jesus Christ taught this truth when he said that on the last day we shall all be rewarded, if we "have gone to the aid of prisoners", because "in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine you did it to me."

Also, speaking about slavery as it exists on our African continent, Leo XIII, who normally speaks with moderation and indulgence, energetically condemned slavery.

He declared that slavery is opposed to divine law and to the natural law. "Contra quod est a Deo et natura institutum". He proclaimed that the traffic in human beings was infamous. Nothing could be more wicked:

“Mercatura qua nec inhonesta magis nec scelerata”. Using words of authority and of sadness, he appealed to all Christians to oppose it!. He did not just exhort, he begged, he, the Father of the great Christian family: “Hortantibus nobis et rogantibus”, that this trade should be prohibited and finally suppressed in the regions where it is dominant. “Comprimant, prohibeant, extinguant”. So spoke the Pope in Rome some weeks ago, he, the successor of so many Pontiffs who have demanded for the victims of this slavery, pity, mercy and justice. In the name of the bishops and priests of Africa, I have publicly thanked the Pope, on the very day that his Encyclical had just been published., and he, reading surely in my heart, has deigned to authorise me to preach this new crusade. Truth to say, this additional charge has done nothing to help my health; but how could I refuse such a request from the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and how could I not consider it to be a supreme honour for someone whose life will soon be ended!

I am beginning this mission in the very church where nigh on half a century ago, I began my priestly life, finding a happy omen in what I am thus preaching for the first time, in the midst of a faithful of whom I can say, like the Apostle in Romans 1.8., their piety is known throughout the world. What I am proposing to do, today, is not to give an erudite discourse: this appeals neither to my sentiments neither to your feelings. Clever devices such as this are not for an old missionary.

I have two points to bring to your attention in this conference: Slavery is daily becoming even more horrible in the interior of Africa. And what can be done to end it.

In his Encyclical In Plurimis, Leo XIII has just begun the third solemn struggle that the Church supports against slavery.

The Church began the first soon after her birth. This was against pagan slavery. The Church first of all made a frontal attack, through its doctrines, teaching mankind to love one another because they are brothers, sons of the same God. She continued this attack by exhortations from her apostles, her pontiffs, her doctors, who preached justice and pity to everyone. Down through the centuries by her institutions and her example, she caused it to weaken.

True, the combat was long, for it was directed against all the corruptions emanating from the human heart. This same combat was directed to free the multitude of unfortunate human beings.

Humanum paucis vivit genus, the poet said, and as Leo XIII recalled in order to describe succinctly the character of a nearly universal oppression. But eventually the day came when this leprosy disappeared from a world become Christian and where the freedom of Christ triumphed.

In the 15th century, following on the discovery of America, the same passions which had maintained slavery in days of old, rose up again. What happened? In order to supplement their small numbers, the colonialists fell back on Africa and established the African slave trade. For more than three centuries, this trade dishonoured the world by its cruelties. The Church rose up against this by the work of its missionaries such as Peter Claver and Las Casas; by its Pontiffs such as Pius II, Leo X, Benedict XIV, and in our own time, Gregory XVI and Pius IX. All the clever arguments intended to deceive, were used in favour of slave owners; the Christian conscience finished by speaking louder than their greediness. At the beginning of this century, a whole host of generous writers and statesmen battled against the enemy and struck blows under which he eventually succumbed. Brethren, you know the names of these noble defenders of the dignity and freedom of others. They are the honour of France, England, the United States of America.

Thanks to them and the use of European warships, slavery successfully disappeared from the colonies. One great empire, Brazil, held fast to slavery. It was Leo XIII who managed to persuade that country to eventually give it up.

But, my dear brethren, even while the American slave trade was disappearing little by little, one could still hear the cries of despair, each day more numerous coming from Central Africa. Belgian, English and American explorers made the sound of these cries echo even as far as us.

Doubtless, slavery had always existed in these regions, but never in the proportions we hear about today, for it threatens to annihilate an entire people.

This fact is still unknown by the civilised world and it is this that the Vicar of Jesus Christ wants to make known. And this I am telling you now in my double position as Pastor and Father of all these unfortunate people.

I myself have only become aware of these things in the last few years. I had already spent more than ten years in North Africa without receiving any revelations of such infamies, apart from vague rumours from the interior of Africa. Ten years ago finally, I sent my own sons, the Missionaries of Algiers, right to the centre of the equatorial provinces, still virtually unknown. These were the only Frenchmen who had penetrated and established themselves in these far places. Ten years ago they suffered all the evils which beset them, plus a murderous climate and endless powerlessness when faced with the sufferings of a population they were going to evangelise, and which they see sadly perishing from their sufferings. It is by the missionaries that I have heard of the lamentable lot endured by the negroes of the Great Lakes region – chased and hunted down like animals, abandoned by the slave traders. I would have wished from the very first days when I heard what was happening, to have made known to the whole world what was going on in these regions. Nevertheless I hesitated. I asked myself if my revelations would stimulate the hatred of those I was going to condemn and would in turn condemn my sons to a sure death, thus depriving the black population of the support they so badly were waiting for.

But time has moved on. The explorers have increased in numbers. Perhaps they have not been able to tell everything they have seen and experienced because someone who is only passing by cannot tell everything. Whereas someone who stays in one area can see more than enough. Moreover, Europe is now turning towards Africa. The Powers have in fact divided it up. That which was not possible ten years ago, is possible today. One can now hope to see forming, in spite of divisions among themselves, what Montesquieu was calling already in the time of colonial slavery, a “League for Mercy and for Pity”. This is not only my wish, it is also the wish of the Head of the Church: and that is why following on a time of keeping silence when there was no hope, now comes a time for speaking out..

You should know, dear brothers, that for more than half a century, Islam has quietly invaded, without tiring, half of Africa. In certain regions, those which are neighbours to us, the followers of Islam, have founded empires; in others they have caused slavery to come about. Please, Dear Lord, may I not make use of this occasion to throw out accusations against population and peoples. I am living, moreover, in the midst of Muslims. Even if they do not look upon me as their Father, I must, in my capacity as Pastor, look upon them and love them as my sons. But I cannot prevent myself from stating, today, that among the most harmful errors in Africa, the most sad of all is taught by Islam, that humanity is made up of two distinct races: that of the believers, destined to rule over the others; and that of the accursed, as they call them, destined to serve. In this second category, they say that the Negroes are the lowest of the low, on the same level as animals. According to Leo XIII, in their eyes they are described as beasts destined for the yoke: *Nata jugo jumenta!*

Through conquest, the Muslims have penetrated to the centre of a continent peopled by a black population. The Muslims have then started work at justifying their doctrine. Bands of evangelists, set up by them, have advanced into the interior, coming from Morocco, from the land of the Touareg, from Tunisia, towards Timbuctu and the countries which surround the Niger, from Egypt, from Zanzibar onwards towards the Great Lakes, and finally as far as the Upper Congo and nearly to the borders of the English possessions and the Cape colonies.

Everywhere they carry out the same ungodly hunt which feeds their commerce.

Sometimes the kidnappers hide along the tracks in the forests, in the middle of the crops, and take by force the women, the black children who are alone in these areas. Things have arrived at such a state, near to the Great Lakes, and here I quote textually the words of one of my missionaries, that now "every woman, every child who wanders off even for just ten minutes from their village, is not certain to return". There is absolute impunity. There is no black chief of the small independent tribes, in which the entire country is divided, who has the power to stop this violence. The slavers, made up of Arabs and half breeds, of negroes coming from the coastal regions, are armed to the teeth. The savage populations of Africa's high plateaux only have as arms, stones, sticks, arrows and lances. It is impossible for them to fight against the brigands who invade them, or to escape.

But the slavers do not only attack isolated individuals: they organise their expeditions in the same way as a war is organised, sometimes alone, sometimes by a refinement of wickedness, allied to neighbouring tribes to which they offer part of their pillage and who, the next day become their victims in their turn. During the night, they fall on defenceless villages; they set fire to the huts built of straw. They fire on the first people they meet. The population begins to flee, looking for safety in the forest, amongst impenetrable creepers, in dried-up river beds, in the tall grasslands of the valleys. They are chased and the men who resist and the old people are killed. The women and children are taken as captives. But I have already described these horrors. I grow tired of looking for new ways of describing things. Listen, my dear brothers, to what I have to say about the caravans of slaves:

All those captured, be they men, women and children, are immediately marched off into the interior.

Then begins for them a whole series of ineffable sufferings. The slaves trudge along on foot; those men who appear to be strong and who might take off, have their hands bound and sometimes their feet, in such a way that the march becomes a form of torture. They are linked one to another so that they cannot escape. Such is the description the missionaries have given in their letters.

They march the whole day. In the evening when they stop to have some rest, the prisoners are given a few handfuls of uncooked sorghum. This is their food. The next day they set off once again.

From the first days, fatigue, suffering, the never-ending privations cause a great number to become weaker and weaker. The women and the elderly are the first to fall by the wayside. Then, so as to instil fear in the others, the slavers, armed with thick sticks, approach those who appear to be exhausted; they strike their unfortunate victims with a terrible blow on the neck. The victims fall to the ground in the convulsions of death.

The terrified prisoners then begin to move along once again. What they have witnessed gives extra strength to even the most feeble among them. Each time that someone stops, the same dreadful scene repeats itself. Their bodies remain where they are., that is to say, when they are not hung from the branches of overhanging trees. And it is near to their dead companions, that the remaining slaves are forced to eat and sleep.

But what a sleep they must have! It doesn't take much to imagine what the prisoners dream about. Among the young negroes we have been able to rescue from this hell on earth, there are who every night for a long time wake up shouting and screaming. They are reliving in agonising nightmares the dreadful scenes which they have witnessed.

It is like this that the marches take place, sometimes lasting entire months, when the expedition has far to go. The caravan is reduced in numbers, each day. When pushed to despair by the bad treatment they are experiencing, some try to revolt or flee, it is then that their ferocious masters strike them with their swords and abandon them along the paths, attached to each other by their yokes. You could say that if

you were to lose the way which leads from Equatorial Africa to the towns where the slaves are sold, you would find it easily by the bones of the Negroes scattered alongside the paths.

Finally the market place is reached, where those surviving among the poor black people, are led. Frequently it is only half of them, or even just a third, sometimes even less from those who had been captured at the departure.

Now begins scenes of another kind, but no less odious. The captive negroes are stood up for sale like beasts. In turn their feet, their hands, their teeth, in fact their entire body is examined, to prove that they can carry out the services which will be required from them. The sale price is discussed in front of them, just like for any animal, and when the price is agreed upon, they belong body and soul to whoever has bought them. Nobody is held any longer accountable for the sufferings, nor for the deaths of the slaves.

The great and intrepid Livingstone summed it up. For many years he had been witness to these inhuman goings on and he wrote as follows. I beg you to think long and hard about what he says:

“When I consider the slave trade in East Africa, I have been careful about what I have to say. I do not want to be held guilty of exaggerating, but in all truth, the subject does not allow one to exaggerate. To amplify the evils of this dreadful commerce is simply not possible. The spectacle I have before me, the on-going incidents of this trafficking, is of such horror that I make every effort to drive them away from my memory, with no success. The most painful memories are erased as time passes; but the atrocious scenes I have witnessed come back to me and, during the night make me leap up, horrified by the intensity of the image”.

But it is not just the general aspect of these dismal scenes, our Fathers have been witness to even more horrible details. They have seen the executioners, boiling with rage with the thought that their victims were going to escape, draw their sabres with which they were armed, and which they used to cut off heads with a single blow, cut off one arm first of all, then a foot, and seizing this debris, throw them onto the edge of some nearby jungle, shouting out to the terrified prisoners: “These are for the leopards which will come to teach you to march”.

In addition (and I tell this for those who deny the possibility of rescuing one day, this oppressed race), faced with the perspective of so much shame and suffering, the savage strength is raised to the sublime. Women captured during a hunting expedition, torn from their children, from their husbands, so as not to become victims to the debauchery, have seized a poisoned lance and plunged it themselves into their breasts.

This, then is what is taking place in the interior of equatorial Africa, in fifty places at once. This is how the Muslim slave traders trample down human laws, divine laws, the natural law, not only creating these ineffable miseries, but preparing shortly the destruction of men, of families, of villages, of provinces of the interior of Africa, in order to bring about an immense desert.

I am not exaggerating anything, and I can only repeat, moreover, with Livingstone that one cannot exaggerate when it comes to African slavery; I am only repeating what my own missionaries have written to me about, and what the most trustworthy English and French, Protestant and Catholic explorers have already recounted in part. Never, and now I take up my own reflections, never the world has witnessed so many sacrilegious excesses. One has rightly spoken out and acted against the colonial slave trade. But the colonial slave trade with its negro slaves was not on the same level as the man hunts, such as now practiced, even more cruelly, every day, in the interior of Africa. It is not on the same level in so far as the number of victims are concerned, the executioners’ beastly cruelty, the extent of the disasters.

The colonial slave trade was more to do with adults and more particularly with men. The American colonists wanted people for work on their plantations. And for that they needed grown men. The children

were an additional burden until the day came when they could work in their turn. But things have changed in Africa vis a vis slavery on the land, as envisaged by the Muslims. When they were transported to America, the adult negroes could not flee. The vast extent of the Atlantic Ocean kept them there. But while they are still in Africa, the adult negro has only one thought: to flee in the hope of finding his village once again, or at the very least to keep his liberty among some other tribe. Moreover, on Africa's high plateaux, the land, the sun, the rain, all help to make the land fertile, to such an extent that men are not needed to work; it suffices to have women for the work. So to kidnap the men, force them to march long distances, feed them until they arrive at the slave markets, is not very productive for the slave traders. Women and children are now needed in the slave markets, and these have replaced the men. Women and children are fearful and they draw back before the uncertainties and the dangers of flight.

Women and children can be bought without fear. Women for the chiefs' limitless debauchery, children to be used for their odious practices. Since this commerce is now in the hands of polygamous Muslims, the bestial practices of the chiefs have spread far and wide. Powerful chiefs such as Mtesa and today, Mwanga, King of Uganda, have as many as two hundred women at once. Even the poor chiefs have many. In the centre of Africa, the price of slaves does not do anything to discourage these practices. In some places, today, many women can be bought for a goat, a child for a packet of salt. A goat must be looked after, a packet of salt must be brought from the salt deposits, carried from far away; it is sufficient to capture women and children and chain them up. Things have reached such a state in the interior of Africa that men are often the money which replace shells from the lakes and the sea for the smallest purchases.

What a contemptuous sacrilege! O corruption engendered by greediness! Can one even think of it without shuddering, without condemning those who abuse human nature and make it descend to the condition of beasts under the yoke: In truth, we must repeat the words of Leo XIII "Nata jugo jumenta!"

But this is not the only reason which makes slavery within Africa worse than colonial slavery. The journey to the New World was long and difficult. The slaves were carried in sailing boats. So the number of men who could be carried to the colonies was thus somewhat limited. Today, the man hunting and the slave sales can be done by all. It is sufficient in order to keep up the numbers, to have a half-cast with his troop of slavers; poor unarmed black people for victims, and tribes to buy the human prey. So, whilst in Europe we did not know what was happening in Africa, the slave markets were multiplying everywhere in the interior. They are not on the sea-shores any longer because there are no more slave buyers for the countries overseas; but they are to be found everywhere in the interior, in the far off towns of Morocco, in the oases of the Sahara, in Timbuctu, to the south of Niger and as far as Zambezi and further still on the plateaux of the Great Lakes, where the inoffensive population together with the density of the population and the richness of its soil (rather like the situation of the Peru's Indian population), encourages the effrontery of the negro slave traders and their ferocious appetite.

Each day our missionaries record what is happening, wherever this devilish work is to be found.

In the most recent mail, I have received from Zanzibar, I read in our father's diaries, the report of one of these barbaric scenes. Formally I would not have published it: today, in the name of justice, I am going to send it without any delay to the press. You will be able to read and you will see for yourselves that nothing is respected by these demons, neither the age, sex, or weakness of their victims; how they strike the women dead at their feet when they resist; how our missionaries are obliged to suffer the anguish of a thousand deaths, not for themselves (they have already made the sacrifice of their lives), but because, witnesses to the miseries of the black population, it is impossible to help them, not wishing to expose them to some new massacre by an unequal resistance; and not being able to pay a ransom for all the slaves. On the contrary, our missionaries can see the joy on the faces of those whom they have been able to free and at the same time the despair of those who leave chained up.

I repeat for a last time, dear brethren, this is what the African slave trade is all about as it exists in this year 1888, nineteen hundred years after Jesus Christ. Long live God! If your feelings correspond to mine, I am confident that what you have heard will trouble your consciences.

But enough of the details, however moving they may be, for I am taking up far too much time. Let us pinpoint definite figures which must give rise to a condemnation of the traffic with no appeal. Christians, do you know how many slaves have been sold into the interior of Africa by the Muslim slave traders during the last ten years? I am not going to give you just the numbers provided by my missionaries - they speak about four hundred thousand each year. Cameron says that a minimum of five hundred thousand are sold each year!

Do you hear me correctly? Five hundred thousand slaves sold each year in the markets of the interior of Africa, under conditions which I have just described.

I am only talking about slaves who have been sold; added to these, according to the explorers and our Fathers, for every slave put up for sale, must be added the victims who have been massacred during the man hunts, or who have died from their sufferings and from hunger in the caravans en route to the slave markets. Some people say that for every slave sold, must be added four, five or even ten dead before arriving at the markets.

Cameron, in confirming these estimates, reports that in order to procure fifty women to be sold, one of these "tigers" destroyed nearby, ten inoffensive villages, each with a population of as many as two hundred people, and massacred all their inhabitants. If, in the other regions where these man hunts are carried out, the proportions are the same, this makes two million blacks killed or sold, each year. This means that in fifty years the interior of Africa will be completely depopulated. I am not astonished by this consequence, especially as my missionaries write that every day a slave caravan arrives at Lake Tanganyika. When my missionaries arrived ten years ago in the heavily populated Manyema region, the area was totally covered with villages and cultivated fields; today, Tipu-Tipu's slave traders have made most of this region, as big as a third of France, a sterile desert where the only traces of the former inhabitants are the bones of the dead people.

I have completed my task, my dear brethren

I have completed my task, my dear brethren. It consisted in making known to you, as much as one can in an hour, a situation in all its brutal horror, which could not even be imagined. It is sufficient for me now to allow you the time to think about what I have made known to you. I know enough about France, about the Christian world, to be certain that when faced with so many misfortunes and iniquities, there will be an immense movement of indignation and pity, and the human conscience will be aroused and human solidarity will fulfil its duties.

Enough of suffering! Enough of blood! Enough of this infamy! Enough of these insults to civilisation, to all the principles which the Christian world lives by and which it can no longer allow to be trampled under foot! Such is the cry which rises up from every heart. This is what is asked for by God's Vicar, once again, through my voice.

But, brethren, what are the practical means which must be taken to fight again African slavery?

The first is charity, but it is inadequate in itself, because it cannot alone save these millions of human beings. Moreover, there is a danger therein. Trying to redeem all the slaves and announcing one's intention of doing so, will only arouse further greediness among the slave traders and cause them to multiply their captures. But even if one cannot or must not try to ransom all the captives, and if Leo XIII indicates as we shall see, a more efficacious remedy, what should be said about a missionary who finds during his travels one of these unfortunate creatures. Must he not, as did the Good Samaritan in the

Gospel, look for means to relieve his sufferings and, if he can, remove him from his sad lot by paying his ransom? You will see what my missionaries say in the letter I have spoken about. You will share, definitely, their sentiments and their regrets. Listen to their words of distress and their powerlessness to free the slaves they came across on the very day they wrote:

“The Arab chief promised to leave early tomorrow morning, and allow us to ransom, among the victims of this afternoon’s manhunt, the women and children whose ransom we can pay. And this is what took place. Imagine the joy of those ransomed who could return home, but at the same time imagine the despair of the poor unfortunates who cannot be saved, and who are carried off by force, chained one to another in the middle of their cries of despair! If only we had the means to save everyone!”

It is here, my dear brethren, that your help could be useful, and, however, I am not appealing for it at the moment. In preceding years, preaching in France for my apostolic work, I directly collected alms from Christians. I am not appealing this year in your churches. I dare not ask any more from those among you who are not well off, whilst, in these difficult times, all the ordinary charities are asking for help. But those among you who are more fortunate than the others, take a look at your finances, and if they allow for it, listen to your own consciences, that little something which speaks to you in secret! It is more powerful than mine, it is the voice of the One who teaches that “everything you do in his name for these poor captives, it is for Him you have done it”. He is the One of whom each year that we sing: “in order to redeem us from slavery, God has delivered up his own Son”.

When you have taken the decision to undertake this work of mercy, in the proportions called for, our missionaries are ready to act as your intermediaries. Those among you who are familiar with the history of the past, will recall that in centuries of faith, Christians took upon themselves to include in their Wills an item “for the redemption of their souls”, as they said in a touching manner, “the redemption of captives.” They knew that the most sure way of obtaining mercy from the Redeemer, was themselves to have taken part in the work of redemption.

But I repeat, my dear brethren, that charity, however great it may be, will not suffice to save Africa. A more prompt, more efficacious and more decisive remedy is needed. When our Holy Father, the Pope, had finished appealing for charity, he then appealed for force, a peaceful force, which would be used not for attack but for defence. For that, he addressed himself to Christian nations. These can do a lot through their moral strength with the Muslim princes, on whom these African slavers depend, in making these same feel responsible for the continuation of their infamies.

Our missionaries echo this wish, and they declare in addition that, alone, armed force can stop the slave traders. “Alas!”, they write to us, “when will there be an European power prepared to destroy this accursed slave trade and all the subsequent evils. It suffices to have a detachment of well-armed soldiers who are acclimatised to the tropical climate, to disperse in fifteen days, this entire troop (a bunch of two or three hundred brigands) who spread terror throughout the country, from Tabora through Ujiji right up to Manyema, and throughout Tanganyika as far as Albert-Nyanza”.

I think the same. If my sons’ calculations are correct, their plan is speedily feasible. I think that five or six hundred European soldiers, well led and well organised, will be sufficient to suppress the manhunts and the sale of slaves in the countries which stretch from the high plateaux of the African continent, from Albert-Nyanza to the south of Tanganyika.

Already, a first experience in this direction has been made. A Christian hero, a former officer in the papal zouaves and of the French campaign, came to see me. He wanted, even at an age when youth was no longer on his side, to defend the negroes of Africa against slavery. For a number of years he has been living near one of our missions, at Mpala, alongside Lake Tanganyika. He is alone, experiencing privations and sacrifices. He has made himself the protector of the villages which surround him. He has, with the

arms we have given him, formed around him among the neophytes, a militia of two hundred negroes. They are not, truth to say, troops from Europe, but at least they are armed and they control, within a certain area, the half-cast slavers with their Rouga-Rouga.

It is necessary, then, that the European countries which have received zones of influence by the Berlin Congress, should, in their future territories, maintain a sufficient force, wherever the man hunting takes place. But if these same states cannot do so, as I fear, because of difficulties in organising such a force or because of financial difficulties perhaps still insurmountable, why not raise up in these barbarous countries, one or other of the military/religious Orders for the defence of the Christian population, similar to those which existed at a time when the Spanish population, and people living in the east of Europe and around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea - areas which were threatened by Turkish invasions and subsequent slavery. These same Orders are known by their courage and by their services rendered: the Knights of Malta, of Saint-Lazare, of Alcantara, of the Teutonic Order, which, under the authority of the Church and with the protection of the princes, strived, not by conquest and by blood which the Church wanted nothing to do with, to defend the weak, to suppress violence, and make up for what the authority of the existing states could not do.

Young Christians from many European countries, why not do the same in the interior of Africa, for a long time inaccessible to the civilised world. Why not revive these noble enterprises of our fathers? Why not, with the blessing of the Church and its pastors, revive this dedication which was the honour of the past.

Doubtless, what is needed is an organisation somewhat different from those of the past, and in keeping with present times. Noble lineage found in the Orders of old, would be supplemented by courage, abnegation, willingness to suffer and to die for ones' brothers. We would have, besides descendants of our noble families, intrepid priests to serve as nurses and chaplains, Christian workers coming from the work shops or from the farms, ready to take up the sword and pour out their blood for the freedom and the salvation of their brothers, all for the honour of the Christian name and their respective countries. What better than amid the low morals which invade and dishonour everything, to spend one's life, to leave behind in dying, the memory of a heroic devotion, and to carry upwards to God, the merit of such a death?

It is true that everything cannot be done through the devotion of these African knights. We must provide material necessities needed at least for the immediate future, for a religious militia which will have to be maintained and trained, that is to say, until such time that one can make use of resources easy to find later on in these immense spaces. But here I dare to place my trust in a generosity which is never lacking when it comes to supporting great and holy enterprises, and I have no doubts that if some young men present themselves in enough numbers, so as to sacrifice their youth, their lives, in the interior of Africa, for the salvation of mankind, there will be Christians prepared to participate in such a work and join their names to such a work.

But I will come back on this subject on another occasion, my dear brethren. Today I must stop. Allow me, before I come down from this pulpit, to ask you one thing. In order that such a cause should be successful, it must be publicised. Make it known. Repeat the details I have given you. If you have a powerful voice, if you have access to the press which can form public opinion, I appeal to you directly. Journalists, who among you have never made mistakes which you want to make up for. Whatever tendency you hold, and here I address myself to all without distinction, on the one condition that you love humanity, freedom, justice, mercy to be used in supporting the poor black people, you will obtain, one day, for yourselves the same infinite justice, mercy and pardon!

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that, while St. Paul preached in Asia Minor, he had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, "Come across to Macedonia and help us". Through my voice, it is this same prayer that the African slaves address to you, today! Christians of

Europe, come across the sea which separates us and come to our help! St. Paul lost no time in replying to the Macedonian's prayer. In Macedonia, he rescued those held prisoners under the yoke of evil. Come across to the country of the black population. Come there, some with your kindness, others by the strength of your arms and rescue these peoples, seated in the shadow of death, and those even more miserable from slavery.

Amen.

4. Conference given at Prince's Hall, London, 31st July 1888

He goes to London on the invitation of the British Anti-Slavery Society. After a pilgrimage to the tomb of Livingstone, he gives a talk at the Prince's Hall. It is remarkable to note how Lavigerie did not confine himself to giving the same lecture as he gave at Paris, but how he adapted perfectly to his audience knowing how to flatter them and gain their sympathy.

My Lord, (Lord Grandville)

Allow me to thank you, first of all, for the extreme kindness of your words. One of the most precious memories of my life will be that of having been presented to this assembly by a man whose name is the honour of England, before his own country and before all the governments of the civilized world.

(Applause)

Please allow me also to thank my eminent colleague, Cardinal Manning, for the support given to me today by his presence and his name rendered so venerable by the remembrance of a noble life, entirely consecrated to the service of his country and to that of the Church of which he is the Pastor. (Applause)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not a politician who presents himself to you today. I have never preoccupied myself, and I do not preoccupy myself at this moment, with any other interests than those of souls, of humanity, of religion.

Neither is it an orator. Absorbed for nearly a quarter of a century by the works of my ministry in a continent that is half savage, I have almost forgotten my mother tongue. Today I have the double regret of not having learned yours and of not being able to communicate to you the sentiments that fill me except by the tone of my voice and, as has just been said to you with such grace, by the bonds of affection that attach me to those of your brothers who come, each year, in great number, to take a place in the sun of our Algeria. (Applause)

So I am only an old Pastor, half broken by fatigue and years, who wants to plead before you the cause of a portion of his flock, condemned to atrocious tortures and menaced by complete destruction.

I am going to speak to you about the horrors of African slavery

I have already twice solemnly spoken up to condemn them: the first time, in Rome, at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, the great Leo XIII, my father as well as the father of all Christians; the second time, in France, my native land. But, having fulfilled this double duty of filial respect and of patriotism, it is to you I come, Christians of England. Despite what separates us, I am certain, in advance, that our sentiments will be the same in a cause which is that of humanity, of justice and of liberty. (Prolonged applause)

I come, then, to you because you, in these sentiments, have been the first sentiments, to declare war on slavery in the West Indies. For three centuries, it has oppressed millions of human creatures cruelly snatched from Africa. It was supported by all the sophisms of greed, and so seemed invincible. You, it is, and your fathers, who, without letting yourselves be scared by any obstacle, have undertaken to destroy it. The world knows the names of the writers who led this noble campaign and of the statesmen who supported them, the names of Wilberforce, of Clarkson, of Buxton (Applause). And I cannot forget,

pronouncing this last name, that it is the name of the founder of your Society, of this Anti-slavery Society, under the auspices of which we are gathered at this moment. For more than half a century, it has nobly fought for this holy cause. It has just noted its triumph, seeing first Cuba, then Brazil, embrace the ideas and sentiments that, together with the writers of France and of the United States of America, it has publicized everywhere.. Now, according to the saying that is common to us, noblesse oblige, and therefore, England, which has made every effort to destroy colonial slavery, cannot disinterest itself from the African slavery, a hundredfold more horrible.

It is England, moreover, which, through the accounts of its explorers, has been the first to raise this new question. They have been the first to make known in Europe the atrocities that are happening, without its knowledge, in the heart of our continent.

After having abolished slavery in America, after having stationed warships in the Red Sea and in the Indian Ocean to prevent the transport of slave to Asia, the zeal of the Christian nations grew cold. The intense indignation, which had forced the hand of the Princes as well as of the frenzied opposition of the slave traders, faded away. People seemed to forget that slavery still existed on earth. People even forgot the Muslim slavery which, in the countries nearer to us, still continued under a form that seemed less cruel, when, suddenly, fifteen years ago, we learned through our travellers, that it reigned with a fury for which there is no name, in the centre, almost unknown till then, of our Africa. They have said it, and they have asked the Christian world to intervene on behalf of these unfortunate creatures who doubtless do not have the same faith as us, but who are, like us, creatures of God.

At the head of those who declared this new war was the intrepid, the noble Livingstone. (lively applause) As an old African myself, I wanted to visit the tomb of the great explorer, under the vaults of Westminster. You have buried him in the midst of your greatest men. You were right, for Livingstone, by his courage, by his high intelligence, by the abnegation of his life, is the glory of this century and of your country. (Prolonged applause) But if you are the heirs of his glory, you must be the executors of his last wishes. (Applause) So it is with an emotion that brought tears to my eyes that I read the final words he wrote and that England has had officially engraved on his tomb, by order of the Government: "I cannot do anything more," he wrote in the neglected environment where he was going to die, "than to wish that the most abundant heavenly blessings descend on those, whoever they may be, English, American or Turks, who contribute to making the frightful plague of slavery disappear from the world." (Applause)

I thank you for these rounds of applause. To me, they are the good omen of the success of our common efforts. (New applause)

However, I am here not just to solicit your pity and to recall the obligations that such a past imposes on you, I am here to appeal to your justice; for England, by the new empires she has just founded or conquered in Africa, has contracted sacred obligations towards them.

Such are the reasons for my confidence. But before going to the very heart of my subject, I must rectify one of the words I spoke to you at the beginning. I said I was coming to plead the cause of the poor blacks. This expression does not correspond exactly to my thought and I take it back for two reasons:

First, because the cause of the slaves does not need to be pleaded before English Christians, it is already won in their hearts. (Repeated applause)

Secondly, because this cause is pleaded, with an eloquence that cannot be equalled, by the facts themselves and by the accounts your explorers give of them.

Africa does not need barristers, but witnesses

Africa does not need lawyers, but simply witnesses, and it is as a new witness that I appear before you. I do not propose, then, to come back on anything that you know through your writers or those of Germany. I have no intention of summarizing their accounts nor of coming back on the sentiments they inspire. But, before such horrors, one might doubt at times their exactness, and Livingstone himself expressed the fear that he would be charged with exaggeration. However, to doubt in such a cause is to lose it, for the doubt brings hesitation, and hesitation, at this moment, is the end of the African interior. If we allow the massacre of its inhabitants to come to an end, it will no longer be time to do anything. What is needed, is to rouse conviction in people's minds, and, in order to make this conviction unbreakable, to produce new witnesses in agreement with the first.

So I come to bring you my testimony for the portion of Africa that evangelization has entrusted to me.

But this testimony is not just mine. In the regions which I am going to speak to you about, I have a legion of eye witnesses. They are my sons, Missionaries of Algiers, or, as they are popularly called in Africa, "the White Fathers of Algeria." (Applause)

When I first arrived in that country, more than twenty years ago, I saw that unless I wanted to limit my ministry to the Muslim countries, till then almost inaccessible to the Gospel, it was necessary to penetrate into the interior, among the pagan populations, and that, whatever my strength, I would soon be overcome in such an enterprise, if I remained alone. I gathered around me some young men animated by the purest fire of the apostolate. They bound themselves by oaths which obliged them to live the life of the indigenous people and to suffer for them to the point of death. They were only three to begin with; but it is the glory of human nature that heroism is contagious, like evil. They are now three hundred, (Applause) of various sorts: Fathers, Brothers, novices or auxiliaries. Three hundred living. One hundred are dead, the most glorious. Eleven of them shed their blood as martyrs; the rest succumbed to the climate, to disease, to privations, to exhaustion. If I speak thus to you, it is not from a sentiment of complacency, which would be shameful; it is in order to put the seal of sacrifice on their testimony and to allow no doubt to persist any longer about the horrors they reveal to us. I recall the word of a Christian philosopher of my country, who, speaking of the foundation of Christianity and of the objections directed against its history, gave in response to them the simple and sublime reason of the martyrdom of the apostles and evangelists: "We must believe, said Pascal, witnesses who get their throats cut." It is the account of witnesses who get their throats cut, that I will let you hear today, after all you already know. (Applause)

To avoid confusion, and to make clear the parts of Africa that these testimonies refer to, I must first tell you in which regions my missionaries are established. For more than ten years, they are in the Sahara and the Great Lakes region, from the sources of the Nile as far as to the south of Tanganyika, as well as Belgian Upper Congo. It is from there they write to me, and it is of these regions, immense indeed, that I want to speak to you, leaving to travellers and missionaries who live at other points of our continent to inform Europe of what they see.

To begin by speaking of the first, I mean the missionaries of the Sahara, they testify, then, that whatever others have said about it, slavery still reigns in the same proportion as before, in all the countries of North Africa that lie south of the European possessions. Slave hunting, for these countries, is carried out as high as the Niger, in all the regions where the negroes have not yet been forced to submit, in fact, to the rites of the Muslim religion. The sale of slave, on the contrary, takes place publically in all the Muslim provinces. Thus, all the towns in the interior of Morocco have markets where the slave caravans come. A few years ago, barely five, these markets existed in the coastal towns and as far at Tangiers, just across from your Gibraltar. If they have since fled far from our gaze, to take refuge in the towns of the interior, you know who this is due to: it is the honourable Secretary of the Association that brings us together

today, who, by his eloquent and indignant complaints, has forced these infamous merchants at least to hide their work. (Prolonged applause) But, in the interior, the markets are still held and there one sees Muslims openly replenish their supplies of human cattle several times a year. It is the same with the oases in the Sahara, that is to say, those that are found on the frontiers of Algeria, of Tunisia, of Tripolitania and as far as Egypt.

In truth, and to say nothing that is not exact, as I am obliged by my role as witness, domestic slavery does not at all have, in this region, the character of constant butchery that it has taken, as I will prove, on the high plateaus of the heart of Africa. Once bought and received into the interior of Muslim families, they are treated with a fair amount of gentleness. It is in the master's interest not to cause the slaves to perish, for they cost a high price because of the distance. Perhaps, too, the presence of the Europeans in the neighbourhood scares the slavers. They fear that the groans and cries of the victims might come to our ears...

But one special condition gives, nevertheless, this trans-saharan trade a character of atrocity: it is the crossing of the desert, which requires whole months of travel, because of the herd of women and children that the caravans drag after them. Frightful journey where they must walk on foot, on a dry sand, under a burning sun, in a countryside where food is often lacking, and water even more so. There is food and water for the slave merchants; but the children and women receive only just enough to stop them dying, for by dying they would deny their torturers the profit they expect. Most often, the Tuaregs are the escorts of these herds of human beings. Their hearts are as hard as the steel of their lances, and a handful of raw sorghum, every evening, a mouthful of water, that is all they give the slaves who walk burdened with the horrible forked pole. Those who fall: it is death. The experienced eye of the slaver knows how to recognise if the victim is going to escape him before the end of the journey. If he sees that is so, a blow with a club finishes him off. The hyenas, the jackals will come to devour their flesh, leaving the bleached skeletons to mark the way to the markets of Morocco or of Fez.

But the slave trade in the Sahara and the Northern provinces, of which Timbuktu is the centre, is nothing compared with that of the high plateaus of the interior. That, above all, is the one I must speak to you about. It is there that our missionaries are, at this moment, witnesses of facts that plunge a whole continent in agony.

Twenty years ago, we did not yet know what the heart of Africa was like. People spoke of it as an inhospitable and sterile desert. It has proved, on the contrary, and my missionaries confirm it daily, to be the finest part of it, the richest and the happiest. It had been judged only by the coastal lands. There, in effect, the climate is unhealthy, often deadly, work is difficult, almost impossible for Europeans. Ancient traditions, traces of which are found as far back as Hesiod and Herodotus, seemed to announce that the interior of Africa did not at all resemble its shores, and what announced this no less was the existence of its great rivers: the Niger, the Congo, the Zambezi, the Nile especially, which rightly stirred the curiosity and the conjectures of geographers, historians and philosophers. They were not mistaken, as has been seen since, about the importance of these mysterious water courses.

After the lowlands of the coast, one has noted then that the centre of Africa rises on two plateaus: one of them two to three hundred English feet above ocean level; the other, immense, measuring thousands of mile in length, rising on average two to three thousand feet above the first, giving it a total altitude of four to five thousand feet above sea level. These two plateaus, inundated each year at fixed seasons by torrential rains brought by clouds formed over the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, are dotted as it were with great lakes, or to be more correct, with inland seas, immense reservoirs that nature has created. From these seas and great lakes, as they are called, flow the four rivers of Africa and their innumerable tributaries. That is what makes these countries so beautiful and fertile. Aided by an over-lively imagination and by the four rivers, some, these latter times, have even wanted to see the ancient paradise there. Altitude tempers the burning force of the sun. On the shore of Lake Nyanza and of Lake

Tanganyika the heat by day does not go beyond 32 degrees centigrade, and every night, the temperature goes down to 17 or 18 degrees. The soil is of a rare richness. I am not speaking of the numerous mines of which one sees traces and which promise treasures for industry, I am speaking only about agriculture. Helped by the waters and by the sun, it produces without difficulty all that is needed to live on. Wherever water flows, four harvests are possible yearly. That is the experience our missionaries, themselves, have had, for the wheat they grow in order to procure the material for the Eucharistic sacrifice. The woods are of a beauty, of a force, that excites the admiration of explorers. The combination of all these riches should naturally draw and fix a numerous population. That is what has happened in the course of time. Nowhere in Africa, did one see more numerous and more populated villages. Peace reigned there, families were patriarchal, firearms unknown; they were found only towards the coast or on the banks of the Zambezi where the Portuguese had imported them.

Sad coincidence, it is at the very moment, twenty five years ago, that the great explorers and the missionaries penetrated these regions to bring civilization and the faith, that the slave traders, perhaps informed by the very persons who had served as guides to the travellers, invaded in their turn. Their departure points were Egypt and the kingdom of Zanzibar.

Their principal chiefs, the half-casts, horrible race, offspring of Arabs and blacks of the coast, Muslim in name, just enough to profess hatred and scorn of the negro race that they place below animals, and to which, when it comes to what is due, nothing is due except slavery, and if any resistance, torture and death; frightful men, without conscience or pity, equally infamous for their bestial corruption and their cruelty, they justify the African saying: "God made the Whites, God made the Blacks, but the devil made the half-casts." (Applause).

Our Fathers arrived, then, eleven years ago, on the high plateaus of the interior, at Tabora, in Tanganyika, in Nyanza, in Upper Congo, to see the work of death, already being organized, grow and finally destroy everything step by step. For the half-casts, in this initial period, these lands were storehouses containing two types of riches. Life was easy there; ivory, the principal object of their trading, was extremely abundant. Never before had anyone come so high and so far looking for it, and in some provinces, like Manyema, not far from lake Tanganyika, it could be found in such great quantity that elephant tusks were used to fence gardens and serve as uprights supporting their primitive huts. The ruin of this unfortunate land began with the ivory. It was not enough to buy at a very low price or to seize it by force, it had to be transported to the coast. Now, to transport it, in this part of Africa, there is no other means than man. The routes are simply arduous tracks, domestic animals are killed by the bite of tsetse flies. To have men, the traders made slaves. The smallest pretext was enough to find reason to quarrel, that is to say, for premeditated massacres. Without pity, without mercy, the brigands fell upon an inoffensive population, massacring all who resisted, binding the rest in chains, and by threats or force, forcing men to serve as beasts of burden as far as the coast where they were sold, together with the ivory they had carried there.

That is how everything started. But greed and blood can create an intoxicating thirst, a terrible thirst which can never be quenched, when it is not repressed by force. (Applause) The history of pagan tyrants has already shown us that clearly. It is this intoxicating thirst for blood, this scorn for human life, that today dishonours the heart of Africa. The population there is oppressed, taken away, and mown down as it were incessantly. After one village, it is another; after one province, it is a new province, and soon all is covered in ruins and blood. Our missionaries in Tanganyika write to us that not a day passes without their seeing pass by under their eyes caravans of slaves who are dragged far away, as bearers of ivory, on the markets of the interior, as human cattle. Little by little, these markets have sprung up everywhere; it is especially women and children who are sold there now; since ivory is running out and becoming scarce, men are no longer needed; moreover, they flee when they are in the hands of their new masters and they are killed. The cruelties thus committed defy all description, and the scourge of this sort of hunt, for that is the name it is called and must be called to present a true idea of it, exceeds all scourges. Never, on any

spot in the known world and on any page of history, has there been seen killing, butchery and contempt for blood equal to this. (Applause)

Already millions of human creatures have succumbed in this way, during this last quarter of a century. But the proportion is always increasing and for the high plateaus of the interior, our missionaries exceed the number given by Cameron for the trade along the Zambezi and Lake Nyassa. Now Cameron, one of the Englishmen most worthy to be heard on this matter, because of his long experience of the slave trade, his courage, his noble heart (applause), estimated that already at his time, five hundred thousand blacks, at a minimum, were then being sold, every year, in the markets of the interior.

He is here, moreover, to confirm once more his testimony and the perfect conformity of our sentiments and views. He has wanted to write me to this effect in a letter which I received at the very moment when I was setting out to come among you. I ask him permission to make it public.

Many things divide us, perhaps, Commander, but on this issue, as I said just now, we can only be in agreement on everything. (Prolonged applause)

The cruelty, as consequence of this thirst for blood, which I have already pointed out to you, follows the same progression as the number. Formerly the invaders contented themselves in the midst of an unsuspecting population, to take those who came to hand. Today I learn according to eye witnesses, of scenes where savagery competes with a passion for evil. The blacks of the interior, knowing henceforth what their aggressors intend, flee into the jungles or the wooded areas close to their villages. There they hope to escape their blows. Listen to the procedure the slavers employ to drive them out. That is an impious term, but it is the very excess of cruelty that obliges us to use, for men, terms reserved till now for beasts; that, moreover, is the usage in the African interior: the blacks themselves, when they have slaves, have adopted the terms of the slavers and do not name them in any other way: "my beast, my animal", they say.

The infernal band, then, surround the high grasses where the natives have taken refuge and set fire to them. The fire soon catches in the lands of sun. Soon, cries of terror and despair are heard from all sides and all that the flames have not reached, choked by the smoke, rush out fleeing from this burning furnace and fall into the hands of the torturers who are waiting, to kill some and bind others in chains. You will find similar accounts in your explorers and you will not be surprised if the populous and fertile provinces of the heart of Africa are reduced, one after the other, to desolate solitudes where only the bones of the inhabitants testify henceforth that human activity, peace, work had been there at one time. (Reaction of horror)

So before long, the complete depopulation of the African interior can be foreseen. If these humanitarian considerations do not touch the heart of Europe, let it at least think of the difficulty it will soon have to draw from these privileged regions the riches they seem to promise. Once the population is thus destroyed, all work, consequently all agriculture, all serious industry become impossible there for the white man, deprived of an indigenous work-force. Without inhabitants, the traveller will no longer even be able to find food, or shelter on his road, and the paths will disappear, closed by the impenetrable barrier of tropical vegetation. Such is what is happening today, and what will be tomorrow. I repeat, a last time, if Europe does not rapidly stop these excesses, the heart of Africa, in a few years, will be nothing but a desert. (Lively applause)

That is why I am here and make this cry of indignation and distress resound in your ears, English Christians, as I did in the ears of the Christians of France. (Applause)

Without contradiction, it is on the governments of Europe that the obligation to save Africa falls first. (Applause) The honourable president of this meeting, before giving me the floor, reminded you how in 1814, in Vienna, and later again in Verona, in 1822, they solemnly committed themselves no longer to

tolerate slavery in the world. But they must have the will for that. (Applause) And why would they not have it? Is there an undertaking more noble, greater, more generous? On which questions can they more honourably consult and agree than on the cessation of such frightful evils? (Applause) One speaks often of their alliances, and the peoples, none of which at heart want war, seem to see in them merely the prelude to struggles where they will cut each others' throats. We must come back then on the bitter irony of our Montesquieu when he said, more than a century ago, speaking of colonial slavery: "Some little spirits exaggerate too much the injustice done to the Africans: for if the injustice was such as they say, would not the idea have come to the Princes of Europe, who make so many useless agreements between themselves, to make one, in common, in favour of mercy and pity?" (Applause)

It is true, the European governments think of Africa; but till now, they seem to think about it only to appropriate it. To come together in a congress to draw lines on a map and claim empires for themselves is easy. But Christian States cannot forget that right is correlative to duty. The principle nations of Europe, England, Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, by common consent, recognized and proclaimed their present and future rights on Africa. Consequently, they have duties towards her. (Applause) Of these duties, the first is not to allow the indigenous race to be cruelly destroyed and the land that the explorers had opened up to civilization, to be closed up again, by being transformed into inaccessible deserts. It is in their own interest, firstly. But if the voice of interest does not speak to the governments with enough power, occupied as they are by other concerns, they must be forced to hear, to use the words of Montesquieu, the cry "of mercy and pity." And for that, the cry must be raised by all, indeed, with such power that they are forced to obey it. (Lively applause)

This undertaking is, without doubt, the very undertaking of the Anti-slavery Association which gathers us here today, of the eminent men who preside over it and direct it, under the patronage itself of the heir to the throne. (Applause) But an association of men, no matter how powerful, cannot do everything, and, if I dared to address myself to you, Ladies, I would say than in a very real sense, an undertaking "of mercy and pity" is yours, above all. You know better than a man how to find the way to the heart for you feel more deeply than he does. But that is not the sole reason when it comes to African slavery. The victims of this slavery are now, in fact, especially children and women. That is what my missionaries never cease to repeat. Scarcely two days ago, I received in London a letter from our Tanganyika Mission, in which the Superior repeated the same message: "Here, now, only children and women are sold; the men are killed." I do not hesitate to say, in this talk, that the women are more to be pitied than the men. Death delivers the men with one single blow; slavery reserves a thousand deaths for the women and children,. They are placed without defence in the hands of their masters for the most base debauchery and for acts of horrible cruelty. (Reactions of horror)

Examples of what these slave women from inside Africa had to suffer

In a letter written a few days ago, I narrated the sufferings of these unfortunate women of the African interior at the hands of those who buy them. Let me quote here a passage from this letter:

"Here, I said, is an example of this cruelty, chosen from the lowest rungs of the social ladder, a poor black. It is one of our Fathers who narrated it to me, and I already published it myself two years ago: "During the masika rains, he said, the terrains of the neighbouring plain (of Tabora) became a marsh. Impossible to go there without sinking into the mud. Despite that, a negro of the neighbouring village ordered his woman slave to go and collect wood to cook the evening meal. She went. Scarcely had she entered the fields than she began to sink into the mud and soon she had sunk up to her arms without being able to free herself, and had to stay immobile so as not to sink further and perish. Her plaintive voice called for help but those who passed near there just laughed. The husband, not seeing her return, went to search for her with a stick, no doubt to knock her senseless. He found her in this pitiful state, and without doing anything to help her, threw her from a distance his stick so that she could defend herself, if she wished, he said to her

with atrocious irony, against the hyenas that would come at night. The next day, all trace of the unfortunate woman had disappeared.”

Let us go up the rungs of the ladder. One of our Fathers reports with horror that a minor Bukumbi king said to him one morning, with the most tranquil air in the world: “I killed five of my women during the night”, without even appearing to believe that that could be anything extraordinary. (Reaction of indignation)

Let us come finally to the powerful. This is what I myself say in the letter from which I took the previous extracts: “Reverend Father Levesque, former missionary in Uganda, told me that, finding himself at the court of King Mutesa and waiting in the exterior enclosure for an audience with this prince, suddenly he saw the doors of the barazah, or royal hall, open noisily to allow two armed soldiers, dragging a poor female slave by her feet, to pass through. She had just been condemned to have her ears, nose and finally her head cut off immediately, for having spoken too loudly before the opening of his audience. The sentence was carried out on the very spot, before the crowd. To the cries of the unfortunate woman, which broke the heart of the missionary, the bystanders responded with noisy hilarity.” (Signs of horror)

These horrors are confirmed, we will see in what proportion, regarding the negro court of Uganda, where there were one thousand two hundred women, victims of all the caprices of the tyrant, by an eye witness, the explorer, Speke:

“For some time now, he says in his Sources of the Nile, I am living in the enclosure of the royal house, and so for me, the key customs of the court are no longer secret. Will anyone believe me, however, if I affirm that, since my change of domicile, not one day passes where I do not see led out to death one, sometimes two, and as many as three of these unfortunate women who compose Mutesa’s harem? A rope bound round the wrists, led or dragged by the bodyguard leading them to the slaughter house, these poor creatures, eyes full of tears, with cries that pierce the heart: “Hai Minange! (O my lord!) Kabakka! (O my king!) Hai N’yavio! (O my mother!).” And despite these piercing appeals to public pity, not a hand is raised to deliver them from the executioner, although low voices are heard here and there commending the beauty of these young victims.

Christian women of Europe, women of England, it is up to you to make such horrors known everywhere and to stir up against them the indignation of the civilized world. (Applause) Leave your fathers, your husbands, your brothers no peace at all, use the authority they possess through their fortune, their situation in the State, to stop the blood shedding of your sisters. If God has given you the talent to write, use it in this cause, you will not find a holier one. Do not forget that it was the book of a woman, a novel, Uncle Tom, that, translated into all the languages in the world, sealed the deliverance of the American slaves. (Applause)

But what is the practical goal for which the States of Europe must unite at this moment? I repeat it, in one word, and very clearly: it is to use force for the destruction of African slavery. (Applause) The evil is too deep, too extensive, for it to be conquered henceforth in another way, before it has brought its work to completion.

Through persuasion, missionaries can indeed convert isolated populations; they are too few in number to make their action felt over the vast extent of the African interior. In the meantime, destruction goes so fast that all will have disappeared.

I say as much of charity and the ransom of slaves. Several have proposed it, in a sentiment of generous compassion, to withdraw a few victims, as least, from their sad fate. God preserve me from turning Christians away from a sentiment so conform to their law. Charity is its first precept. But on the one hand, how to find sufficient funds for the ransom of so many slaves, and, on the other, would not this ransom be

an encouragement to the greed of the slavers? If the ransom is assured, the hunt for slaves will find a new reason to expand.

What is needed, I say it again, is force, a peaceful force, doubtless, and destined solely for defence, but an armed force. That was clearly seen for the colonial trade, where everything was useless till the day when English, French, American warships erected an insurmountable barrier before the slave traders. Today they maintain it in the Indian Ocean to prevent the transport of slaves to Asia. Doubtless they do not succeed in preventing everything, because, thanks to the shortness of the crossings, they can be effected by the Arab dhows under cover of darkness. But at least they inspire fear. I can only, for that, highly congratulate the British government, for the perseverance that the recent Blue Book shows us. (Lively applause)

But for slavery on land, warships are insufficient. There needs to be added, following the thought of your great Gordon (Prolonged applause) regarding the destruction of the Nile slave trade, land barriers which close to caravans the routes to the slave countries, and some lightly armed troops which can be transported to wherever the infamous hunt is reported. That is the thinking of all those who know our African question; it is the one that Commander Cameron expressed to me again this very morning in his letter. (Applause)

But, I am supposing that the governments which often have diverse views or interests, cannot or do not want to agree. In that case, I say it with equal clarity and equal frankness, the same duty passes from the governments to the Christian peoples. (Lively applause) They can fulfil it; one can see it by the Christian Missions in which governments take no interest and which peoples have taken on themselves. In this respect, England sets an example for all by the generosity of its alms. France, the other European countries, do the same with their intrepid missionaries and their apostolic works. Why would they not do so for a work that adds itself so naturally to the preaching of the faith? Why would one not see arise among them personal devotedness capable of providing what governments cannot do? (Applause) They have not yet sent one single man on the high plateaus of Africa. Why would not private associations, like those seen in the middle ages, send them there to teach the blacks to defend themselves against their oppressors? (Applause)

Has not Stanley shown us what a man, a single man, helped by a few hundred blacks, can do by his audacity and perseverance? (Prolonged applause) Did not Emin Pasha know how to constitute and direct forces which have maintained order around him? (New applause) And if I wanted to tell you of a more modest devotedness, I could cite for you, without of course making you jealous, a French hero, a former captain of the Pontifical Zouaves, who, for nearly five years, confronts all the privations, all the fatigues, all the dangers of the African equator to establish an army of blacks and protect by his courage and devotedness the surrounding tribes. His name is Joubert. (Applause) Others could involve themselves as individuals or associate themselves, as has been done in the past, in the same crusade. They will not be lacking among you, I can see. Already, since I am in London, I have received several offers of this nature. (Applause) May these offers multiply; may we thus be able to have, on the different points of the African interior, Stanleys, Emin, Jouberts, and the problem will be solved. For what is needed, it is not, as one might have believed, numerous armies. What is needed is men, even isolated, but powerful in virtue, initiative and courage, capable of training the blacks to resist their enemies. (New applause)

They will still lack, however, and we will still lack one indispensable thing, and that therefore will be the work of all. Courage in war, strength to confront perils and fatigues are the privilege of few; charity is the obligation of everyone, and here it is needed to furnish material resources to those who accept to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives.

You cannot make a better contribution than by involving yourselves in the Work which brings us together today and which gives, under many headings, and to Catholics in particular, by the presence of an eminent

Cardinal, the highest guarantees of honour. Nothing prevents similar Works being created in other countries. (Prolonged applause) Only remember that at this very moment I am speaking to you, rivers of blood are flowing under the African equator. Remember that it depends only on Europe to stop it, and that if it does not do so without delay, it will incur the responsibility before God and history. Nineteen centuries ago, the world heard from the lips of a whole people which could with one word stop the shedding of innocent blood, a word of indifference, of egotism and of fear: "Let his blood fall on us and on our children!" The blood was shed, in fact; but the people which had thus let it be shed thereby lost all that a people can lose, its honour and its country, and we see it today dispersed to the four winds of the universe. Let us take care lest the blood of Africa reserve for Europe a similar curse. May God save it, then, from the calamity which threatens to destroy it for ever! May God save it by inspiring in governments generous resolutions, and by arousing in the heart of peoples, Christian dedication and courage. (Salvo of applause)

5. Conference given in the church of St. Gudule, Brussels, 15th August 1888

Arriving in Belgium, Lavigerie knows that he is in difficult territory. He can not openly criticise what is going on in the Congo without offending the King and his subjects. He has to show prudence, to make certain allowances, and get on the good side of his audience by showing them his respect without hiding the human drama taking place in the Congo. He knows how to touch and to rally those who listen to him.

My very dear brothers,

You know why I am in your midst. The great crowd pressing round this Basilica and filling it, at this moment, would be enough to prove it.

You have, then, heard tell of this old Bishop, who despite the weight of years and African fatigue, wanted to leave all to plead before the Christians of Europe the cause of the poor blacks whose pastor he is, and who, in Upper Congo, suffer the horrible agonies of slavery.

But since you know my story and that of so many unfortunate creatures, I do not want to repeat what I have said elsewhere. You can read it, perhaps you have already read it, in my Conferences published in London and Paris. Since it is to Belgian Catholics that I speak today, I want to speak to them only about what concerns part of Belgian Africa: the sufferings of the blacks held in slavery.

Arguments to encourage Belgium Catholics to fight against slavery

I want above all to explain to you how it is the responsibility of you, Catholics, to remedy so many evils, out of a sentiment inspired by religion, Christian piety and patriotism. To convince you of this, I must tell you everything.

You will not be surprised, then, by the freedom with which I speak. I am a missionary; I preach only the truth as apostles must preach it. I am sure, moreover, that whatever I may say to you, I will not hurt you. I am sure of this because I love Belgium, your country. I love it for its generous faith. For many long years, I have never found anything but marks of sympathy and charity for my works. If, then, what you will hear may at times surprise your ears, you will understand, simply by the tone of my voice, that I do not want to wound your hearts.

What I must remind you of, or bring to your awareness, has nothing, moreover, that is out of the ordinary. I only find in this history of the Belgian Congo, what I find in the history of all the noble enterprises, and I cannot give you any better proof of this than by showing you how Our Lord spoke about it himself nineteen centuries ago for the future instruction of Christian peoples.

He gave this lesson in the form of a parable. You will find it, if you wish to read it again, in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Our Lord tells there the story of a man who goes out to sow a good seed, bonum semen, in his fields. But once the seed had been sown by him, his people went to sleep and while they slept, cum autem dormirent homines, the enemy sowed darnel in the midst of the good seed. The darnel soon grew to the dismay of the servants, and no doubt regretting their negligence, they rose and said: "Do you want us to uproot the darnel that is growing in the midst of the good seed?"

If you have understood this well, it is what I am going to set out for you today in new terms.

The man who sows the good grain is the Prince who conceived the noble thought of sowing civilization, progress, and at a future date, riches, assured riches for his people, in an Africa till now barbarian. The people sleeping around him, alas, are you yourselves who have not always supported him as much as you could, Belgian Catholics, in what concerns the works of faith and humanity (for these are the only ones that I wish to and can speak from this pulpit.) The darnel which is sown is the slavery which is developing and seems ready to cover everything. Finally, the workers, who, filled with regret, arise to root out the darnel which has grown up, will be you, I am sure, my very dear brothers, when you have heard this talk. But see in my words one desire only, the desire to enlighten your consciences and to render service to your sense of Christian honour. Any other thought is foreign to me. In my mouth, politics, human interests, even distant allusions to them, would be contrary to the duties of my sacred ministry.

I

I say first of all, then, that like the man in the Gospel, the Prince who founded the international undertaking for Africa has sown a good and noble seed. Nothing is easier to prove.

Africa was an unknown world and lost as it were to the human race, until the beginning of this century. It is only then that at one of its extremities, by the commercial undertaking of England, at the other, by the military conquests of France that it seemed to come back to life. But the interior remained always a mystery that explorers tried in vain to pierce. For such a task, isolated individuals could not suffice, no matter what their intelligence and audacity. A hand powerful enough to unite these efforts was needed, and it is your King who, towards this end, made a first appeal to Europe.

It is here, in Brussels, that all the representatives of science, of noble initiatives, met together, ten years ago, under his chairmanship, to begin studying African problems. Action soon joined thought. Explorers, intrepid officers, later on devoted and capable administrators offered themselves, risking their lives. Several died on the field of honour. Others made admirable discoveries, and the face of our continent was changed. One day, it will be the face of the world itself, for one quarter of the earth, closed till now, has opened up, with its countless riches, its mines, its fertile interior, its life-giving sun, its abundant waters. But it is not my role, I repeat, to speak of commerce or industry. I am only the voice crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the ways of the Lord", that is to say, the ways of truth and justice. It is not my role either, but for another reason; for here it would be just to speak of the royal sacrifices made to attain such a goal, though I know them well.

But it is my role to note, because they are public and concern the topic I am treating, the high motives that have inspired your King. "It is, he said in his invitation to the learned experts of Europe, an idea that is eminently civilizing and Christian: to abolish slavery in Africa, to pierce the darkness that still covers this part of the world, to pour out there the treasures of civilization." And, in his first speech to the international conference, he said again: "To open to civilization the only part of the globe where it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness which envelops entire populations." And finally, in line with my own harrowing preoccupations: "Slavery, said Leopold II, slavery which exists on a notable part of the African continent, constitutes a plague that all friends of true civilization must want to see disappear. The International Association must put an end to this odious traffic which brings shame to our age."

What undertaking, then, could be more noble, more human, more Christian, more glorious! In itself, it is enough to assure its royal instigator of a place among the greatest benefactors of humanity and of Christian princes most worthy of this name.

Also, when, after the Congress of Berlin, the foundations of the new States of Africa were laid down, and the State of the Congo was recognized with its immense expanse, its brilliant hopes, the representatives of the great Powers of Europe, England, France, and Germany, were unanimous in their praise for him, and Belgium, the smallest in size of the European kingdoms, appeared that day, because of its King's initiative, the greatest in the eyes of the whole world.

Thus was the good seed sown. Everything seemed to give the assurance of a sound harvest. But now we must return to my parable: "Cum autem dormirent homines", it says, "while his people slept".

You fell asleep, then, Catholics of Belgium!

You fell asleep, then, Catholics of Belgium! From the religious point of view, you have not given to the spreading of the Christian light, to the struggle against barbarism, all the energetic cooperation which was your duty. Your King opened up before you a land sixty times larger than yours, peopled by a minimum of twenty million souls, according to others, by a maximum of forty million. It was, then, an immense field for apostolate and for charity. Could there be a goal to stimulate more powerfully the zeal of a Catholic people? However, I say it with sadness, in this order of ideas, you have not done enough. I know that not all have failed in their duty. I have seen six worthy sons of your Belgium devote themselves to these thoughts of faith; I have seen them fall nobly, martyrs of their courage. I have seen four priests of the dioceses of Gand and Bruges devote themselves, in the Society of the White Fathers, to these new Missions and bravely face all the perils of the extremities of the Congo. Others prepare themselves to imitate them. Two of them are next to me on the steps of this pulpit. They will be followed, these very days, by four new apostles belonging to an excellent family of Missionaries (Scheut). But what is that for all these immense territories?

I say the same about the resources necessary for the apostles. For in the end, if they give their life, the Christians owe them their daily bread. I know again in this respect what some people are doing. But noblesse oblige. In the whole world, you have an incomparable reputation for generosity in all the charitable works, too great a reputation perhaps in some people's opinion, because it draws all the collectors to you. But while in this way you support Christian works all over the universe, you have sometimes forgotten too much the part of Africa that from now on bears your name.

That is not all. While you were thus sleeping, the enemy, barbarity, which in Africa is the enemy of all Europe's efforts, has been at work. With the good seed, with the progress of the material organization and the preparation of future riches, thanks to the impetus given by the Sovereign, we have seen the darnel grow and threaten to invade everything.

Listen, then, to what for the past ten years is happening to part of this land which rightly expected from you the blessings of the Christian faith. You have been able to see, in the accounts of travellers and even in the conferences that I have given, to what horrors unhappy Africa has become a prey, on the part of the slave traders; how monsters with a human face, Arab and half-castes bloody by murder, ravage by fire, terrify by the hunt and the sale of slaves, all parts of the black continent: in the north, right up to our Saharan frontiers, in the Muslim kingdoms of the Sudan; to the east, in the regions that border the Nile and the Indian Ocean; along the Zambezi, in the countries that touch the Portuguese provinces and the recent English colonies; around the Great Lakes of the interior. But in no other part of Africa do these horrors come close to what is happening in the lands of the Upper Congo. The explorers have been followed, in effect, by the slave traders looking for an easy prey. It is there that the latter have destroyed everything in entire regions where soon neither villages nor inhabitants will be found.

Recently, in England, a map of the slave countries has been drawn up, indicating their present state by diverse colours. Lighter colours simply indicate the existence of slavery and its atrocities ; the darker colours indicate that it has destroyed everything, in a fever of furious impiety. Now in the whole of Africa, there are only five provinces marked with this colour of death, and these five provinces lie along the banks of the Upper Congo. I say it with a double pain, my dear brothers, for I am the Pastor of these lost regions, and my missionaries have been the witnesses of this destruction of entire populations by the cruelty of the Muslims and half-castes.

But a general statement is not enough, proofs are needed to convince you and bring you to decide to stop the evil without delay, for this work of death continues, and if you delay any more, the neighbouring provinces will share the same fate.

These proofs, I take them only from witnesses belonging to Belgium or having served in the Congo.

Manyema is the most beautiful of the regions recently depopulated by slavery. Livingstone, who had traversed it shortly before his death, describes this land admirable for its beauty, for its climate, for its natural resources (gold, among them), for the density of its villages and inhabitants. Stanley narrates that one of his guides gave him the same testimony, yet the devastating action of the half-castes who had established their centre at Nyangwe was already becoming apparent. They were soon joined there by a famous muslim whose name one day will become, I fear, more famous still. Once under the hand of the armed slavers, these peaceful Negroes, without any other weapons to defend themselves but clubs and arrows, were doomed to certain destruction. The one thing that stands out in their atrocities here is their savage rapidity. The Muslims are, in effect, all over Africa, to the north, to the east, to the centre, the enemies of the blacks, and their bands, in the words only too true of an English writer, have invaded the heart of Africa with the deliberate aim "of changing this peaceful paradise into a hell."

The fact is that for them, as I have said elsewhere but must keep on repeating it to Europe, to reduce the Negro to slavery is a right, I was almost going to say religious, because it is on their doctrines that it is based. They teach, with the commentators on their Koran, that the Negro does not belong to the human family that he is midway between man and animals, that he is even, in some respects, lower than the latter. That being so, to capture him, to force him to serve, is the believer's right; and not only does he have no remorse for doing so, but he takes a fearsome glory in cutting the black down just as our hunters take glory tracking and cutting down a wild beast. If the Negro is peaceful, one has the right to burn his village; if he resists, one has the right to kill him; if he flees, one has the right to put him to death with horrible tortures, so as to put fear into his companions in misfortune and discourage them from imitating him.

The Muslim executioners and their brigand associates exercise these frightful rights wherever they are the stronger, from the lands subject to Tuareg incursions down to the banks of Lake Nyassa and the Zambezi, now that they have been allowed to penetrate that far.

That is what we have been seeing, in Manyema and the three provinces that surround it. Between the four, they had several million inhabitants, five million, say the most credible witnesses. Today, apart from those, few in number, who have been able to hide in the jungles and escape from their executioners, not a single one is left. I make a mistake. The adult men have been killed, the women sold, but the children have been kept, I speak of those the slavers judge capable of helping them in their infamous trade. Those ones they bring up, train them in the use of weapons, in stealing, in banditry, and, by a sort of unnatural rage, it is the children of the blacks, who after seeing their villages destroyed, their fathers and mothers massacred, now go far away to assassinate their brothers, destroy their homes and their farms, and make new slaves.

A phenomenon so distressing it is hard to find an explanation. The boldness of the Muslims has grown because of their atrocities. The more these atrocities grow, the more, it would seem, they should fear punishment. It is the opposite that occurs. Those who formerly trembled for their slave caravans simply because Europeans were around, have little by little taken courage, and it is before our very eyes that the devastation progresses, day by day, with what seems a drunken haste. They seem afraid that their victims will escape them, through some resolution of the European powers, and they hurry to destroy everything. In this recent period, I mean for about the last two years, the infamous hunt has developed so much that in the Upper Congo, everything is in agony, to use the expression of one of my missionaries. But at this point, my very dear brothers, and to give you a more exact idea of facts unparalleled in history, it is not enough to summarize; the precise statements of testimonies are necessary. So I will cite the words of eye-witnesses. I will read you a letter I have just received from a missionary in the station of Kibanga, on Lake Tanganyika, where there is a Belgian priest whose intrepid zeal you know well, Fr. Vynke. I put it in a note, I must say, in one of my last speeches; but the newspapers did not print it and it needs new publicity. I am going to read it therefore, in this church, before these altars, as in the first period of Christianity one read out letters narrating the torture and death of the martyrs:

“Several times previously I had visited the market of Oujiji; but at that time, slaves were few in number, and I had not seen this odious trade in all its horror. At the time of this last trip, the town had been flooded, in the full sense of the term, by slave caravans coming from Manyema etc. etc. The slaves, because of the number, were cheap and someone proposed that I buy at a very low price, but almost all were exhausted by fatigue, by misery and dying of hunger; some would even have been incapable of making the journey across the lake to reach the Mission. I was so poor that I had to refuse almost all of them.

The market place was covered with slaves for sale, attached in long lines, men, women, children, in a frightful disorder, some with ropes, others with chains. Some coming from Manyema had had their ears pierced and a little cord passed through to keep them tied together.

In the streets, at every step, you met living skeletons, dragging themselves along with the help of a stick; they were no longer chained because they were incapable of running away. Suffering and privation of every kind were painted on their fleshless faces and everything indicated that they would die rather of hunger than of disease. From the big scars on their backs, you saw immediately that they had suffered ill-treatment at the hand of their masters who did not spare them any beating to keep them walking. Others awaited the end of their miserable existence, lying in the streets or next to the house of their master who no longer gave them food as he foresaw they would soon die.

But it is above on the Tanganyika side, in the uncultivated space, covered in high grasses, which separates the market from the lake shore that we must see all the horrible consequences of this abominable trade. This space is the Oujiji cemetery, or more correctly, the refuse dump where the bodies of dead or dying slaves are thrown. The hyenas, very abundant in this country, are charged with their burial. A young Christian who did not yet know the town, wanted to walk to the shore of the lake; but at the sight of the numerous bodies strewn along the path, half-eaten by the hyenas or the birds of prey, he turned back in fear, not able to bear such a frightful spectacle.

When I asked an Arab why the bodies were so numerous in the surroundings of Oujiji, he replied in a quite natural tone of voice, as if it were the most simple matter in the world: “Formerly, we were accustomed to throw the bodies of our dead slaves in this place, and, every night, the hyenas came to carry them away. But this year, the number of dead is so considerable that the animals are no longer enough to devour them: they are disgusted with human flesh!!!”

Is that enough, my very dear brothers? To incite your horror and indignation, yes, without doubt; but the truth is, more is necessary. In his last work, *Five Years in the Congo*, Stanley narrates that the first time he

descended this river, there was, around Stanley Falls, a land as big, he said, as Ireland, peopled with a million inhabitants; and when he returned a few years later, he found the land deserted and ravaged, and he added this detail, that out of a million inhabitants, eye-witnesses told him that only five thousand escaped. He went on to calculate that out of two hundred inhabitants, only one had escaped slavery or death.

Nothing to this degree had been seen anywhere in Africa. The figures given by Livingstone and Cameron, which already made one shudder, were nothing compared to this. They said: five men, ten men killed for every slave; and on the Congo, Stanley says "two hundred!" Ah! My very dear brothers, the breadth of the waters of this river has been vaunted, but if they were to dry up, and all the blood that has been shed were gathered there instead, one would have seen for a moment a similar flood continue to flow.

But this is still only about the number of victims. Above all, we must speak of their sufferings. What I am going to say is frightful, it is true, but it is necessary to say it. To save the African interior, the anger of the world must be roused.

It is useless to speak to you of the nameless horrors of the slave hunt and of the caravan marches; of the jungles set on fire to force those who fled to give themselves up to their executioners; of the hunger of those left long days without food; of torn and bloody feet from the cruel marches. I have already described that in my previous speeches.

In Africa, once in the house of their masters, the lot of the African slaves is not sweeter

But it has been said that at least, once in the house of their masters the lot of the African slaves is sweeter. I myself have said it, for the Muslim countries of Asia. But in the African interior, in the territories of which I speak and which are now known under your name, the name of a Christian people, their lot is no less horrible than in the caravans or in the markets. I will not go far to look for my proofs, I will only speak to you, in the midst of so many other facts which we have witnessed, of facts I learned just yesterday, here in Brussels, from eye witnesses returning from the Congo. They are here and can prove me wrong.

One reported to me that the very day of his arrival, in the lands of the Belgian Congo, in Tanganyika, a chief had died. He saw twenty slaves buried alive with their master. Nobody was upset. It is the local custom, they said. It is only too true, and this frightful custom still goes on. One of my missionaries who came to find me here, said, on his part, that one day a chief, neighbouring to the Mission, to persuade him to come and visit him and take up residence near him, promised in his honour to burn eight of his female slaves alive before his hut. He was astonished at the priest's indignant reaction to such a horrendous proposal, so natural did it seem to him. Finally, for I want to finish with this, near Tanganyika, there is another chief. A monster. He is called king Wemba, from the name of his territory, and he is, as though by an irony stained with blood, both a lover of music and a lover of blood. Now his principal music, a little as throughout our Africa, is that of the drums. But he finds the wooden drum sticks too hard on his ears, and in order to have a gentler sound, he wanted something new. To that end, he had the hands of the slaves destined for his abominable orchestra amputated, so that they would beat their instruments with their stumps.

And would you find that it is not my duty as Pastor to put an end to such infamy! Wise people have remonstrated with me that I am killing myself with my travels and my speeches. But I in no way will be silent or will I stop. I have sworn David's oath, I have vowed to give no rest to my feet and to my voice till I have aroused in indignation over the horrors of Africa the entire Christian universe.

And I have not said all. I have not spoken of the slaves transported, at this present hour, to the north of India, to the Persian Gulf, to Arabia, to the islands of the Indian Ocean. The maritime trade has been abolished for America. In the Indian Ocean itself, British vessels close the way for Arab boats; but the

dhows (that is their name) have only short distances to travel. They have the darkness of the night on their side and thanks to it, they often escape pursuit.

Thus it is that we still find slaves so pressed together that they seem to form one solid mass, closed up in dark holds, where, to hide them from patrol vessels, they are suffocated, covered up by anything that will disguise their presence. Slavers go so far as to sew them up in the sails or in sacks, and thus bound, dying of hunger and thirst, the living attached to the dead, smallpox and leprosy completing the unspeakable process, the survivors will finally people the harems of the Muslims of Asia.

But the sufferings and the death of so many human beings is not yet the worst thing. The worst: it is the social dissolution which is the consequence, because to maintain the hunt they have to nourish the divisions, the hostilities between the black chiefs and change into a frightful disorder the patriarchal way of life they followed.

What is to be done, then, faced with such a spectacle? One famous word sums up the feeling with which I would want to galvanise you all. It is the word of a king of Belgian Gaul, born near your ancestors, perhaps at Tournai, where his father died. Clovis, then, while being instructed in the Christian faith and told the story of the Passion of the Saviour and the cruelties of his executioners: "Ah, he cried out suddenly, drawing his sword if only I had been there with my Franks!" Sons of Clovis, Belgian Catholics, Jesus Christ is crucified again on the plateaus of Africa, in the person of these millions of blacks. The cruelties are no less great; the abandonment is the same; repeat, repeat the word of your ancient king and be there with your courage and your faith.

II

What practical action am I coming to ask of you?

Allow me to state precisely the conditions and to show you how nothing is more simple in itself nor more effective.

In my past conferences, in France and England, I had to restrict myself to general views because, there, the hour for decisive action did not seem to me to have arrived. I contented myself to exposing my principal thought, which is that it is on the European governments that falls the duty of suppressing slavery in the Africa of which they have taken possession, and that only if they default should private associations be employed. With you, it is different. You are faced with provinces in agony, to repeat the word I have already used, when speaking to you of the Upper Congo. It is imperative to come to their aid without delay, and to act, not tomorrow, but today, under penalty of seeing everything perish. For the rest, by responding to this appeal, you will be responding to the desires of the King, and not only to his desires, but indeed to his laws. To prove this to you, it is enough for me to read these two articles of the constitutive Act, approved by him at Berlin, for the foundation of the Congo State, and accepted thereafter by all of Europe, as a basis for the Constitution of the new African States.

Here is Article Six of this fundamental Act:

"All the Powers which exercise rights of sovereignty or influence in the said territories commit themselves to seeing to the conservation of the indigenous populations and the betterment of their moral and material conditions of existence, and to work together towards the suppression of slavery and above all, of the trade in blacks: they will protect and foster, without distinction of nationality or religion, all the institutions and enterprises, religious, scientific or charitable, created and organized for these aims."

And now here is Article Nine, even more explicit about the obligatory abolition of slavery:

"In conformity with the principles of the right of peoples, such as are recognized by the signatory Powers, the trade in slaves being forbidden and the operations which, on land or at sea, furnish slaves for this

trade, likewise having to be considered as forbidden, the Powers which exercise or will exercise rights of sovereignty or influence in the territories forming the conventional basin of the Congo declare that these territories cannot serve either as market or as transit for the trade in slaves of whatever race. Each of these Powers commits itself to use all the means in its power to put an end to this commerce and to punish those involved in it."

All one could desire is there: the formal prohibition of the trade, the punishment of those involved in it, the freedom and protection of all the Christian undertakings established to abolish it. In France and England, I made reference to the conventions of the Congress of Vienna and the Congress of Verona, where Belgium was not represented, moreover. Here, I do not even want to mention them. The constitutive Act of the Congo is even more formal.

But, with such a law, how do you explain these devastated provinces, these miseries of the blacks, which are such, as an English writer expressed it, "that you do not find anything at all like it under the sky." How, my very dear brothers? In a very simple way, but one which, sadly, falls again partly on you. The fact is that those in government cannot do everything; their resources, no matter how abundant they may seem, run out; finally, when they have done all that their resources allowed them to do, they stop, out of a principle of wisdom and distributive justice. For them to have fulfilled their duty, it is enough for them by the action taken to have indicated the objective and shown the path of honour. When they have done all they could, it is up to the peoples to compensate for their glorious inability, and when it is a matter of a religious work like this, it is up to the Catholics. And you, Christians of Belgium, remember the Saviour's parable: "Cum autem dormirent homines."

Not being able to do everything at once, having obtained too little from you, all the efforts had to be concentrated on the Lower Congo, leaving, for a time, the Upper Congo without a single Belgian administrator, and so for a while abandoning in practice this portion of the Independent State to "the enemy." Thus the darnel could be sown; but, faced with this mounting tide of blood, I come, as Pastor, to do what no other can do and to cry out to you with the Apostle: "You must rise from this sleep" which would henceforth dishonour you.

This appeal, I address it, from this pulpit, to the public opinion of all Belgium, that its voice make itself heard; to those in authority, that they take the truly effective and truly simple measures which could put a stop to it all; to the young men, that by their personal dedication they support the measures decreed by the authorities; to the charity of Christian, that they take enough from their surplus to allow these new crusaders to reach the battle front and, if necessary, martyrdom.

My first appeal then, is to public opinion. It is the queen of the world. Sooner or later, it forces all the powers to follow it and obey it. But, here among you, public opinion has not yet spoken enough.

Can you accept, Belgian Christians, to hear any longer, without shuddering, the echoes of these butcheries? Can you accept that thousands of human beings be thus reduced to slavery, deprived of their freedom, the first gift of man, dragged far away to the markets where they are in agony, heaped together in dark boats, dispersed to the four winds of the Muslim world, mothers separated from children, each one from another, to be used for shameful debauchery? Can you accept that entire provinces be depopulated?

Let us reveal all. Do you want to carry dishonour in the face of history? Do you want God to call you to account one day for the blood of your brothers? Do you want him to say to you on the Day of Judgment, as he warns in the Gospel: "Away from me! For I was oppressed and you did not come to my aid; I was enchained and you did not deliver me; I was tortured and you did not have pity on me; they shed my blood and you let it flow."

Ah! No doubt, you could reply, as He suggests Himself: "And when, then, Lord, did we see you oppressed, enslaved, bleeding?" But it will be enough for Him to say, to confound you: "It is with the blacks, with your blacks, that I have suffered and that you have abandoned me."

Finally, my very dear brothers, have you forgotten, as St. Paul teaches you – it is the rule of Christian solidarity – that when one member suffers in this immense body of humanity, all the others suffer with it? Have you the sentiment of liberty, dignity, the greatness of our nature? Where were you born that you accept to fall asleep under the yoke of slavery? People of Belgium, you are the last, it seems, to whom such questions can be addressed! The love of liberty, noble human pride, you have shown them on every page of your history, and if you are today a free people, enjoying all the rights of conscience, you owe it to the horror of servitude and to the blood you have shed for your independence!

I do not want to believe that these sentiments of indifference exist in the heart of a single person among you, when it is a matter of the sufferings, the enslavement and the death of so many millions of men. So it is to you that I appeal. You have a voice; let it roll out like thunder till it is heard. It is above all to those who speak, every day, to their country and to the diverse factions that constitute it, that I address myself at this moment. Members of the Belgian press, whom I am happy to see in this auditorium, I know what, on other points, divides us and what separates several of you from me. But on this matter there can be no divergences; this cause is one of those on which we are all agreed, for it is the cause of pity, justice and liberty. Be the echo of the plaintive voices that reach you from beyond the seas. They are those of two million men who perish, every year, on the whole surface of Africa. Imitate your brothers in England. I arrive from that great country. I, a Catholic Cardinal, spoke in the midst of Protestant listeners, in this costume which, a century ago, would have been covered with their boos; but doubtless, in this purple which covers my shoulders, they saw the blood of an entire continent for which I came to implore their pity, and they surrounded me with their sympathy and their respect. I do not know of a single London newspaper which did not join its voice to mine. It will be the same in your Belgium!

If an entire people can speak, it cannot as an entire people displace itself and go and fight. It needs volunteers who offer themselves and fight on its behalf. Those are the ones I look for now among you.

But before I speak to them, let me first protest against a conclusion that has been falsely drawn because I spoke of fight and proposed a crusade. It has been said: "You ask for the use of force and, consequently, a new shedding of blood! Till now, it was the hand of the Arabs or their auxiliaries that shed it; now you want, in addition, the hand of Christians." In truth, if this calamity was necessary temporary, I would not withdraw from such a painful necessity; for the blood being shed in torrents till now is innocent blood, the blood of the little ones and the weak, and now the blood of the executioners which should be shed is the blood of frightful criminals.

What I am asking for, besides, is just the contrary, and here I dare to give the advice of my humble but long experience to those who exercise authority. It is easy for them to make the ongoing shedding of blood in the interior of Africa impossible, taking an infallible measure which only depends on their will. It is the measure that France successfully took in its Muslim colony of Algeria. Due to it, peace has been kept between so many diverse races. This measure is to remove from the Arabs and the half-castes who are in the interior, the right henceforth to carry weapons.

One day, a Muslim slaver was asked how he penetrated into the heart of Africa and who was sovereign of that land. "The sovereign of the African interior, he replied showing his rifle, is the powder."

Never was a reply more true and if those who govern these immense territories did not understand it, they would see barbarity reign there.

Therefore, prohibit the carrying of firearms, and consequently, of powder by the Arabs and the half-castes who are the only ones in Africa who hunt slaves, punish them if they do not submit, with immediate

banishment, that is all the blood that I ask. The arm of princes has no doubt the right to shed it for the security of society; but the Church can never do it, and according to the maxim of one of our holiest French bishops, it is in knowing how to die, not in shedding blood, that the religion of Jesus Christ has established itself in the world.

I repeat: forbid Muslims, in a State, moreover, where they are only foreigners, to carry the arms which they put to this horrendous use, banish them if they disobey; and, in a short time the whole interior of European Africa would be rid of three or four hundred demons; (know that they are not more, in total, in all the African interior), who, assisted by blacks, they have formed and drag after them, oppress it, render it desolate and cover it with human blood. I say the same for the negroes trained in assassination, and what is more, if I had another authority than that of prayer, I would not allow anybody to carry arms in the Belgian Congo except those having the mission to do so, or at least, formal authorisation from the State. That is a principle of public right. In Belgium and in France, it is applied even to those who merely hunt innocent birds; and in Africa, by a lamentable aberration, it would not be imposed on those who openly take part in this infamous hunt!

It is now that I address myself to you, young people who would want to join this crusade. To ensure the execution of a measure of this sort and thus bring peace, the Government of the Congo needs a force to support it, not to shed blood, as you have just seen, but on the contrary, to stop the bloodshed. We cannot hope that the Arab slavers or the half-castes, that the Negroes they drag with them, will obey the law and disarm themselves. There needs to be a force besides them which inspires fear in them and makes them obey.

If Belgian troops could be legally sent to the Congo, they would be sufficient for this role.

But your Constitution forbids it, and we cannot hope to have any Europeans other than volunteers. So it is necessary to find, among you, valiant Christians, ready to sacrifice all, even one's life, to stop this blood that flows like a river. It is necessary that, out of love for humanity, they renounce the joys of family, country, their Belgium, to go in the name of their God and put an end to so many and such frightful miseries.

Where can I ask for them more confidently than in this country of Christian generosity? In effect, I have no human compensations to offer them, no dignities, no honours, no riches, but only the reward that God reserves for those who have sacrificed everything for their brothers: that is to say, the ineffable joy of having saved the life of a fellow-being, at the cost of his own life. To save one person, that is already to merit this pure joy; but to snatch millions from such a death, what would that not be, especially at the final moment.

At present, moreover, I ask only for a small number of these heroes. One hundred is enough to deliver the provinces of Upper Congo. The regions that must be saved, besides Manyema and Tanganyika, send their slaves at present to the shores of the Indian Ocean and the markets of Ounyanyembe. It would be enough to close the caravan routes to the slavers; it would be enough to render the continuation of their trade impossible. Now, Lake Tanganyika, with its five hundred kilometres, is enough to block the way if it is well defended. It only needs one armed steamship on its waters, some highly mobile troops at its extremities, and for that, a hundred Europeans is enough, adding to them, to form regular militias, blacks already Christians or catechumens from our missions.

A need of volunteers without reproach

But if the number is small, the quality, on the other hand, must be excellent.

Hear this, young people. It is not a matter of sending into the midst of the blacks men who are looking for adventure or who are fleeing the consequences of those they have had. The cure would be more

dangerous than the illness. Immorality, indiscipline, scandal, for all of these soon go together, would accompany these pretended volunteers and we would see the disorders that have devastated America for a long time. What are required, then, are men who are worthy, not just by their courage and their energy, but also and above all by their virtue, their faith, their life entirely above reproach, of such a noble mission.

Furthermore, complete and precise regulations will soon make known all the practical conditions for these undertakings.

I add that the former Zanzibar route, so disastrous for our first missionaries, can henceforth be replaced by a shorter and more convenient route to reach the high plateaus. By the Zambezi River and its tributary, the Chire, one can reach by boat, without fatigue and without the fever-prone forests, as far as the north of Lake Nyassa; and once there, one is on the plateau itself of Tanganyika, where the air is pure, the climate temperate, the route even. And that is why (European travellers no longer threatened as in the past by the loss of some of the men) one can limit oneself to a number sufficient, with the help of Christian blacks, to stand up to the Arab traders or half-castes of this special region, who surely do not number one hundred, and cannot do anything without the blacks they enrol.

But, the dedication of our Christian volunteers being free, and having no relationships with the State apart from obedience to the laws that the latter will see fit to establish, and to its sovereign authority, the volunteers will receive nothing from it. On the other hand, your King cannot, without being imprudent and unjust to his own people, add anything to what he has personally done already. So they must receive everything from the Christians, and it is on that matter that I ask you, all of you, Belgian Catholics, as worthy reparation for past sleep, to share generously in such a noble enterprise.

It is you who must, at this point, provide what is necessary for these crusaders of mercy and pity. This very day, I am opening a general subscription, from this pulpit, and I write my own name at the top, despite my poverty, in my position as Pastor. When I come down, I will go and give my offering to the parish priest of St. Gudule. I make a special appeal to your newspapers, asking them to print in their columns, when the time comes, the key names of all the contributors. This will be like the Golden Book of this new crusade. One finds today, proudly, on marble or in our histories, the names of the ancient crusaders. Your descendants one day will read, with the same joy, the names of these new crusaders. The first list will be published in eight days. From now till then, I ask all those who wish to set the example, either to give to the parish priest of St. Gudule or to remit directly to me, the contribution they want to make. I point out to them that it must not be just an ordinary almsgiving, and that to equip, arm, send to Africa and there maintain soldiers, requires a considerable sum. For a troop of a hundred men and the purchase of the steam ship they will require on Lake Tanganyika, at least a million is necessary. No doubt this is a lot to ask for; but one will find it is little when, with this million, one can save a million human creatures.

And now I will add nothing except that, in Brussels, a National Anti-Slavery Society is going to be formed, consequently composed only of Belgians, all known to you for their high sentiments and their patriotism. It will be free and independent, like the one in England. It is this Society, which, by a directing Council and Action Committees, will decide the requirements for enlisting; it will lay down the internal regulations which, for good order, will be imposed on the volunteers; finally, it will receive the offerings you subscribe to and disburse them according to its votes, so that everything in this undertaking will be truly national as much as Christian, and that, consequently, as I ask God, the blessings of heaven will come on the whole Belgian people.

I have been long, my brothers; but one speaks at length (especially the old men) of those one loves, and I love the poor blacks, whose Pastor I am.

Just a last word to finish. When coming just now to this church, I passed before the statue of this great Godfroy de Bouillion, who was the head of your crusaders of another age. I remembered that when he set out to deliver the Christians of the Holy Land, oppressed by the Saracens, and to avenge the Saviour's tomb, he was followed by eighty thousand Belgians, led by the Counts of Flanders and of Hainaut, and all the illustrious members of the chivalry of the time. I remembered the enthusiasm of their faith, their abnegation, their sacrifices, their sufferings, their death. But, at the same time, I recalled their glory. Would Godefroy, despite his piety, have this name in history, and would you have erected this statue to him, in the centre of your capital, if he had not sacrificed everything, in a spirit of sublime faith? "God wants it! God wants it!" said he, with all his faithful people; but he was speaking thus of a Master who does not let himself be outdone in generosity, and who rewards, as only He can, those who have sacrificed everything for Him. It is the same reward he reserves for those who participate in our new crusade, and as pledge of this reward, I give you all, at this moment, in the name of the Vicar of Christ himself, whose humble instrument I am here, my paternal blessing. Amen

6. Letter to the President of the Congress of German Catholics meeting in Fribourg-en-Brisgau, 28th August 1888 (Extracts)

His health prevented him from responding to an invitation to take part in the Congress of German Catholics. He, nevertheless, sends a letter where he insists on the harmful effects of the slave trade which completely disrupts all African societies and on the duty to restore order and prosperity for all. Once again, he adapts to his audience by taking examples from German History.

... As long as Europe was unaware of the vile deeds that today have been revealed to it, Catholics in the various States could do nothing about them. As long as they were not interested in the situation in virtue of the new sovereignty that their countries have acquired, they had no special duty in that regard. But today, not to act would be cruel; even to stay silent would deserve condemnation.

... It is not necessary to send numerous armies down there... What they must attempt, in effect, is not to occupy everywhere in one go or even to go everywhere, but simply to erect barriers everywhere the caravans must pass to reach either the public markets of the interior or the secret markets of the coast... It is these same troops who would have the duty of applying the law of disarming the Muslims and the half-casts as they appeared with their human prey. In a very short time, Africa would be cleared of the brigands that oppress it... I speak only of the heart of Africa. The populations there are pagan, the Muslims till now have penetrated there only in very small number...so there are only five hundred Muslims at most to disarm and send back to the countries from which they came; but here it is necessary to recall the words of Cameron (the English explorer): "It is not by discourses or writings that Africa will be reborn but by deeds."

... Stopping the slave trade, and using force to do so, is necessary to save the population in the pagan regions of Africa; but the evils of slavery do not end there. I have already said, the most deplorable effect of the slave trade is not merely the destruction of human life, but above all the absolute disorganization of the original social order that existed in the interior of Africa. The bonds which linked the inhabitants of these savage regions in a common order were no doubt elementary but they were real. They were those of patriarchal families. Today, as result of the Muslim invasions, of violent capture, of the flight of populations, of the arming of so many blacks to make them serve as auxiliaries in the banditry, everything is up in the air on these high plateaus formerly so peaceful. Order, authority no longer exist there, and to save them, the social order itself must be reconstituted.

That is the fundamental work of the Catholic anti-slavery societies, once the shedding of blood and of human life has been stopped by force which alone, I will never repeat it enough, can now put an end to it.

Doubtless part of this work of reconstitution could be done by the preaching of the faith, as happened in all the barbarian regions. Whatever one may say, the majority of African tribes are very capable of an intellectual, religious and moral culture. For me, according to the testimonies of my own missionaries in all the tribes where they are established, and they are the only Catholic missionaries present till now on these high plateaus in the heart of Africa, the populations of these high plateaus, who are the authentic type of the African, offer the greatest hopes in this respect.

I do not speak of what we have seen, scarcely two years ago, in the Christian community of Uganda, where the harvest of the apostolate germinated and ripened almost at the same time, and in such conditions that numerous neophytes, almost children, did not hesitate to shed their blood for the faith. Leaving aside these circumstances where the intervention of a force superior to that of man is visible, we have found in our blacks seeds of intellectual and moral progress that we did not expect.

That, it is true, I repeat it, is the special objective of the Propagation of the Faith; it is for that it receives our contributions.

But there is another side of this question of social reconstitution which is material almost as much as religious. It is not enough, as I have said, to make slavery impossible henceforth; we must draw together these scattered sheep, and give them, through cohesion, security, confidence, the example of work. Nowhere will people be better able to understand what I am saying than in your Germany where, after the barbarian invasions had destroyed the former Roman organism across all the frontiers, when the whole of Europe was covered in blood and abandoned to disorder, one saw centres of peace and light arise here and there among you. It is around your monasteries, lit by the holiness and genius of St. Benedict, that people came looking for security and rest. It is there that the truly ancient social life was reborn, with that incomparable character that the faith gave to the institutions of the Middle Ages. That is what must be done in our Africa, to repair the evils of slavery and restore it to life; it is the logical crowning of the armed expeditions. The work has begun in fact, in the regions closest to the coast by a German foundation (O.S.B. of the Congregation of St. Odile). But it had already begun in the interior.

One saw, one sees at this moment, around Lake Tanganyika, the miserable remnants of neighbouring populations, so cruelly dispersed, come together again around our missionaries. These, at the same time that they teach the children to understand the Holy Gospels, show the fathers how they can live in peace through work. Here I pay homage in this respect to Brother Jerome Baumeister (a White Father Brother of the diocese of Wurtzbourg)... He trains the blacks in work, he teaches them to build houses in stone, strong and lasting, instead of miserable huts. He pays attention to the slightest details. He has created a herd of cows, calves, a butter and cheese-making factory, in a little agricultural colony of blacks at Kaboua, that is to say, at 10 km from Lake Tanganyika and from Kibanga (north west of the lake) because there is no fear of the tsetse fly at that place. What has been happening? Little by little, negro fugitives have grouped themselves around the missionaries and the farming Brothers. Every day, new blacks arrive, knowing by experience that, near the White Fathers as people call them, slavers leave them in peace. And thus a population of several thousand souls has already grouped itself there where ten years ago, was only a desert.

Those are the foundations we must multiply. I say the same for the agricultural orphanages for orphaned or abandoned children. One could do there what is already being done at Tabora, in Tanganyika, and what the Fathers and Brothers of the Holy Spirit, had already undertaken, the first to do so, at Bagamayo.

To sum up, once the first task is finished, that is to say, the trafficking ended, such is the crowning achievement that the anti-slavery Society I desire so much to see erected could bring about in the German region of east Africa...

7. Extracts of the letter of 4th November 1888 to the Anti-slavery Committee of Cologne

Some time later, he writes to the Anti Slavery Committee of Cologne, where he underlines the root of the evil: The Law of Supply and Demand. The evil is so deep that a concentrated action of all the Christian nations is called for.

The root of the evil: The Law of Supply and Demand

As long as one can find a large enough number of these unfortunate blacks for sale at the high price one finds today in the Muslim countries, that is to say, 750 to 1,000 Francs per slave, depending on distances, the slavers' greed will know how to overcome all the obstacles and continue this shameful trafficking in human beings. It is, in effect, an established economic law that merchandise (and, in slavery, man is nothing more than merchandise) is offered when there is a demand for it. If, then, one continues to demand negroes from Africa, she will continue to provide them... No people (European or other) will be capable on its own of stopping the trafficking by force, even in just the regions dependent on it. Suppressed on one side, it will be reborn on the other. If, on the contrary, the Muslim countries no longer ask to buy blacks, the interior trafficking will fall of its own accord... Now, to overcome the resistance, open or hidden, of the Muslim governments, the common agreement of all the Powers interested today in the civilization of the various regions of Africa, that is to say, of your Germany (and the other Powers) is indispensable. If the nations are divided, nothing satisfying or complete will be achieved and all the sacrifices made... will be inefficacious. I insist, then, on the agreement of all the Christian peoples represented in Africa at this time...

8. Conference given at Rome in the church of the Gesu, 22nd December 1888

In order to avoid repetition, we are not repeating here the first two parts of the lecture where the Cardinal describes the African slave trade. On the other hand we are reproducing the beginning of the third part where the Cardinal stresses the reasons for his pleas and proclaims his righteous anger.

The reasons for his pleas

If I cannot treat this grave question with all the details it would require, I will at least say what is necessary, and will try to make up for the rest by a clarity that, I hope, will enlighten your minds.

And first of all, is there any obligation for the Christian peoples, for you Catholics, in the measure possible, to come to the aid of populations so cruelly, oppressed?

On this point, there cannot be any doubt to the eyes of faith. It is the law itself of love, of Christian solidarity, that is to say, of the whole Gospel.

Not only does this law oblige us to love one another as brothers, it teaches us that God considers done to himself what we do for those who weep, for those who suffer, for those whom injustice or force hold in irons. It teaches us that on the last day, it is on this precept that God will judge us, calling to himself, for an eternal recompense, those who came to his aid in the least of men, condemning, driving away those who refused to come to his aid. You cannot be in any doubt, then, that Christians, learning of the sufferings of so many human creatures, have the obligation, formal and absolute, of doing whatever is in their power to help them.

I have already expressed myself to the other Christian nations of Europe, on this sacred obligation. Nobody has called it into doubt, no son of the Church has denied it.

But in the crowd that has gathered from all parts to fill this church, there are perhaps people who do not believe as we do, and I want to address myself to them nonetheless, in a cause which concerns the whole of humanity. Slavery, as it is practised in Africa, is not only, in fact, opposed to the Gospel, it is contrary to

the natural law. That is what our great Leo XIII affirms, with a freedom and a vigour that have never been surpassed, in his Encyclical on slavery: "Contra quod est, dit-il, a Deo et a natura institutum."

Now the laws of nature apply not just to Christians but to all men.

That is why I appeal to all, without distinction of nationality, or party, or religious confession. I do not appeal just to faith, but to reason, to justice, to respect, to the love of freedom, that supreme good of man, as our Pontiff has likewise said. No doubt I am pleading this cause today in a temple, and before altars, but I am ready to plead it everywhere. I have pleaded it in Princes Hall, before the English protestants, in salons, before philosophers, before non-believers, and always I have found in people's hearts the echo of the sentiment expressed by the ancient poet: Homo sum, et nihil humani a me alienum puto (Quote from Terence: Heautontimoroumenos, v. 77) **I am a man and nothing of what is human is foreign to me.** It is a cry that came out from Rome and which, also, has its echo through the whole universe. I am a man, injustice towards other men revolts my heart. I am a man, oppression fills my nature with indignation. I am a man, cruelty against so many of my fellows inspires nothing but horror in me. I am a man, and what I would want done to give me freedom, honour, the sacred bonds of family, I want to do to restore family, honour, freedom to the sons of this unfortunate race

What I say of individual men, of each of you, in particular, my very dear brothers, I say it of peoples, and I am only interpreting their heart-felt wishes, I know, crying out to the four winds of heaven every day: "Enough blood! Enough vile captures! Enough tears! Enough children taken from their mothers! Enough men torn from their villages, from the peace of the domestic hearth, to be thrown at the discretion of a cruel master into the shameful practices of debauchery! Enough, not just in the name of religion, but in the name of justice, of solidarity, of human nature and of the One who has engraved his law in our heart.

But we must go further and affirm our duties towards civilization itself and world progress. God has imposed them on us, by placing us on earth. If he has, as our Sacred Writings say, handed the world over to our free investigation and dominion, it is that we work to improve it and to embellish it, and each of us is called to do it within the nation of which he is the son. But it is not a matter here of a single people. It is a matter of a whole continent and that in circumstances where Africa is the necessary complement of countries where the population stifles henceforth, within too narrow limits, hope of a commerce to which such rich regions promise the natural produce of the soil, and will one day ask in return all that our manufacturing and industries produce.

It is a quarter of the terrestrial globe that a fanaticism, increasing daily, is trying to separate from us for ever. Absolutely no doubt! I repeat; in the ancient world, there is no people worthy of the name, there is no man worthy of the name who would not understand the duty of this crusade of salvation, of mercy, of pity, of progress, of civilization, of justice, who would not understand that this duty is imposed upon him by the name man and by the order established by God:

Homo sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto. **I am a man and nothing of what is human is foreign to me.**

9. Allocution pronounced on Good Friday, 19th April 1889, in Algiers Cathedral

The harmful effects of the slave trade are compared with the Passion of Jesus

In his sermon, on Good Friday 1889, the Cardinal does not content himself by just describing the harmful effects of the slave trade, he compares it with the Passion of Jesus, and so develops the Christian motivation (and not just the humanitarian one) of his commitment.

Given the responsibility, as I am by the Holy See, of pleading the cause of the poor African slaves, I thought that nothing was more likely to appeal to your pity for their sufferings than to place them, today,

under the protection of the memory of the Passion of the Saviour... They, too, these slaves, continue their painful passion, delivered over to vile torturers who hunt them on all sides like wild beasts, who subject them to the most atrocious tortures, to captivity, to the shame of a nameless debauchery, to death. I know what one could say about the sad degradation where they have fallen during so many centuries of barbarism; but I also know that nothing can justify the frightful sufferings they endure. Should they even be capable, moreover, of the brute behaviour that their oppressors attribute to them, we would have to say again of them, as Our Lord did: "O God, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing!" ...

Remember, My Very Dear Brothers, what I have just been revealing to Europe. Since about a quarter of a century ago, more than twenty million victims have been delivered into slavery and to the most horrible death. When I drew the picture, following the accounts of explorers and missionaries, I roused horror everywhere. I have been able to calculate, following eye witness accounts, that two million human creatures disappear in this way every year. Do you hear that, My Very Dear Brothers? Two million men, creatures like ourselves of God, that is to say, about five thousand Blacks, massacred, captured, sold, each day, if one counts the victims of all of Africa (Equatorial, East Africa, Western and Eastern Sudan, Morocco). That is still not enough. Massacre and fire are everywhere. It is the destruction of a whole continent. And yet, despite the cries of indignation of all that merited, on earth, the name of man and that of Christian, these horrors continue and multiply...

O God, has history ever seen such an excess of infamy? And if I wanted to say all, if one day I wanted to unmask the hypocrisy, the names which hide themselves, the cowardice, the impious calculations, the ambition of the one, the inhuman indifference of the other; what a cry of horror and condemnation in the civilized world!

There, then, for an entire unfortunate race, is the cruel Passion of the Saviour truly renewed. All its elements are found there. I could point them out one by one. Nothing is missing, neither the Herods, nor the Pilates, nor the Judas, nor the cruelty of the scourging, nor the cowardly insults, nor the cross.

Never has anything in such abominable proportions been seen. In Jerusalem, Calvary was the summit of a hill. It bore only three crosses. In Africa, it is an immense continent. Blood is flowing everywhere, from the veins of millions of Blacks, mixed with the tears of mothers whose children are massacred before their eyes. Cruel abandonment is practised, deliberately, even shamefully preached by some who hold that one can allow to continue, without feeling disturbed, something that has been going on for so many centuries and who are not ashamed to declare it to the world! In the African interior, the cry of despair of Calvary arises from every breast: "Why are we abandoned?" And, sadder still, we begin to detect, even in the heart of Europe, greed, debauchery, hatred ready to join forces for the continuation of this long martyrdom. In their own way, that is what not only the Muslims of Turkey are doing, but those moreover who have undertaken to defend slavery, for love of gold, or perhaps out of opposition to our faith. Their lies, their stories, their sophisms seem to defy shame, in order to reconstitute, as one saw in the struggles at the beginning of this century, the infamous Party of the Slavers. (1)

But we, since the Passion continues so cruelly in our Africa, I beg you to surround with your pity this new Calvary, in remembrance of that of Christ.

... I read, on the day of your Compassion (Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, formerly the Friday of the First Week of the Passion), O Mary, the hymn which the Church addresses to you to unite herself with you at the foot of the Cross and there invoke your help (=Stabat Mater). In almost every word, I found there encouragement for my hopes, by the very similarity of the sorrows of your Son to those which the Blacks, your adopted children, suffer today. They, too, are attached to the cross, and what a cross! From the temple we have erected for you on the shores of the Mediterranean (the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa), it extends to the other extremity of our continent. Everywhere the negroes are attached to it and die there

in their atrocious torture (At this point, Mgr. Lavigerie paraphrased and applied to the Blacks three verses of the Stabat Mater.)

(1) "This Party is promoted by the Muslims who hope in this way, by deceiving public opinion, to keep the profits and the debaucheries of slavery; by the traffickers of every nation who make their fortune through the commerce in human flesh, with its yearly profit of two hundred million; by the enemies of the Church, who aim at preventing it from thus achieving the finest work of humanity and of civilization of this century. They find accomplices at every level, even among those usually considered honourable, from a Greek Minister in Turkey, who dared affirm in a public letter that the sale of slaves no longer existed in the Turkish empire, to a former French Ambassador who, claiming to base himself on his title and sentiments as a Catholic, openly advised the Catholics of France to abstain in the question of slavery and to reject the repeated calls of the Head of the Church for the abolition of slavery."

... Such, then, my Very Dear Brothers, are the sentiments and the thoughts which must fill your hearts and mine, at this moment, as we hold before us the memory of the Passion of Calvary and of the Passion of Africa...

Doubtless you will pray without distinctions for all the regions of Africa, far and near, where the horrors of the hunt, the sale, the bondage of man still exist. You will pray especially for the regions which are our neighbours and over which our influence spreads more particularly; towards which, in consequence, we have a more sacred duty of charity and justice to fulfil.

One day I will speak to you at length about that, in a special Instruction that I am preparing for that purpose, and I will show you that, while England, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, because of their own interests, have precise duties to fulfil elsewhere, which do not fall likewise on us, we cannot forget that the infamous practices which dishonour and devastate Africa are nowhere more frightful than in the Sahara, the Sudan, at the borders of our possessions in Senegal, Algeria, and the Protectorate of Tunisia.

If the use of force is not yet possible for us or if political jealousies oppose our action, prayer remains for us. It does not know obstacles. It is free, like our faith, and finds the way everywhere to reach the very heart of the God of Calvary. Let us all together, then, make it resound beneath the vaults of this church. They are draped in black to remind us not just of the Passion of the Saviour, but also of the death that hangs over Africa and of the destructions that threatens it....

10. Letter of 8th November 1889 to Leopold II, king of Belgium

In this introduction to 'Documents on the foundation of the Antislavery Work', Lavigerie deals more with the legal aspects of his campaign. In order to avoid criticism coming from Muslim states, he adds interesting distinctions between domestic slavery and the actual slave trade.

The first and the most serious difficulty that arose, for such an organization (the Anti-slavery Work having a single international Committee or Council) was having to face the diversity of interests and political views, relative to Africa, between the diverse nations of Europe. Since the beginning of this century, our continent had been the object, on the part of the civilized peoples, of generous attempts to introduce the light in these barbarous regions. There was only one means to succeed in this, that of ensuring direction, and consequently, sovereignty or protectorate... But if the European governments have so done and are ready to make considerable sacrifices, they expect to draw future benefits from it. This gives birth to interests which must be taken into account and about which the governments and the peoples are rightly concerned. Therefore it was difficult to think, without running the risk of regrettable rivalries and competitions in the very heart of the Work, of forming a single Committee or Council comprised of representatives of all the peoples, as is done in other faith or charitable Works...

The national Councils... are therefore independent of one another; it is in their respective nations that they each seek and find their resources... What is held in common is the thought of abolishing the African trafficking and slavery, which gave birth to the Work itself, the thought of civilization and fraternal solidarity, which maintains and preserves the bonds of sympathy between the various Committees... The antislavery Work is based exclusively on the ground of humanity and religion, it pursues no objective but charity and justice.

Slavery exists in all its forms in Africa: trafficking with its manhunt and public markets, indigenous and traditional slavery and, under the name of freedom, the "Free workers", that is to say, subject to the yoke for a time instead of being so for ever...

I propose to introduce gradually the necessary solution, to prevent the spread of this slavery, without creating chaos, to make whatever atrocity is in it disappear...

Slavery as it exists among the Blacks, is nothing but a tissue of cruelty and infamy. There is no master more barbarous for the slave than the black master. He claims for himself the right to inflict every form of torture on him. Sitting high up in the pulpit of St. Gudule, I made the Belgians who surrounded me shudder as I described the atrocities committed in the Congo. I spoke to them, quoting the statements of witnesses of their own nation. I have cited other examples no less odious...

I must add that if today the Christian nations have, on this issue, broken with the last traditions of the past and no longer accept within them either the sale, or the transport, or even the presence of slaves captured by the trade, the same is not true of the Muslim nations, despite very clear texts (General Act of the Conference of Berlin, 26th February 1885, art. 6 and 9)...I must, however, make a distinction here between the slavery as it exists among the Muslims, where it has a gentle character, and that which existed formerly in pagan antiquity, and even in our colonies. I know it, for I have been a witness of it for a long time, and I have said it publically even in our churches.

For I am determined to render full and open justice to a population of which I am not the pastor, it is true, but with which I have been in relationship in the East and in Africa for many long years...

Distinctions between house slavery and the slave trade as such

Among the Muslims, slavery has a character of gentleness, and I dare to say it, of family, which resembles neither the horrors of the slavery of blacks in the interior of Africa, nor even those seen in the colonies of America just a few years ago. Among the colonists of the New World, slavery was hard, sometimes ferocious. In the families of the Ottoman Empire, it has quite another character which it holds from the prescriptions themselves of the Koran and of its principal commentators. Thus one often sees slaves not wanting to leave their masters, even when they can, as in Algeria or Tunisia. Their work is moderate, their treatment less severe than it is for the workers in most of the towns of Europe; the attachment between masters and slaves greater than in other regions; marriage, legal adoption, between masters and servants frequent.

But although slavery may be gentle and tolerable among the Muslims, at least in the Turkish Empire and in Egypt, for the same could not be said of the Sudan and Morocco, it is certain that it gives rise in Africa to cruelties and horrors without name by maintaining trafficking and manhunt. The existence of slavery is recognized by Mohammed but only for captives taken in war. Mohammed directs that slaves be well treated and recommends the setting free of slaves as an act especially pleasing to God. The Koran does not approve the separation of husband from wife, nor children from parents (as happens openly in the markets of Morocco)...The mutilation of children for the harems is a crime against God, against human nature and the Koran forbids it...

The Antislavery Work requires that, in conformity with the precise text of the General Act of Berlin, help and protection should always be given, by the Powers, to the works it undertakes and to the personnel it employs, whatever their nationality or character, religious, scientific, or charitable, to achieve the abolition of slavery and, later, the restoration of a regular social order in the interior of Africa...

I myself and the Work appeal not only to faith but we address ourselves to reason, to justice, to respect, to the love of freedom "this supreme good of man" as Leo XIII said (Encyclical "In Plurimis", 5 May 1888, to the bishops of Brazil on the abolition of slavery in their country). .."I am a man, and nothing of what is human is foreign to me." Injustice towards other men revolts my heart, the oppression, the cruelty against such a great number of my fellow beings; what I would like done to restore to me freedom, honour, the sacred goods of family, I want them done to restore to the sons of this unfortunate Africa...

...Our Work, by offering each one the means, while serving the honour and the interests of his own country, at the same time to serve those of all humanity.

(In addition to money, volunteers are needed but) "I hasten to say it, however, this crusade cannot and must not be other than a peaceful crusade. It is not a matter of organizing a ragtag armed expedition to make a conquest or engage in battles; force is needed, soldiers are needed not to engage in combats but only to maintain order, to prohibit brigands from using arms, to block the route of slave caravans. If I had dared the word, from the very first day, it is a sacred police force that I would have requested for the interior of Africa..."

11. Speech given on 1st September 1890 in the church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, on the occasion of the opening on an anti-slavery congress

The content of this address differs from the previous ones where the Cardinal aimed at mobilising public opinion. Here, he gives an account of the campaign and its fruits.

"A Domino factum est istud, This is the work of God." (Ps.117)

At the very beginning of this address, my dear brethren, I chose the above quotation from the Psalms so as to characterise in a word, the results achieved so far by the Anti-Slavery campaign whose Congress I have just opened.

Presence of a witness

Please allow me to apply them today to an unexpected coincidence which will surely touch your hearts as it has mine. God sends us at the opening of this Congress consecrated to the salvation of Africa and dedicated to the abolition of slavery, one of its most zealous apostles, together with the first fruits of his apostolate – fruits which are also those of our Work. Mgr. Livinhac arrived yesterday unexpectedly at Marseilles after a long journey. He is accompanied by some young black people who wished to follow their pastor even to the country from which their freedom came. Bishop Livinhac has been able to join us in this solemn gathering.

You are aware, my dear brethren, how worthy he is of your veneration. Consider his twelve years of apostolate accompanied by so much wear and tear; consider the many journeys he has made with so many adversities. Remember his courage and the good he has done. Mgr. was arrested during a cruel persecution when a large number of his neophytes died around him. He was shorn of all he possessed, confined in a narrow prison, yet at the same time finding the strength in an admirable way to practice catholic charity. Much like Clovis did in yesteryears, Mgr. was able to bring the barbaric king, the same who had persecuted him, to the faith and restored him to his throne. All these factors have come together in this apostolic career, to arouse your interest, your admiration. At the same time, seated beside this young and holy prelate, is the venerable superior of Saint-Sulpice, a true confessor of the faith. He had

been arrested by wicked people, and because of his fidelity to the Church, threatened with a cruel death. Thus it is, that I see before me, this venerable man who was the master and the guide of my youth, together with the pious bishop whose father I am. May they both allow me to recall what St. Cyprian, that great Bishop of Carthage, repeated everywhere in his letters and writings, that according to the Church's ancient discipline, confessors remitted Christians from the debts contracted by them in God's sight. With this in mind, I ask them to pray for me, together with all the faithful, that my words will prove efficacious.

The Church had already triumphed against a similar scourge

Two years ago, on the orders of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, I went into this same pulpit to begin a peaceful crusade against the African slave trade. I recalled, then, that the Church on two occasions in her history, had already triumphed against a similar scourge.

On the first occasion, the struggle lasted for several centuries. I reminded you that the pagan world was victim to the passions of a small number of cruel masters who ruled over humanity, treating it like a beast under the yoke. But, although alone and without any power other than that of justice and truth, the growing Church was not afraid to throw the cry of deliverance to this oppressed multitude. The Church taught them that the name of slave must disappear from people's language, because, as St. Augustine was later to explain, this name is one of a punishment (*Nomen servi, nomen poenae*), and if humanity was given over to so many cruelties and infamies, it was because it had abandoned the way of justice; but Jesus Christ, in expiating our crimes and obtaining for us heaven's forgiveness, freed us from man's slavery by freeing us from the slavery of sin.

This is a true echo of the Apostle of the Nation's teaching, which the great bishop of Africa taught us in his turn: "You are free; Christ has freed you".

But, if this truth was proclaimed from Christianity's very first days, mankind's passions were slow in giving up this sacrilegious prey to evil. It was only little by little that justice, abnegation and charity were to triumph. Twelve centuries after Jesus Christ, the Church, through the voice of its Pontiffs, its saints, its great adherents, worked to extinguish the final traces of that greediness which kept up the existence of slavery.

Once this struggle against paganism ended, there arose another, in a sense even more odious, because it was to be found among Christians themselves. This began after the conquest of the New World. It lasted for three centuries and has just finished, in our own days, by the abolition of slavery in Brazil.

But at the very moment when we received assurances of this latest victory in the memorable Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII to the bishops of that nation, a third crusade against slavery has begun. This time, it is against the existence of slavery in Africa. It was in this very pulpit that I made this known, in the name of and by order of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

The present campaign

And so it has come about that once again I am in this pulpit in the name of the Pope, not after ten centuries relating to slavery in the time of the pagans. Neither dealing with slavery in America. But after a brief two years to rejoice with you that the civilised world has generously taken up the noble and holy cause against slavery in Africa by accepting the struggle against this modern-day slavery and so guaranteeing its triumph. Faced with such a result, I can only repeat the words of the Psalm which I opened this speech with: "This is the work of God – *A Domino factum est istud!*".

On the occasion of the opening of your Congress against Slavery, I want to explain what has been done for this great work up till now, and what still remains to be done.

This Church of Saint-Sulpice reminds me of the most memorable circumstances of my priestly life. More than forty years ago, on the floor of this very sanctuary, through the sacrifice of my youth, I offered myself to God and to work for the good of souls. On this very altar I celebrated my first Mass together with the bishop who had just ordained me; and now the Church of Saint-Sulpice will remind me, during the short time I still have to live, of a new and no less dear memory. It is under this very roof that I preached for the first time, about the crusade destined to entreat the pity of all Christians for the black races of our Africa. I thank God for the effectiveness he has given to the voice of this old man, and the grace he has given me in allowing me to plead this cause, at the end of my career, in the same place which has been his birthplace.

What I have said for the first time about African slavery, has been a revelation for many. Truth to say, however, the explorers' books had recounted at least part of the evils besetting our continent and the Academies were conversant with the situation. Newspapers and official publications had calculated the number of executioners and their victims. Returning travellers from Muslim countries repeated that they had seen the number of black slaves multiplying, whilst the number of white slaves were diminishing in the Turkish Empire, in Egypt, in Morocco, in Tripolitania. But it seemed that the attitude of the civilised world was that of complete indifference.

In this situation, several weeks before I spoke to you for the first time in this place, a voice made itself heard. In truth, it was the voice of an old man speaking out as he neared the end of his life, but it was that of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. At the very moment when he sent his Encyclical Letter to the bishops of Brazil to congratulate them on the abolition of slavery, and to encourage them in their work as fathers and shepherds which they would have to accomplish in their turn, so as to warn against the disorders of a social revolution, the Pope learned from afar, the horrors which brought about a river of blood throughout the interior of Africa, caused by the Muslim slave traders.

He was aroused by what he had learned and recapturing the thoughts he had just expressed in his Letter to the bishops of Brazil, he condemned in a rare strength of style and of thought, in a communication addressed to the missionaries, to the bishops, to the princes, indeed to the whole world, the untold crimes which had struck the world with astonishment and terror. With an energy which had never been surpassed by his predecessors, he declared the African slave trade to be contrary to the natural law, not least to that of religion. He begged, he ordered that everyone, using the triple authority of his supreme ministry, his old age and his social authority, to fight against and to suppress such a scourge.

But one letter did not suffice. We have seen this in the world's history, likewise in that of religion. We know what the Prophets did, who wrote nevertheless in God's name; their teachings did not go beyond Israel's borders. It needed that God who became man should speak out himself to change people's hearts. The Holy Father wanted then, in addition to the words of his Encyclical, that there should be a living voice, a human heart, as Scripture says. He looked for these where he hoped to find them. I mean to say, people who are deeply affected by the spectacle of so many tears, the cry of children torn from their mothers, the lamentations of so many Rachels. And to better show that he was only obeying a supernatural inspiration, this magnanimous old man chose for such a ministry, another old man whose voice and strength was already half broken by fatigue.

The itinerary of Lavigerie's preaching

And so I came among you. I began among you by honouring my country in the first of my speeches and sermons. This I did in order to recognise the most ancient aspirations of France for freedom and justice.

From Paris I went to London where the groundwork had also been well prepared by England's traditions. It's Anti-Slavery Society provided the touching sight of two Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, speaking to a gathering made up mostly of Protestants who applauded their words. When we had finished, they petitioned the British Government to contact other European Governments to join in suppressing and

ultimately destroying the slave trade in Africa. I had emphasised the importance of taking this action. To see what has been done, it is enough to re-read the text of the resolution that the Prince's Hall meeting presided over by Lord Granville finally adopted.

The same success can be noted in Brussels where Catholicism is strong, and elsewhere in Holland, Rome and Milan. The Catholics in Spain, Portugal and Germany lost no time in taking action following on what the Vicar of Jesus Christ had to say about slavery in Africa.

Indeed, whatever I had to say came from the Pope. Likewise any action I took. Through his letters, his Papal Briefs, his supreme generosity, he encouraged me in my work. For more than two years, he has never forgotten this great Work we have undertaken and recently he sent me a Papal Brief of congratulations concerning what had been achieved by the great powers at the Brussels Conference. This Brief encouraged us to continue what we had undertaken to raise public awareness so that people would do their utmost to hasten the abolition of African slavery.

A tangible sign of his fatherly blessing, is the presence among us of the Pope's eminent representative in France.

The Holy Father has a constant solicitude in this matter, but what practical steps does he propose to attain this end and consequently to ask me to carry through? Surely it must be action worthy of his wisdom and his great political mind. In the last audience I had with him confirming my mission, the Pope said: "More than ever, public opinion is paramount, and it is there that you must work on. You will only meet with success by raising public opinion on this matter". The Bishops, especially that of France, allied themselves to the Pope's thought. They echoed the voice of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. I have received and published in my turn the warm and supportive letters from all the Cardinals, the Archbishops and nearly all the Bishops of France, declaring their adhesion to the crusade ordered by the Holy Father.

Some members of the Hierarchy expressed this in most eloquent terms; all accentuated apostolic charity and indignation, declaring that they associated themselves to the initiative and exhortations of Leo XIII. This is the opinion held by all those I have addressed myself to. You can re-read all my speeches. I do not have the time to quote them here, but I will have this speech printed as I have all the preceding ones, and I will add there my own words. You will see there what I have already said in England:

"The obligation to save Africa must be a primary obligation – this is not to contradict the governments in Europe. And why should these same governments not want to do this? Is there any other work which is more noble, greater, more generous? What can be more important than consulting among themselves and agreeing among themselves on how to end such dreadful evils?"

And I added: "But for those who have taken up the cause – if they do not make their voices heard among the governments with sufficient strength – governments which have other cares – they must force these governments to listen to them. They must be forced to listen to, in the words of Montesquieu, the cry for mercy and pity. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that the cry must be pushed to the forefront by all concerned, with such strength that one is forced to obey it".

At the same time as I renewed among the most important of the princes of the time, the appeal made by the Holy Father to governments, I addressed myself to everyone, even to women, in order to entreat them to bring their influence to bear on the entire population.

I said: "Christian women of Europe, it is for you to make known everywhere the horrors of the slave trade and to awaken against these same horrors, the indignation of the civilised world. Do not give any peace to your fathers, your husbands, your brothers in this matter. Force them to use the authority they have by using their eloquence and their situation in the State, to stop the shedding of blood among your sisters. If God has given you the talent to write, use it to support such a cause. You will find nothing more holy. Do

not forget that a woman wrote the novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, which, translated into all the various languages worldwide, put the final stamp to free slaves in America.

But I have especially appealed to members of the Press, without any distinction of nationality, religion or political adherence.

From this very pulpit, I spoke to French journalists, thus": I wish to make a request to you all: in order for such a cause to triumph, it must be made known far and wide. You, who have heard me, help me to make it known. Repeat the details I have given. If you have a powerful voice, if you have at your disposal one or other of these press organs which form and influence public opinion, it is to you that I especially dare to address my prayer. Journalists, you have a delicate and important task, but who among you has never made mistakes which should be erased? Whichever public opinion you belong to, and here I address myself to all without distinction, on the one condition of having love for humanity, love of freedom, love of justice, love of mercy to be used in supporting the poor black people, you will in your turn, one day obtain infinite justice, mercy and forgiveness".

Gentlemen, today I can but thank you for everything you have done, and I offer my thanks without any distinction to those among you who have contributed in popularising our cause and thus assuring its victory. The day following my first revelations from this very pulpit, the entire Paris press unanimously repeated what they had heard from my own lips.

It does happen that some sides make use of information received for their own advantage, particularly when Church-related matters are concerned, and these get mixed up with initial signs of sympathy and approval of what has been said.

You have been able to read for yourselves what has been said on this subject, as indeed I myself have done; but if representatives among the most hostile of publications are present today in this great audience, please allow me to state that I have only kept in mind their invaluable service to our cause. The conspiracy they have been able to hatch against our cause, is the conspiracy of silence. In a Work such as ours, attracting public opinion is all-important. If, then, you wanted to attack me personally, many thanks. Gentlemen, that will be to my personal profit for eternity; but, thanks again that in speaking out against me, you have served to support the cause of the slaves. Basically, all this has produced results in its own good time. Appealed to by England, governments have not been able to resist the manifestations, with public opinion growing each day more general and more pressing.

The official Acts of the Brussels Conference

What has been achieved by the European powers meeting at the Brussels Conference? Those among you who have read the official Acts of the Conference as I have done have been able to give a report on proceedings.

In a word, the great powers present at the Conference have discussed, accepted and consecrated, at least in principle, all the measures we have asked for, in the name of religion, in the name of nature, in the name of pity. When one knows all the public or secret difficulties opposing such a result, one can but admire it. More than man's hand was needed here. The hand of Divine Providence was at work here. *A Domino factum est istud.*

I was trembling when I first read the official Acts of the Brussels Conference which had been graciously sent to me. I was afraid I would find there insufficient or perhaps hostile measures to carry out our wishes. But having finished reading the Acts, I wanted to start again, but this time I did so having first of all thanked God that all the Catholic, Christian, dissident, and even the Muslim governments had agreed to follow the inspiration of the Conference, heading their declarations with the sacred name of God.

They declared first of all and without hesitation that to succeed in such a work, it is a prime necessity to use force, armed force. I had said the same thing myself. Faced with what is happening on a continent, victim to a violent greediness which does not draw back from the shedding of blood, only armed force can end such horrors. Those who rejected the use of force in order to ask that one should limit oneself to persuasion and gentleness, were mistaken. Leo XIII was not mistaken. From the very beginning he called for the use of force by Christian leaders. Following this, we called for the same action to be taken by governments, independent associations, by individuals, and this in spite of the rare opposition which arose in some quarters. Everywhere we proclaimed the same necessity in France, in England, in Rome, in Brussels. And the great powers have thought along the same lines as us.

From the word "go", the slave trade must be cut off from its source, in other words, the manhunts must be stopped. In their final report, the great powers present at the Brussels Conference decided to establish forts wherever this terrible form of hunting takes place, in order to suppress by force, the fury of slavery. But more has been done. A decision was taken to suppress this evil at its very roots, by prohibiting, as we have called for, the entry of arms and gunpowder into that part of Africa dishonoured by the existence of the slave trade.

The savage bands of Arabs and half-casts forced the unarmed population to flee into the interior of the continent, to bend under the yoke of slavery, to confront the flames and smoke of their ferocity, until the time came when they could do nothing else than fall desperately into the hands of the slave drivers. Some, such as the elderly were immediately killed, whereas young men, children and women were dragged along under the yoke to wherever they could fetch the best price. All this, since the beginnings of the slave trade, carried out by the use of firearms. I have often repeated the words of an African chief, who, when asked who were the rulers of the interior of Africa, replied: "Here it is gunpowder."

The great powers have thus decreed the following clear law: "Without their authorisation, no arms, no gunpowder, can be introduced into the interior of Africa, unless it is for the same powers' own soldiers or those of the volunteers who will assist them in the suppression of the slave trade.

But laws, even the best, can be violated: this is more often carried out by ruse, violence, the greediness of barbarians. The Christian authorities have reacted against this. Each of these violations must henceforth be punished by the Christian authorities with the same rigor as they would do in their own countries. Unjust attacks, manhunts, rape, odious mutilations which increase the price of a slave when it comes to selling him, are to be punished in the same way as carried out in France, England, Belgium, indeed, in all the civilised nations.

Doubtless, such punishments will terrify, but they are not enough to prevent all the evils, so long as there remain on the African coasts places where this human merchandise can be sold, in order to provide satisfaction for ingrained habits of laziness or debauchery. It is a law of social economy that merchandise must be offered for sale when there is a call for it. So, efforts are made to supply, as long as they are accessible, the slave markets secretly established in the Turkish Empire, in Tripolitania, and openly in Morocco, Sudan, even up to the frontiers of Algeria and in the Saharan Oases.

It is necessary, then, not only to place obstacles, materially, in the places of origin of this trade, but to keep an eye on wherever caravans are formed, and where they pass through. Routes they have hitherto taken must be blocked and the same goes for routes planned for the future. In addition, forts must be established in key positions and patrols must be authorised to stop these godless caravans. Both victims and those who drive them must be stopped, and both must be taken to the coast, to the very dhows by which this infamous commerce is carried out by sea. The Muslims must be forced to close the markets, even the secret ones, which still exist in their domains, and the police in Europe must be given the right to keep an eye on the Muslim police.

I called for these measures to be taken when I pleaded myself on behalf of the slaves. I have said that this trade must be stopped at its origins, at the places where the slaves are embarked, during the voyages of the Arab boats, at the approaches to the markets. This has now taken place, not only on Lake Nyanza and Lake Tanganyika, as I called for, but at all the salient points in Africa. The great powers have agreed to grant their protection and their support to all the undertakings of organisations founded for the suppression of the slave trade, likewise for the undertakings of individual initiatives.

But to think that the members of the Brussels Conference stopped there, is to misunderstand their high motives. In addition to the necessary force which must be employed to allow for the necessary action and the security of such civilizing works, they directly appealed to these same works themselves. First of all they listed them: government, science, industry, commerce, education, and finally the Christian missions for which the great powers promised freedom and protection.

Like myself, you have seen that our Holy Father the Pope, inspired by the Holy Spirit, having acknowledged the means adopted by the great powers, means which included measures of force, reminds us that we have another duty to perform, that of making known the name and laws of God among those who are ignorant of them: *Hi in curribus et hi in equis, nos autem in nomine Domini.*

He addressed himself to me in a recent Brief, that I should make known to all the Societies which evangelise Africa: the Lazarists, Jesuits, Holy Ghost Fathers, Missionaries of Lyons, Missionaries of Algiers, Capuchins, his desire to see multiply, if possible, the number of missionaries for such a vast Work, in spite of the difficulties of the sad times in which we live.

We must count on Catholics opinion

Such is the Work decided on by the great powers. If they hold to their resolutions and promises, and public opinion has a major role to play here, and it is especially among Catholics that we must count on, there is no doubt that we shall meet with definite success. Such success will not be achieved in one day, and we can say that to attempt to achieve an immediate result on such a large scale, would not even be good for Africa which already has its own social traditions, and to destroy these too suddenly would throw the continent into chaos. The principle is thus set down. It is in the process of being carried out. If it is maintained, as I have no doubt it will be in spite of Netherlands' momentary abstention, to which, in the name of all the civilised world, we launch a final appeal - slavery will one day be abolished in both its domestic forms and that of the slave trade and the commerce of human beings.

So as to better guarantee the end of such infamy, our Work has decided that following the example of the great powers in political matters, to divide the work and to attribute it to each of its Committees. If, in the political order, the great powers had aimed at working together for the civilizing of Africa, but at the same time ignoring any distinction or separation, this would have led to confusion, to rivalry, to useless struggles and perhaps to disorder worse than that of the primitive barbarism. Wisely they have agreed to impose limits proportional to the action taken by each of them within the territory over which they exercise their own influence. The anti-slavery campaign began at the Berlin Congress. The Work is now accomplished without any of the strife that, in the world of today, we had so much reason to fear. Study the most recent maps of Africa. You will no longer find there any barbarous region which is not adjoined to one or other of the regions of Europe. Belgium with its Congo, England and Germany in the Eastern regions of Africa, Italy in those of ancient Ethiopia, France in those areas which were called to complete its dominions from the Mediterranean up to the Atlantic.

The political transformation of Africa hastened by the European Nations

In these diverse countries, each nation remains independent, and can work there for its own interests, at the same time carrying out work for all. The political transformation of Africa has thus been hastened,

without violent upheavals by the two passions which carry along the people with them most nobly and efficaciously: love of humanity and love of one's own country.

For the very beginning, this double thought has been that of the great Pope who has appealed to our dedication.

He wished with everyone's free cooperation, without any distinction of nationality, to bring about that abolition of the scourge of slavery, stigmatised by all the civilised nations. It will be one of the most noble of history's spectacles, that in two years, following on what this grand old man said, such a resolution has been proposed, taken, proclaimed in the Final Act of the Brussels Conference, through the nations' vote.

But the same thing could have been for our crusade as it would have been for the political division of Africa if, after all of us being united in a common enthusiasm in calling for solemn promises from the great powers, we had not divided ourselves into spheres where each of us must take action.

In anticipation of its actual situation, our Work was divided into as many Committees as there existed different nations which interested themselves in a practical way in the future of our continent. Each of these Committees has to be concerned within Africa with the regions dependant on the nation to which each region belongs. Doubtless, all the Christian governments of Europe keep the freedom to use in their domains within Africa the help which is spontaneously offered to them no matter from whichever side it comes from. English, American and French people offered their services to Belgium. On behalf of Belgium, Stanley twice crossed Africa. In his area, for ten years, our own heroic Joubert courageously arms the African population living alongside Lake Tanganyika so as to keep the peace with his small troop of soldiers, and to guarantee the safety of our missions against the slave traders in that place.

The great powers have opted for providing freedom and protection to all those who present themselves in order to assist in the destruction of slavery: that is to say, properly constituted Societies, isolated individuals, missionaries. The Work of the Anti-Slavery Committees, set up under our auspices and those of the Holy See, wish to work for their own countries, that is to say, after God and the poor black population. United in heart in a common thought which is that of the cessation of Africa's evils, we have, in thus serving both religion and humanity, the desire and the will to serve each of our own countries in the region which is specially handed down to each country, in bringing about the end of slavery. The English in England's territories, the Germans in those of Germany, the Portuguese in those of Portugal, the Belgians in those of Belgium, the Spanish in those of Spain, the Italians in those of Italy, and finally, because I am today speaking before a French audience, the French in those of France.

The members of the National Committee of France know the new field that Providence opens to them, after so many others. France did not wait for the present time to begin the conquest of Africa. She came before nearly everyone in this immense duel between civilisation and barbarism. She has, for more than half a century, worked in Algeria, in Senegal, in the colonies of the Atlantic Ocean, and more recently, in Tunisia. But between these countries which for a long time belong to her on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, still remains an immense region, as large as nearly half of Europe and where slavery rears its ugly head with more cruelties, perhaps, than in the rest of the black continent.

In the Sudan, where the Muslim princes have elevated slavery to a state of a public institution, with their "nègres du trésor". In the Sahara which serves as a place for the export of slaves and of neverending caravans, with untold barbarities inflicted on slaves destined for the slave markets of Morocco, Turkey and Tripolitania. It seems that behind the doors we have opened widely to European civilisation, to its commerce, to its art, to its industry, to its faith, an insurmountable barrier has arisen in the desert solitude. In order to reach the shores of the Mediterranean where we are the masters, and where from here, it takes just two days thanks to the progress of steamship travel, it is necessary, in order to enter the Sudan which offers us so much hope with its numerous population, its natural products, its silver and gold

mines, to skirt round half the continent and come back up the Niger. This is an expensive journey full of countless dangers, whereas, a railway would allow us, in a four-day journey, to open up to our France, to Europe, the final depths of Africa.

How many times have I heard our soldiers regret that from the very beginning, they have not been allowed to push their conquests even further. As for myself, how many times, arriving after crossing the plains already invigorated by the gallantry, the discovery of a country's wealth, the engineering feats of our soldiers, I say this with some sadness, to see it all limited by the desert. In front of us now, and as far as the extremities of Africa, are millions of souls, people without number plunged into, and never having the possibility of getting out from, an abyss of evil. And this in the midst of a tropical splendour provided by nature. What separates us, then, are these arid sands. But one day with the marvels of modern industry, we could conquer the deserts and cross them in less time than it has taken me perhaps, to come from Algeria to this place. I would add: O God, may this one day be the work of France!

With this thought in mind already twenty-two years ago, I wanted to prepare for the taking of a Christian possession of these lost regions. With his ardent courage, Pius IX had the same viewpoint, and a Pontifical Act dated 6th August 1868 placed under the special jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Algiers, the deserts of the Sahara and all the regions of the interior of the Sudan which stretch beyond the missions already constituted on the Atlantic Ocean, with the mission to prepare the road to Christian liberty and to the Gospel.

What Lavignerie has done in these immense regions?

I have done what the Church does. The same Church which Our Lord describes as "the Sower": *Exiit qui seminavit, seminavit*. I have sown there that which the Christians sow, as Tertullian puts it, when they wish to guarantee eternal harvests. I have sown there with blood, the blood of my sons, these same White Fathers whom you see at this very moment surrounding this pulpit. Six among them, in addition to those who have been killed in the other regions of Africa, have suffered martyrdom under the blows of the barbarians, and have fallen there whilst blessing their executioners.

How could I forget them today, in this parish of Saint-Sulpice, to which the first of them, like yourselves, belonged from birth, my dear brethren, and from where, six years before his martyrdom, he left to begin his training among us for the tough life as a missionary.

In France, the various forms of dedication for such a conquest destined for us by Providence, have been united as one: science, charity, even the army has left for more than a quarter of a century in the desert, traces of their blood-soaked heroism. And that, thanks be to God, has had to be avenged, because the honour of France and the army was in question, and it is not permitted for a people, especially a Christian people, to dismantle her honour. But sadly, there has been a certain hesitation until now. And so, when the newspapers made known that, through an agreement drawn up between the great powers in Europe, the Sahara and central Sudan, have just been recognised as belonging to our sphere of influence, I regarded this act as the providential revenge for so many sacrifices.

But what has been done is nothing more than the daybreak of what has still to be done. Now must come the real work. For this that once again I am appealing to the French National Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society. Its members are aware, as always, that objections have been made. But for those who have studied the issues and the elements of their material and moral solutions, these objections have already fallen by the wayside.

If you read what has just been written by one of our most honourable, capable and experienced generals, an engineer worthy of that name (General Philibert M. Rolland), there remains just one question of duty and honour. With a leader who is equal to the situation of such an enterprise, a leader who knows how to be careful and to look after others, one would see all the obstacles disappear. Doubtless, are not the most

experienced among our soldiers who have taken part in the African campaigns convinced that two hundred French troops, provided with up-to-date arms and assisted by native auxiliaries for the purpose of looking after the material service of the military convoys, able to triumph over every kind of hostility offered them by the ferocious populations, who, not having arms permitting them to offer a serious resistance, and moreover who lack water, are unable to gather in great numbers.

I am speaking according to those who know and to whom as a mark of my absolute confidence, I have proposed to follow them, despite my age, in order to guarantee the help of my ministry for such an expedition.

But after such necessary force, to which I can only offer the support of my prayers and my good wishes, must come the work of civilisation and of peace. I can only encourage the Anti-Slavery Committee to enter into this.

It does not suffice to force the Tuareg into submission; this is the work of our soldiers. Hearts must be won over. And in this connection, how many useful things must be done. The education of tribes reduced to the most abject misery by centuries of oppression, ungodly struggles and all the resulting disorders that these struggles leave behind; wondering tribes having lost all the traditions of work and reduced, in the midst of never-ending hostilities and having only one way of living: that of pillaging, assassination, selling slaves, more frequently and more atrociously and this at our very doors. Life must be brought back to their oases by looking for water which is thought to have disappeared; agriculture appropriate to the soil must be restarted; children must be educated; the sick must be cared for; refuge must be offered to fugitive slaves.

This is the part I have reserved, as you know, to the Anti-Slavery Work in the African Sahara. I do not speak, even to our missionaries, about preaching the Faith. This must not be started in the midst of Muslim populations. Hearts must be won over first of all, and overexciting fanaticism must be avoided.

Close to the settlements where our soldiers will have raised our flag, I will place there, God willing, centres where charity can be dispensed, work found, and help given. My own personnel have already begun this. The house where these are to be trained is ready on the borders of the desert. I call on all those who are prepared to join us, not to conquer the Sahara by force of arms as some have thought they might do, but to make loved the name and influence of France. If such a sentiment inspires our country in this way, it is good to bring it about.

My dear brethren, such is the Work we are faced with. The collection following this speech is for this end. It will be taken up by these missionaries, my sons, the White Fathers, who have accompanied me right up to the steps of this pulpit and who replace me in criss-crossing such a vast audience. Give them your offering as a sign that you approve of what we are going to do in the Sahara. Parishioners of Saint-Sulpice, do not forget that it is the harvest of blood shed by a child of this parish which is going to germinate, thanks to your offerings, and, if you cannot, follow in the generous footprints of your martyr, show at least, that you are worthy of understanding his heroism.

Bishop Livinhac as Successor

Dear brethren, I end my discourse. It is the last discourse that I will give in France. For a long time I have become aware that I am growing older. I feel that infirmities and fatigue are preventing me from doing more because of my worn out strength. Your presence in this church at this solemn time is a sign of what I have just said. (He speaks to Bishop Livinhac)

I have obtained from the Holy Father that he will release you from the links which join you to the Apostolic Vicariate of Lake Nyanza, so that I can use your zeal, virtues and talents which you have received from God for the work of leading, under my authority, during my life-time and as my successor the

missionary works which have been confided to me. The great Leo XIII, to whom I have been happy to give all my life, has deigned to grant my petition. My Lord, you arrive today. Doubtless I am not the Prophet Elija, but I place on your shoulders, as those of another Elisha, the mantle which I can no longer carry alone. Henceforth, your work will be to replace me in France and within your congregation, to plead the cause of our missionaries and our Works, to hold out these same hands which have been chained for the love of Our Lord in our Churches, and to make them hear this voice which has confessed Jesus Christ.

As for myself, I am going to return to Africa never to leave it again, and if God pleases, to leave me enough courage to face up to my years, happy in the knowledge that I have given my all to work for the sanctification of the Father's sheep who have surrounded me for more than a quarter of a century, and to end my life in looking for the lost sheep.

My Lord (the Nonce), the living memory, the great figure who has animated this discourse, is that of the Great Pope, whom Your Excellency represents among us. It is from him alone that I hold my mission and which I now hand over to this young and generous apostle. He is the one who must bless us through your venerable hands and humbly I ask this, for this faithful people who kneel before you.

Amen.

Chapter Three

The White Fathers and the White Sisters against Slavery

Introduction

The Cardinal did not, directly, involve the members of his two congregations in the antislavery campaign. This consisted of alerting and mobilising public opinion. Using his fame and prestige as Cardinal and Primate of Africa, he put in a lot of energy to raise awareness among his contemporaries. He did not, or very rarely, involve his missionaries.

On the other hand, he urged them very strongly, and on many occasions, to commit themselves with all their strength, not to fight directly against slavery, but to rescue the victims, to come to their aid, to invite them to become Christians and even Apostles.

This Chapter aims to recount some of the actions of the Missionaries Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters) and the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)

The section dealing with the White Fathers is twofold:

- a) A global presentation that enables an understanding of the ins and outs of this enterprise.
- b) Some extracts from Diaries

The section dealing with the Sisters is more analytical and describes what happened, from day to day, in the life of the mission.

First Part:

The White Fathers and Slavery

A/ General Presentation

This presentation follows quite well the text written by Father François Renault who prepared it for the 1980 Chapter.

The first aspect, under which Lavigerie tackled the problem of slavery, was the redemption of slaves sold on the markets of southern Algeria. He saw to it that, in 1868, the title of Apostolic Delegate of the Sahara and Sudan was added to that of Archbishop of Algiers. That same year, he founded the Society of Missionaries of Africa and a few years later he sent his first communities into the villages of southern Algeria right on the edge of the Sahara. It was through the reports and stories of these first missionaries that he discovered, for certain, the importance of these slave markets. Spontaneously, his instruction to the missionaries was to do all in their power to free these men and women. Not having much power, it was evidently impossible for the missionaries to act on a big scale, so they gave priority to the redemption of children and young people, with the idea, subsequently, of providing education and training for a profession with a view to helping them to reintegrate into society.

These perspectives expanded with the sending of the first missionaries to Central Africa. Lavigerie had already read the books of the explorers which informed him of the hard reality of the slave trade in the vast regions between the Indian Ocean coasts and the region of the Great Lakes in the interior. Very quickly, the reports of the first missionaries confirmed the reality of this traffic, emphasising not only its extent but also the inhuman acts of cruelty which went with it. The reaction of the missionaries was evidently to oppose this traffic, but very quickly, they realised that they could do very little to change the situation anyway. Therefore, they set about, like the missionaries in North Africa, to buy back, as many as they could, men, women and children. For the same reasons, as mentioned above, they gave priority to the freeing of young people and children. Soon, each mission post, though actually few in number, had set up orphanages to receive the freed children. From the beginning in Central Africa, Lavigerie had supported and approved the actions of his missionaries in support of the slaves. If the humanitarian and charitable dimension of these steps remained fundamental for him, he also had the view of a missionary bishop that in giving these young people, in Central Africa, a spiritual formation which would direct them towards the faith, they might be the foundation that would give birth to the first Christian Communities at a later date.

In fact, Lavigerie thought that the work of evangelisation would require a lot of time before bearing its first fruits. For him, through this work of liberating slaves, there was a real witness to be given for the respect of human dignity. At the same time, there was the building up of trust and an opening up to the Gospel. Therefore, he encouraged his missionaries, to redeem slaves, children in particular without, for all that, ignoring the adults, and to group them close to the mission. They were given education and an introduction to the Christian religion. In this way, Lavigerie hoped to create liberated households and believing communities which, side by side with the local population, would be able to influence and create a movement of trust and of openness toward the Gospel message.

It is necessary to see this approach in all the aspects that Lavigerie wished to give it. Indeed, he talks about this work of redeeming slaves 'as the basis and hope for all the rest'. What does he mean? For him, 'all the rest' does not simply mean evangelisation. By saving the slaves from the caravans in what were often inhuman conditions, by taking care of them and treating them as children that one educates for their own good and not as individuals to be disposed of at will, Lavigerie hoped to raise awareness among the people themselves, of the terrible horror of this scourge of which they themselves were victims. From a modern point of view one could perhaps consider that this method was tainted by paternalism. However

it is necessary to place it in the context of the mentality of the time and especially the perspective that the European world had of Africa. Effectively, it was futile, with the derisory means that were available on the spot, to think of fighting up front an institution that was deeply rooted in the traditions of the people. On the other hand, one could take out certain elements that could be used to establish the first Christian foundations and, in this way, to change the mentality of the people and so lead to a progressive disappearance of slavery. This is what Lavigerie called, 'bringing good out of evil.'

This practice of buying back slaves was not new in the Catholic world. It was found, but in very different circumstances, in the distant past in the work of redeeming captives who had fallen into the hands of the Berbers. In the 19th century, it was practised by other missionary congregations. In Egyptian Sudan, the Verona Fathers redeemed children that they sent to their communities in Cairo. There, they received an education which was at the same time religious and practical before they were sent home to take part in the apostolate. The Spiritans, established in Zanzibar and on the opposite coast (in Tanganyika), found themselves in an entirely Islamic environment. They did not have any other activity than redeeming the children from the slave caravans coming from the interior and to educate them. These children, on reaching adulthood, would be the founders of Christian villages which would gradually spread out and form a network emanating from the coast.

In demanding that his missionaries redeem slaves, Lavigerie was joining a well established Catholic tradition. On the other hand, he showed his originality in drawing up, within this general framework, a more precise plan, that of the doctor-catechists. Among the freed children, the more intelligent should be chosen and sent to an Institute, where they would receive a solid religious education as well as following higher studies in medicine. Returning home, their professional qualification, because it was particularly sought after, would allow them to go anywhere. The practice of their profession, done in a spirit of service, would favourably dispose people towards them and might even go as far as a fruitful apostolic mission.

To redeem slaves in order to create the first nucleus of future Christian communities and to train, from among them, doctors who would be, at the same time, apostles of the faith, was Lavigerie hoped, to implement a process that would gradually undermine the very system of the slave trade. However, even if that was to lead to its extinction in the long term, slavery, in the meantime, constituted a very real problem, not in the form of domestic slavery as such, but especially in the commercial reality of the slave trade. The violence, of all kinds, that it generated led to a climate of perpetual insecurity, rendering the population incapable of thinking of anything else other than their immediate needs. It was going to be necessary to re-establish order in these vast regions in a state of constant insecurity, as an indispensable condition for the thorough realisation of the project.

It was not the job of the missionaries to take responsibility directly for such a project. Lavigerie thought, at first, of creating a Christian kingdom. Such a kingdom to be sure, should lead to the suppression of people trafficking in all its forms. This formula turned out to be unworkable, but the problem remained. The solution was found in the organisation of super mission stations which would be able to provide for their own defence and to protect entire groups of people. Kibanga and Mpala were chosen. Kibanga mission station had an area of tens thousand of hectares comprising of a settlement, cultivation and pastures. It had 2,000 people divided into three categories; orphanage, a village of Christian adults, and some refugees seeking the protection of the mission and who were called 'followers'.

The orphanage consisted of children bought from the passing caravans. The Christian village comprised freed adults and the grown up children coming from the orphanage. They married among themselves, or for the boys, with some local girls. They had to follow the preparatory stages for Baptism as laid down by Lavigerie, a postulate and a catechumenate, and received the sacrament after four years, or longer, if it was felt that their motivation left something to be desired. If the daily life of the orphanage was naturally regulated, it was the same for the Christian village whose life was punctuated by a regular rhythm of

prayers, religious instruction, different works and relaxation. Christian morality was enforced, which led to all sorts of difficulties: breaches of monogamy, attempts to imitate the kidnapping practices of the slavers. When some wished to free themselves by escaping from these restrictions, they saw themselves being pursued and brought back to the village under military escort. One missionary explained that 'the missionaries had redeemed them, and paid the dowry for their wives, so, they belong to us according to the customs of the country.'

The 'followers' were not tied in the same way. They came, seeking the protection of the mission. They were able to leave when they felt like it. However, during their stay, they had to accept a certain number of conditions which opposed the usual practices of traditional life. The polygamists arriving with many wives were able to keep them, but the others could keep or only take one. Witchcraft and the use of slavery to pay debts were forbidden. All had to follow religious instruction but unlike the redeemed slaves, they did not have to follow the preparatory steps for Baptism.

These structures copied, in a certain way, those that existed in the region. The redeemed slaves belonged to the missionaries on the same level as domestic slaves. They were considered and considered themselves in this way. The 'followers' belonged to a temporary form of servitude, called 'fwasi', that is to say, men who placed themselves at the service of a rich man who provided, in exchange, for their upkeep. These links could end on the wish of one or the other partners. The mission found itself part of a complex network of bonds of power and dependence. This did not mean, in any way, a status of inferiority for the inhabitants of Kibanga. In the general context of life, an affiliation with a powerful man, -and the missionaries were considered as such-conferred some of his status, to the extent that, the redeemed slaves considered the 'followers' as savages because they were less dependant. The point of reference was not so much based on the amount of freedom held as that of security.

The security of the post was assured by the presence of armed militia who were initially foreseen for service in a Christian Kingdom and who now found themselves used in a much more limited role. They formed a little group with the responsibility of policing the mission and of its defence against incursions from outside. One was not able to leave this matter to local authorities whose rule did not generally go beyond the level of a single village and who were powerless. The missionaries were providing a supplementary role here.

This role was pushed much farther at Mpala, situated on the south west coast of Lake Tanganyika. This station was founded by a delegate of the International African Association, one of the organisations supported by Leopold II, with the official aim of exploration in Africa. The station Chief was not confined to this one particular activity. By a mixture of war and alliances, he had extended his influence over a territory that about the size of a French Department. He settled the disputes and received tributes from the chiefs as a sign of submission. When the Belgian King, Leopold II, stopped his enterprises from the eastern side of the Lake, where the communications with Mpala were set up, this station was transferred to the missionaries of Algiers. It was the same thing at Karema, which faced Mpala on the other side of the Lake.

The Missionaries found themselves at the head of a feudal structure that circumstances required them to maintain. This meant that a number of responsibilities demanded the use of an armed force. This was incompatible with the duties of a missionary and an appeal was made to Captain Joubert, who already knew Tanganyika where he served as a militiaman and who came back to settle there permanently. With him, a lay authority was established to look after the temporal power and so the preliminary plans for a Christian Kingdom took shape which was a dream of Lavigerie. The big difference was that a European took the place of a 'Black Prince' and the area was much reduced.

The two examples studied of Kibanga and Mpala appear to be different from one another. However, a common link can be discerned that can be summarised in this way: Adaptation to local structures and

customs while at the same time getting rid of the more extreme practices. An adaptation which could go as far as the ownership of domestic slaves, but eliminating everything that could reduce a man to be a victim of human trafficking such as the slave trade or make him a victim of unreasonable actions such as witchcraft. The methods used meant that the missionaries had to take responsibility in the secular world. Did this method facilitate the work of evangelisation? At Kibanga, 'the followers' had to follow compulsory religious instruction. Some attempts were made at evangelisation outside the mission station. The results were ineffective. At Mpala, an area comprising of a number of villages, was well disposed towards evangelisation but little was done to profit from this situation and pastoral visits remained exceptional and short lived.

The missionaries were too few in number, and completely preoccupied with the many practical jobs of organisation, that they did not have the time to undertake pastoral visits on a regular basis. In fact, Christian formation was confined to the redeemed slaves. The Tanganyika mission did not have any converts other than redeemed slaves before the colonial era. This was not without consequences for the future, because in the minds of the people living around the lakes, it was only the slaves who could 'pray'. The results seem a bit meagre. To appreciate the problem, it is necessary to understand the context in which the missionaries founded their work and how they laid the basis for future development. It was not a trivial matter.

Missionary work was proving to be impossible in these enormous regions because of the anarchy resulting from the activities of the Arab slave traders. These constituted a fundamental obstacle, which had to be eliminated. This required recourse to coercive means on a grand scale, of which only the political powers were capable of delivering. Lavignerie tried to provoke their intervention in appealing to the authorities in place, such as the Sultan of Zanzibar, then to European Governments. The appeals for help remained unanswered, so he resolved to take things in hand and launch a campaign, on a grand scale, against the slave trade in 1888. He had two principal aims: to whip up a powerful movement of public opinion and to prompt the formation of armed groups to be used to crush the slavers. The Anti Slavery Campaign was seen, before everything else, as a public opinion campaign which would start a wide ranging action for suppressing the slave trade. One important result was recorded in this area.

The attitude of Lavignerie and the White Fathers concerning slavery was clear. They saw it as one of the main obstacles to missionary work and the success of that work required its suppression. The problem, because of its importance, was tackled from all sides both internally and externally. Internally, it was tackled by buying back slaves with whom one might be able to lay the groundwork of the new Christendom, especially those of them, in the medical profession, who would be called to take important roles. There should follow, from their influence, a certain evolution in the minds of people which would have an impact on social structures where slavery would have no part. One was hoping to create the factors which would lead to its extinction. However these results would only be seen in the long term. In order to speed things up, it was necessary to deal with the matter externally, in protecting, as far as possible, the people from the raids of the slave traders. In making his appeal to the powers that had the power and forces available to do so, the Cardinal, in his campaign in Europe, quoted abundantly from the reports of his missionaries who were on the ground. This was their contribution to the Cardinal's campaign.

B/ Extracts from the diaries of the Missionaries of Africa

There are a large number of texts concerning slavery. We have selected those which deal with the region of Lake Tanganyika: Kipalpa was on the route of the slave caravans, Karema was on the eastern shore, and Mpala was on the western shore of the Lake. In fact, it was in these areas that our first confreres confronted this scourge. Moreover these extracts are more or less contemporaneous with the Cardinal's campaign.

Kipalapala, 4th January 1888.

A man from Sike comes to warn us that an Arab intends to bring an action against us at Tabora. This is why: In the last days of December, a young Mganda, about 16 years old, came to the house and stated that he wished to stay with us. I asked him where he came from and why did he want to stay. He replied that he had been treacherously sold to the Arabs by some companions. He was brought to Unyanyembe, but his master did not give him anything to eat, as food supplies were scarce. He sent his slaves away to find what food they could. This young man came to find us and he wishes to receive instruction. I accepted gladly, but in this sad country, there are precautions to be taken.

I brought the young man in. He is called Mkasa. He is brought something to eat. His emaciated face told us that he hadn't eaten anything for a long time. At the same time, I sent one of our men to get more information on Mkasa's story. That night, the envoy came back and confirmed all that Mkasa had said.

However, I advised Mkasa to go back to his master so as to avoid too much trouble and not drag us into the matter needlessly; because a master can recapture his slave anywhere he is found. Mkasa absolutely refused to leave; he preferred to risk everything and, no matter what the cost, to stay here. Again, I sent somebody to the master to ask what price he would sell Mkasa. He replied 'seven dioros' which was three times the market price.

Nonetheless, having decided not to abandon this child, I suggested to him that he should leave with Fr. Lombard who would be able to bring him home. Mkasa accepted this suggestion, and on the eve of the departure of the Father, he disappeared from the house. The Arab, knowing that one of our caravans was leaving for Uganda, and suspecting what we planned to do, sent someone to look for Mkasa at the house. I told him that I did not know where he went. From the proceedings at Kuikuru, Sike sent word that I had caused the defection of a slave and that the caravan could not leave. I sent an express message to Fr. Lombard to tell Mkasa to return if he was with him. Fr. Lombard replied that the young man was not in the caravan. I informed Sike and told him that the slave of whom he spoke was not with us and that, furthermore I did not understand what the Arab was claiming; he had been told many days ago that his slave was here, and he did nothing about it. He had no reason to make a claim on me now.

Mkasa returned to the house, he had been found, where I do not know, and beaten about 50 times with a stick. I tried again to redeem him. The asking price was going down: five dioros, but it is still too dear. Finally, after some days, the bargain is struck. The Arab fearing that his slave would be forever deserting to the whites took the decision to sell him for three dioros. The deal is struck and now Mkasa, to whom I have given the name Augustine, is happy here. He willingly learns his catechism. Only, it is best not to ask him to go to Tabora as he is very much afraid that he will fall into the hands of his former master. Let's thank God for having saved this unfortunate young man.

Karema, 29th May 1888

The Wafipas present us with two small boys and a tall young girl. All three were suffering from smallpox. To the astonishment of the people, we redeem them and send them to our hospital. It's almost certain that one of the little boys will die but being safe at the hospital, we have the assurance that he will not escape us. We will at least save his soul if we cannot save his body and so our property is not lost as some believe and say so.

Someone told us that the Wafipas killed one of their young slaves on the road. The only motive for this horrible crime was that this poor child, no doubt suffering from smallpox, was always crying.

Karema, 3rd September 1889

We have redeemed, at Mdewa, two tall young people; brought here a few days ago by the Wazougives. We have been hardly flattered to see our station transformed, obviously without our approval, into a transit site for the slave trade caravans. Well, at least, that gave us a chance to free some unfortunates who otherwise would have eluded us completely.

Karema, 14th November 1889.

The bandits of Upimbwe brought us a little caravan of women and children. Driven out by famine from their country of Ouwangwa, they were captured on the road. The children, carefree as they are at that age, did not seem to have any idea of their plight, but the women begged us, as a favour, to get them out of this pitiful situation where misfortune had plunged them. We agreed to their pleading, not without some misgivings, because many of them will, without doubt, be a source of trouble for us.

Karema, 6th September 1890

Two women captured at Marungu by the Wabendi, during the ransacking of the district where Kisabi was chief, fled to the mission. After long discussions and efforts, we reached an agreement to redeem one, but as for the other, they would not even talk about a price.

Father Dromaux leaves for Kirando where there are, at this time, many slaves to be redeemed. That his journey may be fruitful.

Karema, 17th September 1890

Fr. Dromaux is back, bringing with him, nine new redeemed slaves. He confirmed the arrival at Kirando of the Arab, Alei. The Germans are on the point of occupying Unyanyembe and Sike seeking to get the Arabs involved in a new adventure, is preparing to resist them.

Karema, 28th November 1890

Fr. Dromaux is back. He managed to break the chains of 61 captives. A good number of their unfortunate companions are dead of hunger at Kirando and many more will probably die.

He has collected the terrible details of the dreadful acts of brutality committed by the barbarous hordes of Makutubu, either from the redeemed slaves or from those who were on the expedition. Independently of the men killed in the numerous battles which took place in Kizabi and the surrounding areas, Makutubu, when he was taking the road to Tanganika, wished to get rid of all those who could slow down the journey. Consequently, he drowned a very large number of old women and children in the Lufuko River, which flows close to Kigabi. The caravan, thus lightened, should have been able to move more quickly. It was not to be. A good number of captives, who were healthy at the start, but overwhelmed by tiredness and the deprivations of the march, were not able to keep up, and so became a new hindrance. So, began the killings which one cannot imagine in a civilised world. A Mugwana himself confirmed that 10, 20, 30 and sometimes even 50 were killed every day. In spite of this, nearly 2,000 arrived at Kirando. However from there to Unyanyembe and the coast is still very far and it is easy to foresee that the bones of a good number of these unfortunate people will whiten the paths leading them there.

Karema, 31st December 1893

Our people arrive with 10 slaves that they saved from the inhuman slave traders. Hardly a day goes by that we not have the occasion to take away from their misfortune, some victims of slavery. It is impossible to go into too much detail, suffice it to say, that the number of freed slaves, this year, exceeds more than 300. About 100 are dead from the bad treatment they had suffered, but all received Holy Baptism and

have flown up to heaven to praise God and to pray for the generous benefactors who gave the missionaries the necessary resources to save them

Mpala, 9th June 1890

There is no shortage of slaves. Very frequently, the Wangwana or other natives come and offer us some for sale. We are then obliged to discuss a price as one does for a beast of burden. It is the redeemed children who populate our orphanages and those of Karema and Kibanga, by themselves, number nearly 500 girls and boys. Very often, we have regrets because we are not able to free all those presented to us. It is not just a case of paying for their freedom, it is necessary to rear them, to provide for them and our resources are very limited. This cruel necessity very often leads to another. The children taken into slavery, especially as a result of war, are deprived of the care of their mothers and suffer very much during the long journeys that they have to undertake without food. (I have seen it that during 15 days they had only grass and clay to eat). It is difficult for the youngest to survive. They come to us barely more than skeletons, and eight out of ten of those less than 12 years of age die, despite our best efforts at caring for them. In one year, nearly 100 died at the Kibanga Orphanage. As we have to ration our resources, we often have the cruel task of choosing to let some children die in order to give preference to those, whose age, gives us a hope that they will survive their old injuries. The aim of our orphanages is, in these regions, a work of resurrection, because our orphans when they get older will become part of our Christian villages. At Mpala, where I am now, the village of the mission number 86 families, that of Kibanga has almost the same number.

To summarise what I have said on the local slavery, there is no further need to go to Ujiji or the other slave markets to buy them. Without leaving our house, many are brought here, more than our resources can cope with. Unfortunately those that we cannot free take the road towards the coast and the bones of many of them will bleach the roadside.

Mpala, 3rd September 1890

Six old women and two children are redeemed for a relatively low price, their master wishing to get rid of them at all costs. He even told us that if we refused to take them, he would bring them to the forest and kill them all. Some Christians, more at ease, outraged by this possibility, came and begged us to free these poor creatures from their slavery, saying that they would care for them. At the moment they are in care of some families. However, having been brutally snatched from their own country, they will be filled with the desire to return home and will run away as soon as possible. We have done what we can, God will do the rest. Lavigerieville is equipped with a hospital for these poor women, thanks to the generosity of a benefactor; such an institution has become a necessity in our mission.

C/ Correspondence with the Cardinal

In addition to the diaries, the fathers also sent a large number of letters to the Mother House. Here is an example of a letter sent from Karema by Fr. Josset on the 9th January 1891 (ref: A.G. M.Afr, C 17/223)

Letter from Fr Josset of Karema, 1891

I am anxious to bring to your notice the outcome of the business which I discussed in my previous letter. With the arrival of the Makutubu's expedition, Fr. Dromaux went to Kirando and succeeded in breaking the chains of 110 slaves. However, contrary to our expectations, the slave merchants refused to take our cheques drawn on Zanzibar. Therefore, it was our post in Karema which had to meet all the expenses of this charitable work. The ransom of each slave forced us to pay out from 45 to 50 francs each, which

means 4,500 to 5,000 francs in total. May I humbly ask your Eminence to intercede, on our behalf, with Anti Slavery Committee of France, to help us bear the weight of this heavy burden?

Since it is a question of Makutubu's expedition, it is right that I tell you what I know of the horrors of which it is guilty. It is at Kirando, two days march to the south of Karema, that the expedition has just brought back the spoils, the fruit of its pillaging. There was some ivory and about 2,000 slaves of all ages and sex. It was a pitiful sight to see these unfortunate people chained together by groups of 20 to 25 or put in wooden stocks when there were not enough chains. Nearly all were reduced to a state of walking skeletons by hunger and fatigue. On their arms and legs were the marks of burns probably inflicted for some minor breach of discipline. At Miranda, where they are now, food is scarce and very expensive. Their masters, in a most contemptuous manner, do not bother to give them food. To keep themselves alive, some go to the villages and try as best they can, by their songs and dances, to arouse the compassion of the inhabitants. The others, the vast majority, try to assuage their hunger by going into the jungle and collect some wild roots that even the animals despise. At night, consumed by hunger, fever and dysentery, they are piled, wily nily, into hastily built huts which do not protect them in the slightest from the bad weather and we are in the middle of the cold season. Fr Dromaux told me that he had seen people cooped up in a hut without a roof, while next door the goats of their master had shelter. The results of such treatment are not hard to guess: every morning one or more corpses are brought out from the huts and bodies are thrown on to the fields to be eaten by the hyenas of the forest. How will these dying people make it to Unyanyambe and the coast, because the slavers want, at all costs, to get them there? Without being a prophet, it is easy to predict that the remains of a large number of them will bleach the length of the road bringing them there.

Furthermore, this is only a continuation of the dreadful scenes that they had seen taking place every day during their march of nearly a month through the Marungu. 'At each stop, said a Mungwana of the expedition to Fr. Dromaux, we threw out 10, 20, 30, sometimes up to 50.' However, the word 'throw' is a euphemism for slaughter. When an unfortunate slave is too exhausted to keep up with the caravan, instead of leaving him there, purely and simply, and that would be still be rather cruel, they take the horrific precaution of beating him to death with sticks. They fear that he might succeed in dragging himself to a little hamlet and there, he might recover his health and win back his freedom. The rest of the human herd, no matter how exhausted they are, understand that they can only choose between marching ahead or death. On returning to his tent, the Father heard a child which he had just saved, tell, that on leaving Kigali for Kirando, the expedition had drowned in the Lupuko river a large number of old women and the children who were too young to make the journey. It was only afterwards that he understood the full meaning of this exclamation of a Mugwana at the moment he brought back the young child: 'Ah, if we had known that (the children of that age) had some value'

The journeys of Father Dromaux (because he made two), have been fairly fruitful. However, the unfortunate children he brought back were in a terrible state because they only agreed to hand over the weakest. Our sailors had to carry them, in their arms, from the hut where they were lying to the boat which brought us to Karema. The black man is not very sensitive to the suffering of others; our young people were, nevertheless, very touched by so much suffering and told the Wangwana; 'In killing people in such a way, you are committing a big crime, for which God will punish you.' A diabolic grin was the only response to this judicious observation.

On arriving at our place, our station was transformed into a veritable hospital. We put them in special rooms and confided their care to the direction of the old Negro women of the Mission. My heart constricted every time I entered one of these rooms; they stretched out their thin arms towards me saying; Bwana wetu, tumeona njara (Our Father, we are hungry). Their health has been so profoundly damaged that 15 have already died despite our care.

I have to tell you, Eminence and very venerable Father, that the scourge of slavery, even after the efforts of the Germans from the coast to the interior, prevails in all its hideousness, on the shores of Tanganyika. In this respect, I have to give you the position of Kirando. In the past two years, it has become an important centre and will aim to become, in the south of the lake, what Ujiji is for the north. It is from here that the expeditions leave for and it is here that they return from their periodic journeys to devastate the areas of Marungu, Urua and as far as the banks of the Moero and Luapula. The Wayala, the Wafipa and the Wabende in our vicinity, supply them with conscripts at a cheap rate. I am convinced that they would just as easily enlist the rest for the good cause. Even, at this time, there is an expedition, that of Beloutchi Meruturutu (Mohamed ben Salem) who, for three years now, has ravaged the Urua people. With the small force that he at his disposal; Captain Joubert is powerless in the face of so many enemies. Therefore, he is limited to protecting his little territory. As for us, our role is predestined; we break the chains of as many unfortunate slaves as we can. However, in the areas of Karema, Kirado, at Zongwe and at Kampampa in Marungu, the small slave traders of Unyamuezi are flocking in, since the roads offer a relative security, and give us strong competition. Indeed up to the recent times, they have exchanged slaves for gunpowder and detonator caps which are highly valued and which is something we cannot do. Despite these unfavourable conditions, we were able to register, last year, a handsome figure of 350 redeemed slaves.

This work of redeeming slaves is, for the present, our main work. It is very interesting and gives us great consolation. One can say, without exaggeration, as many as are redeemed, as many again are converted. Indeed, these poor people find it very normal to embrace the Religion and practices of those to whom they owe their liberty and even their life. However, a good number, especially among the adults, have such a limited intelligence that it needs time and infinite patience to get them to understand the quod justum for baptism. However, once they are instructed, they seem to me to be strong enough in the faith. They have especially a naive faith in Providence which should touch the heart of God. Here is an example: last year, the mountains close to the mission were, for the second time, covered by clouds of locusts and we were very afraid that we would see them swoop down on our fields and devastate them. Our neophytes, showed a much greater confidence in God: 'The grasshoppers, they said in a loud voice, to anyone who wished to hear, cannot harm the children of God, they will only attack those who adore the mizimu (spirits)'. What happened proved them right, our fields were spared, while those of our neighbours were laid waste.

These were the things that primarily occupied the thoughts and preoccupations of the venerated Father that the Good God has taken from us, prematurely, and for whom we still shed tears (Mgr Charbonnier). In losing him, the poor slaves have suffered a big loss, because had he lived, I have no doubt that he would have brought to your Eminence a very effective support that would have helped, more and more, to open the eyes of the European Catholics to the horrors that are committed each day in Africa.

I hear from Kibango, that we are facing bereavement. Fr. Moinet has just been struck by a paralysis that has left him helpless: his legs refuse to work and he has written himself that he feels his arms are also threatened. Once again a very precious life, spent for the cause of the slaves, is probably going to be extinguished.

The caravan, which we expected and which is going to arrive very shortly, will hardly do more than fill the many empty spaces that death has made in our ranks.

As soon as it arrives here, we intend to make a journey to the north of the lake to see if, in conformity with the wish that Monsignor expressed on his deathbed, there is a possibility of moving back into the territory of Uzghe, where the chiefs and all the people are still favourably disposed toward us. We pray that those going on this journey will return, like the dove of the Ark, with an olive branch.

However this foundation, if it is set up, will require an increase in personnel. Do we dare to hope that the new Father, that your Eminence is sending, will arrive in Tanganyika accompanied by several reinforcements of apostolic workers?

Be pleased to accept, Eminence and very venerable Father, the expressions of my filial affection, with which I have the honour to be, your most Reverend Eminence, the very humble son in Our Lord.

Jean-Marie Josset

(Miss. of Africa of Algiers)

Second Part

The Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa and the Anti-slavery campaign

Preface

On July 1st 1888 at St Sulpice in Paris, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie officially launched the African anti-slavery campaign in response to the explicit request of Pope Leo XIII. The Cardinal devoted all his energies to this work and associated, directly or indirectly, his two young missionary societies, that of the Fathers/Brothers and that of the Sisters, to this work. Can we let this event go by in silence? Impossible! We want to celebrate it and to be inspired by it. That is why we have been asked to do some research on how the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa were involved in the struggle against slavery at that time, as well as to see how we can continue this struggle today in fidelity to our charism.

We, Sisters Paquita Reche and Munyerenkana Chiharhula, have taken a journey through the diaries of our Sisters from 1894 to 1910. This limited choice was determined by the short time we had in which to complete our task. No matter, because the diaries which we were able to consult had recorded enough facts to demonstrate the devotedness beyond compare of our first Sisters in caring for former slaves and even in ransoming some young girls and children when they had the means to do so. On some occasions when they were helpless to do otherwise, the Sisters were forced to let the slaves return to their former owners who had come to take them back. We have also consulted other sources in order to better understand certain attitudes which were recorded in the diaries and which might appear a bit shocking at first sight.

Throughout the Congregation our Sisters, wherever they were living, whether at the heart of this tragedy in black Africa or in North Africa or Europe, were very attentive to the situation of the slaves. The diaries of the communities witness to this.

While the Cardinal had given clear directives to the Fathers and Brothers on the type of conduct to follow with the slave traders, we found no similar directives for the Sisters. Without doubt this is due to the fact that the Sisters only left for sub-Saharan Africa in 1894, that is, after the Cardinal's death (1892). However, some believe that perhaps it was also because the Cardinal usually gave the same directives to both his missionary societies, at least "in what concerns the first rules for the noviciate and houses... In some texts, the french masculine pronoun "ils" was simply changed to the feminine "elles".¹

It is possible to suppose that he might have done the same with the rules which he gave to the Fathers concerning the conduct to follow in their dealings with slave traders. We will come back to this later on. Besides, the Cardinal never ceased to remind the Sisters that they were destined to be "women apostles to the women"² and were to act as mothers towards the young girls who were victims of slavery in Equatorial Africa. The struggle against slavery is closely linked to evangelisation. Everywhere the early

settlements of the Sisters aroused curiosity and their arrival was variously interpreted by the native populations.

The events selected from the diaries constitute the framework of this small presentation. This framework will be filled out with facts taken from various books and articles. It being impossible to mention all the events, we have chosen only a few. We hope that these few lines will stimulate us all to commit ourselves very seriously to the struggle against the new forms of slavery in these our times. We hope they will inspire some of you to do some serious research on our Sisters' commitment to this struggle down through the years.

I. The birth of the Congregation and the struggle against slavery

A) A Congregation of women for mission

For his time, Cardinal Lavignerie had very progressive ideas about the role of woman in society. He perceived woman as the essential element in the transformation of society and in the missionary apostolate. In 1871, seventeen years before he launched his anti-slavery campaign, Lavignerie affirmed the importance of women for the mission in Africa. In the Bulletin in which he gave news about his works, he affirmed: "Women must be the most effective missionaries to the people of Africa."³

"The Cardinal saw the Sisters as fully missionaries whose apostolate was complementary to that of the Fathers, not only because they could penetrate into groups to which access was forbidden to men, but above all because of their ability to act as women, and through woman to transform the whole of society..."

This is why, after an initial period in North Africa, the Cardinal thought of sending Sisters to the interior of Africa. In 1914, M. Marie-Salomé reminded the Sisters that in the Introduction to the new Directory they would find the same words already addressed to his daughters by the Cardinal in 1876 when he gave them their Constitutions. She wrote: "You will see with pleasure and thanksgiving that already in 1875, three years before the Fathers left for the Missions of Equatorial Africa, our venerated Father and Founder already had the idea of sending us to the Great Lakes... However, for a long time it was unthinkable to send women to these regions which were difficult to reach and very insecure, and where one would be venturing into the unknown."⁴

The departure of the first caravan of Sisters would only become possible in 1894. We will speak of this later on. For now, let us return to the Cardinal's thoughts concerning the role of women in the missionary apostolate. In 1886, writing to the Association of Mary Immaculate for the Conversion of Women, the Cardinal affirmed:

... "In spite of the Fathers' zeal, their efforts will never produce sufficient fruits if they are not assisted by women apostles for the women. They cannot fulfill this ministry on their own: only women can freely approach the pagan women, relate to them with charity, heal their wounds, and thus touch their hearts and help them understand their abasement by giving them an example of the moral heights which christian woman has reached ...

This is your task and it is for this reason, coming as it does at this time, that it seems to me to be providential. Indeed, Providence, in opening up the depths of this unknown continent, appears to be announcing the coming of mercy for so many fallen races and in particular for the millions of poor women whose humiliation and sufferings surpass anything we in Europe can imagine before having heard about them. Now we can know something of them in Africa, and it is about this that I would like to give you at least a brief idea...

It is above all the moral superiority of the christian woman, and of the religious, which speaks to these disinherited creatures... they see, without being able to explain it, that christian women are not only equal but superior to men in generosity, delicateness, living faith, in the courage which this faith inspires and the tender love which this faith places in their hearts...

Imagine these religious women thus committed to the apostolate, penetrating everywhere, drawing ever closer in the villages, in the huts... sitting next to the pagan women, poor slaves worn out by the blows they have received... and slowly raising them up in hope...

... But this apostolate does not stop with the women. Woman is at the origin of everything, because she is mother and her children are what she makes of them. It is she who plants in their souls the seeds that nothing will destroy, and which will germinate in spite of all contrary forces. Thus gradually through the woman one touches the family, and through the family one touches society...

As for me, I have devoted the years of my youth and my adult years to establishing the apostolate of the Fathers. I want to make use of my old age, for as long as God will grant me life, to effectively promote if I can, the apostolate of the Sisters.”⁵

During his conference of July 31st 1888 in London on the anti-slavery campaign, the Cardinal addressed himself specifically to women in these terms:

“Christian women of Europe, of England, it is up to you to make these horrors known everywhere so as to arouse the civilized world’s indignation against them. Leave no peace to your fathers, your husbands, your brothers. Make use of the authority which is theirs because of their eloquence, their fortune, their position in the country, to stop the bloodshed of your sisters. If God has given you a talent for writing, then use it for this cause. You will not find a holier one. Don’t forget that it is a novel written by a woman, “Uncle Tom’s cabin”, translated in all the languages of the world, which sealed the freedom of slaves in America.”⁶

B) The Cardinal sensitizes the Congregation to slavery in Black Africa

The Cardinal profited of all the important events in the Congregation to sensitize all the Sisters to the reality of slavery in Black Africa. In “The History of the Origins of the Congregation” by Sr. Marie-André du Sacré Cœur, we find eloquent testimony to the care which the Cardinal took to prepare “his daughters” for the mission in black Africa ravaged by the slave trade. Two texts are particularly striking :

Clothing ceremony of Mother Marie-Claver in Saint Charles, 1887

He found the appropriate words for the clothing ceremony of Sr. Marie Claver: “Sacrifice until death, he said, is the first example you will receive from your Spouse. He gives you another even more powerful example, love for souls... The Institute which you are entering was born of this love, love for pagan Africa bowed down under the weight of barbarism, ignorance, cannibalism and slavery...”⁷

For this reason, the Cardinal desired with all his heart to see the Congregation established in Equatorial Africa and he decided to take great means in order to promote the recruitment of future missionaries: a clothing ceremony as grandiose as possible in Maastricht, immediately following his anti-slavery conference in Ste Sulpice. Following is the account of this event :

Clothing ceremony of seven postulants in Maastricht, August 19th 1888

The Cardinal arrived in Maastricht on the morning of the day itself. A large number of people had come to the train station where they greeted him with an ovation. No sooner had he gotten into the carriage, that the horses were detached and it is the young men who pulled him in triumph up to the Sisters’ house. In the afternoon a packed and enthusiastic crowd of Dutchs and Belgians, and even some Germans, filled the

parish Church of Wyck in order to see and hear the Cardinal. Seven postulants dressed as brides were already waiting near the altar.

After the Veni Creator, the Founder rose to speak. He had chosen the following words as the theme of his allocution: *Prudentes Virgines, aptate vestras lampades*. 'These young girls, he said, are destined to carry the light of the Gospel to the very center of Africa which is steeped in darkness' ... Speaking of slavery he described the villages surrounded and burned, the people massacred ... 'and then the capture of those who, unable to flee, are chained and dragged to distant slave markets. The weak, the sick are killed along the way; those who reach their destination are sold like cattle... Each year one can count 400,000 victims of this hateful traffic...'

'Among the victims, the women and children are most numerous... and also the most to be pitied because of the infamy to which they are subjected' ... The Cardinal, trembling, recounted what his missionaries had seen. Speaking to the Christian women and mothers who were listening, he pointed out to them how much they owed to Christianity...

'On the slave markets of Africa, he said, two women are bought for a goat and a little girl for a packet of salt... This state of affairs, which is the shame of humanity, cannot continue; the European powers must intervene...' Then, turning to the new novices, he exalted their sublime vocation. They were called to console and to save these poor creatures, their sisters in Jesus Christ; and soon they would go to the interior of Africa, to ransom these little slave girls, to gather them together and be as mothers to them...' For close to an hour the Founder held those present in rapt attention...

The seven novices were: Sr. Gabrielle, died in 1895; Sr. François d'Assise, died in 1897; Sr. Alphonse, died in 1910; Sr. Stéphanie, died in 1923; Sr. Renée, died in 1935; Sr. Emmanuel and Sr. Crescence, who left during the noviciate. That very evening at 6 p.m., the Cardinal continued on to Brussels.

II. 1894: departure of the first caravans for Central Africa

The year 1894 was marked by the departure of the first caravans of Sisters for the interior of Africa. The moment the Cardinal had so longed for had arrived at last! They would reach the heart of Africa:

"You will advance towards the center of Africa: stage by stage, following in the Fathers' footsteps, you will reach the equator."⁹

The first caravan for Equatorial Africa left on June 7th 1894. In central Africa as everywhere else, the Sisters, on their arrival, began working with the women and children. These had been looked after temporarily by the Fathers while waiting for the Sisters. In the territories confided to the White Fathers, they were usually the first white women to penetrate into the interior of Africa and for a long time they were the only ones.¹⁰ They always established themselves at the mission post of the Fathers who had asked for them and had prepared a house for them.

During the first days after their arrival, the Sisters' house was always full: everyone wanted to see them, the Christians as well as the simply curious. Sometimes an orphanage or refuge was waiting for them, with children, young girls or abandoned women who had been confided to the mission; they were to educate them while allowing them to follow their way of life and the customs of the country.

The Sisters lived a life very close to the people. When they left for the mission, it was forever; only sickness or a general chapter would make them return. Many were carried away by yellow fever, malaria, dysentery or tuberculosis. In the French Sudan, yellow fever was merciless to Europeans. Of the 25 Sisters who left in six caravans from 1897 to 1904, only three Sisters were left in 1907. Six Sisters had died and the rest returned home sick...

Their very presence was a simple witness easily understood. Fr. Maze describes a very meaningful event:

“One day a catechist of the mission asked the Father Superior: ‘Are those women under your supervision? Are you in charge of their house? Does the Father Bursar count the money and look after its management?’ One can guess the answer of the Superior who asked in turn: ‘Has anyone ever seen me and the Father Bursar interfere in the Sisters’ business?’ ‘No, that’s exactly it, shouted the catechist, and it’s what the people of the village cannot understand. They say: there’s a house occupied by four women. They may be white, but they are still only women. Not a single man to command, to assign each one’s tasks, to settle quarrels, to correct them and beat them! That house ought to be full of disorder, of shouting, of arguments and fighting. And yet, it is now two months since those four women are always there together. They work, relax, pray and eat together. And in spite of the fact that we spy on them, no one has yet been able to discover them arguing, insulting each other, sulking. We have never heard them complain or speak ill of each other. We never see them cry. They are always happy; they are all equal, they are never jealous. Even the Superior dresses, works and eats like the others... This isn’t natural. In order never to tire of loving each other, they must use some kind of magic charm that we haven’t yet heard of...’

This is what the pagans say, but we, Fathers, say to them: ‘It is a miracle of the good God, the Sisters are daughters of God.’¹¹.

A. The caravans to Equatorial Africa

The departure for Equatorial Africa was announced to the whole Congregation in a circular letter of M. Marie-Salomé dated May 20th 1894. It begins this way: “You have already learned that our humble Society has just been granted the precious grace of being offered the means to found houses in the equatorial missions which have for so long been the object of our desire. These foundations are such an important event for our Congregation and it is fitting that we thank God for this grace and also that we implore Him in a very special way to grant success to the vast mission which is opening up before us.”¹²

On June 7th 1894, accompanied by M. Marie-Salomé and Mother Gonzague, the first caravan of Sisters left St.Charles (Algiers) for Marseille. On June 12th they sailed from Marseille for the foundation of Ushirombo in the Apostolic Vicariate of Unyanyembe. They were: Sr. Jérôme, Sr. Laurent, Sr. Clémence, Sr. Mathias, and Sr. Lidwine. They reached their destination on October 19th 1894, after a trip that lasted 79 days.¹³ The second caravan, destined for Tanganyika, left Marseille on August 12th 1894 and arrived in Karema on November 24th of the same year, after travelling for 15 weeks.¹⁴ They were: Sr. Joseph, Sr. Jacques, Sr. Immaculée, Sr. Alphonse and Sr. Philippe.

Arrival of the Sisters in Zanzibar

The Sisters, who had left Marseilles by boat on June 12th 1894, arrived in Zanzibar on July 1st. On July 5th, a visit of the town afforded them much pleasure:

“We passed through a beautiful region... We were shown the temple of the fire worshippers; to its left the German cemetery; further on many small African huts much better constructed than the poor Arab houses; we were told that the poor people who live in them are all slaves, that there are about 60,000 slaves in Zanzibar and that daily some are being sold in the houses”¹⁵

Actually the Sisters were in the most important center of the slave trade of the 19th century. Two things had just been pointed out to them: the great number of slaves living in one section of the town, and that slaves were being sold daily in the houses. Their small reaction without commentary might surprise us if we did not know the directives which Lavigerie had given to his missionaries concerning prudence when dealing with the Arab and black slave traders. Their power was too dangerous to be attacked head on. The Cardinal felt that without friendly relations with them, any lasting establishment of the Mission would be impossible in much of Equatorial Africa. This is why the Cardinal counselled the missionaries to try to establish some kind of friendship with them and not speak too much about slavery:

“Therefore, my son, until further orders:

1º - Live with them diplomatically, that is, do not oppose them directly and visibly, as the English do in Ujiji.

2º - Make use of them as intermediaries for procuring supplies, even if this would mean having to pay more.

3º - Don't say anything on the outside against slavery; on the contrary, affirm that you are involved neither in politics nor in war, but only in religion.

4º - Avoid settling in any place in which they are installed permanently.

This is the rule of conduct which I have drawn up for you and for your missions.

As for me, I draw profit from everything which you, as well as the Fathers of Tanganyika, have written to me. I hastened to inform the King of the Belgians about all this. He had already been informed in part by his explorers. I pointed out to him that the interior of Equatorial Africa will soon be closed to us again unless we rid it of the merchant Arab slave traders. In this regard I have asked him to persuade England to make some definite move toward Saïd-Bargash (Sultan of Zanzibar)".¹⁶

It was necessary to begin by gaining the confidence of the native populations in order to eventually be able to inspire within them a deep horror for the scourge of which they themselves were the victims. For this purpose, the Cardinal recommended that as many children as possible be ransomed. His project was to gather these children together and form them so that they would become apostles in their own country. This was a tactic to be used in the destruction of slavery. It was a slow but very effective strategy.

“For the moment, be content to ransom some children whom you will then raise, and if you have the occasion, to even ransom some adult slaves so to make them your helpers, servants, and neophytes. Treat them with great goodness in order to gain their hearts and so that it will be evident that you consider them as brothers and not as slaves. Remember that from the moment they are in your hands, their slavery is over; and if you are obliged to take some measures in order to compel or punish them, do so not as to slaves but as to children or brothers whose spiritual and temporal good is all that you desire.”¹⁷

New foundations in the Apostolic Vicariate of Tanganyika

As soon as the Sisters arrived in a post, they would set to work in the shelters and orphanages which were waiting for them, as is related in the diaries of 1896 and the following years. We found nothing special directly linked to slavery in the diaries of 1894-1895. It is from 1896 onwards that we note several events related by the Sisters. In general, we found almost the same types of experiences in the various posts of black Africa. Everywhere we found the work of the Sisters with women, young girls and children (boys and girls) the majority of whom were former slaves. Activities were multiple and varied. From among the many facts, we have chosen a few prominent ones:

Karema

1st May 1896: two slave children appeared at the Sisters' door. They were looking for their mother who was not at the center. The girls had been walking for two days and had spent the night in the forest.

“Arrival of two slave children who ran away from their masters in order to come here to find their mother. Alas, poor mother, where is she? In vain we look for her according to the names which the little girls give us. They had to travel for two days to come here and they spent the night in the forest. The two children don't tire of observing us. In the evening, we bring them to church for the common prayer and, seeing the crucifix above the main altar, they ask who is that man; the lights and the singing also surprise them and they ask who has died to make everyone cry out like that. They imitate what they see the others doing

and instead of raising their hand to their shoulder, they raise it to their back, which greatly amuses the children. These two little ones are thrilled with everything they see and seem full of good will.”¹⁸

9th May 1896: The Sisters witness a very moving scene. Two little slave girls who had escaped now refuse to return to their masters who have come to claim them. They prefer to die in the Sisters’ courtyard than to look these wicked masters in the eye.

“This morning we witnessed a very sad event. Their masters came to take back two little slave girls who had run away and sought refuge with us. The masters had taken care to bring a sheep and a goat as gifts for the missionaries in order to gain their favour. The Bishop replied that if the children wished to return of themselves he would let them go, but that he would not contradict them. The doctor catechist came to fetch them so that they would tell the men that they wanted to remain here, but the two poor children absolutely refused to follow him and came to take refuge in our house. The munyapara also came to reassure them, telling them that he had given a lot of cloths to their masters, but in vain. ‘Kill us here, they said, but we do not want to leave.’ Some time afterwards, the Bishop came to reassure them, telling them that he had given a lot of cloths to their former masters and that they would remain at the mission. Their joy was great!”¹⁹

In all the posts where they were, the Sisters continued to devote themselves to the slaves. In Baudoinville (Moba) where they arrived in 1895, they themselves ransomed some slaves. As we read in the diaries, they cared not only for the black slaves, either ransomed or who had come themselves, but for every child in need. Let’s listen to what the diaries relate:

Baudoinville

27th February 1897: “A wild-looking little girl is brought to us wearing only a tattered rag that barely hides her nakedness. Her body is covered with dust, her hair is filthy. Mother calls one of the children and asks her to bring the child to the river to wash her and cut her hair. All the children want to carry her on their back; when they return Mother gives her a new cloth and some oil to rub herself with. Then the little one is led in triumph to the barza and admitted into the group of girls who lavish her with the best of care. Little Kalwa, for this is her name, is shining with cleanliness. She has been confided to us because her mother is dead and her father did not care for her at all.”²⁰

9th July 1897: Here is how the Sisters welcomed two children of an Arab chief killed during an expedition: “Major Deberghe has sent us two children: their father, an Arab chief of the territory bordering Lake Tanganyika, was killed during an expedition. His widow and children were taken in by the Belgians. The little girl, whose name is Lenora, is very intelligent; she learned how to make the sign of the cross the very day of her arrival. The other child is a little boy about two years old, who doesn’t know how to talk yet; he is the youngest of the barza.”²¹

Thus all the children were grouped together in the same center. Thanks to the Sisters, the children of slaves, or the slaves themselves, and the children of the masters would from now on live in peace and trust, receiving the same education and developing the same values. Together they would learn that they are brothers and sisters because they are children of the same Father. Was there any better way to fight against slavery?

Foundations in the Apostolic Vicariate of Unyanyembe

Even though the first caravan arrived in Ushirombo in 1894, we found nothing in the diaries before 1897. Have some documents been lost? We don’t know. What is striking about this region is the origin of the slaves welcomed by the Sisters. At times they are prisoners of war who have been ransomed by the Fathers. At other times they are children brought by army officers (some of them Protestants) or children taken from their parents by German officers as punishment. Let’s listen to what the diaries say:

Ushirombo

1st August 1897: A Protestant officer brings two little girls who have been ransomed: "The officer we were told about has arrived. The entire mission population went to meet him so as to greet him at the entrance to the Christian village. He has entrusted to us two little girls who have been ransomed. On Sunday, even though he is Protestant, he assisted at High Mass and tried to imitate all the gestures being made by the people around him. He stayed for three days. We hope that the civil authorities will remain favourable in our regard and will protect our works."²²

6th March 1898: Fr. Van der Burgt brings fifteen women and girls. "They are poor young women who were taken by the soldiers during war and they have suffered greatly during the journey. Small and weak as they are, they were made to carry the soldiers' cartridge pouches. Fr. Van der Burgt ransomed them and brought them all the way here. The journey was very long and tiring and several died on the way. We will do our best to care for the fifteen who are left but there are probably some who will not recover."²³

21st October 1898: "Around 10 in the morning, the long awaited caravan arrived to our great joy; Sr. Pierre and Sr. Marc are exhausted. Sr. Marc was carried in a hammock which frightened us a bit. Sr. Antoine fared very well during the entire journey. The Sisters brought four women and three children, one of whom is a little princess whom the Germans took from her father as a punishment and whom they then handed over to the Fathers."²⁴

By means of many other events related, the diaries allow us to be in communion with the life of our Sisters in their mission. Here we would like to underline that before any other activity the Sisters undertook above all the study of the local language. As soon as they knew a minimum of the language, they enthusiastically began to work with the women and children who had been confided to them. They cared for all the sick who came to the mission and visited every corner of the villages in order to care for those who were not able to reach the mission. They prepared several persons (women, young girls, and children) for Baptism, taught sewing, cooking and hygiene and prepared young girls for marriage. The Sisters continued to accompany the young couples after their marriage. In some very lively accounts related in the diaries, we can feel the closeness existing between the Sisters and those they care for like mothers. It is striking to see that they pray with the children and spend some evening recreations with them. The Sisters follow the recommendations given by M. Marie-Salomé on their role as mothers and educators of the children confided to them.²⁵

The houses would rapidly increase in the Apostolic Vicariate of Tanganyika and Equatorial Africa: Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Congo, Malawi and elsewhere. In all their posts the Sisters devoted themselves to the same works and faithfully followed the same recommendations in their commitment to the victims of slavery.

1907. Arrival of the Sisters in Tabora

Ever since 1850, Tabora had developed into a center of the slave trade. Let us see what Sr. M. Léocadie tells us about this.²⁶ When the Sisters arrived in 1907, slavery was in full swing. In 1910 the German government decreed that all children born of slaves would henceforth be free. It was agreed that in 1920, all would be free and that all slaves would receive from the British government their document of liberation.

When the Sisters arrived they found a group of slave women and children who had been ransomed by the Fathers in view of the establishment of the Sisters in the country. These women and children were confided to the care of a Christian woman, Marie-Claire, whom the Fathers had brought for this purpose from Bagamoyo, an old mission on the coast.

Most of the women and children were from Burundi... and had been brought in chains to Tabora. At the time the Sisters arrived, public slave markets had been prohibited, but the market continued in secret. Once the Sisters were well installed in their house, the whole group under the direction of Marie Claire was moved there: 40 women and girls.

In the community diaries we find other interesting facts. Here are a few:

2nd October 1908: "The owner of one slave, who had found refuge in our house for some time, has been hanging about the Mission, but Nyanagemi has informed him that she would never return to him. Today this individual came to our house saying that he would not leave alone; a lively discussion rose up between him and the slave, though she kept her distance in order to avoid any blows. 'Never will I go back with you ; you broke my teeth with your stick, you'll do other things ; I want to stay here, to continue to be educated ; you can kill me right here if you want to, but I will not follow you.' After several hours of discussion, seeing that he was getting nowhere and that, even if he did succeed to take her back, she would run away again, the owner asked us to buy her. Nyanagemi knew that his price was beyond our meager resources, so she herself fixed the price and we heard her repeating: "No, I'm not worth that much; thirty-five francs will be enough". Encouraged by the energy of our heroine, we could not resist the happiness of snatching such a soul from Satan and, confident that Providence would come to the aid of His missionaries, we ransomed the poor captive who did not know how to thank us."27

2nd November 1908: "One slave woman who had taken refuge with us for several days, was forced to follow her master who threatened that he would take her to court, without doubt for the purpose of forcing her to decide to leave our house. But once they reached the main road, the slave wanted to return to the mission station and when the master refused, a very moving scene took place a few yards from our house: the poor woman was beaten repeatedly by her young master who then threw her to the ground and trampled on her. Each time she tried to get up and turn back, the same scene was repeated. Poor women, they are treated here with more brutality than the beasts of burden in our country, with neither the consolation of our holy religion nor the hope of a better life!"28

In the diaries of 1909, we find two interesting events which show an evolution in the ransom of slaves and certain rights granted to them:

23rd January 1909: "Her masters have come to claim for an old slave, sister of a catechumen in the village, who had been at our place for a few days. The matter was brought to the boma and the Reverend Father Superior counselled us to try another means of ransom which consists not in immediately paying the sum exacted by the master, but in letting the slave ransom herself by paying a certain sum taken from her salary each month. This proposal, agreed upon by the three parties involved, pleased us as much as it pleased the poor victim, because not only would it oblige the slave to work but above all it would allow her to remain at our place for at least ten months before obtaining her documents of liberation. During this lapse of time the ransomed slaves would be able to follow religious instructions and come to know our holy religion, in order to desire to persevere in the catechumenate."29

10th February 1909: A small improvement: a certain right to justice was granted to the slaves. "Yesterday a poor woman beaten by her master came to take refuge with us; today we sent her with the woman supervisor to lodge a complaint with the judge. The poor slave must return to her master who is obliged to pay her five rupees ; she has received a written document which will allow her to go to the boma should the scene be repeated, in order to receive a document attesting to her freedom."30

1897. The MSOLA in the French Sudan

On March 19th 1897, M. Marie-Salomé received a letter from Father Hacquard, asking her to send some Sisters to the French Sudan:

“After speaking to Monseigneur Livinhac about the state of the missions in the Sudan, His Greatness has judged it timely to complete the number of apostolic workers this year by adding some Missionary Sisters... He has authorised me to make a first step by asking you to send some Sisters who would form part of the first caravan leaving in October. At least four would be needed for this first departure... In the unhoped-for possibility that you would be able dispose of a greater number of Sisters able to be sent to the Sudan, I would be grateful if you would let me know, because they would find a place suitable for them in other posts for which I would have to make some arrangements with the governor...”

The Congregation accepted and the first caravan left with enough Sisters to found two communities: one in Kati for the military hospital and another in Ségou to begin an apostolate among the sick and with little girls ransomed from slavery.³¹ The year 1897 was therefore marked by the sending of the first caravan of Sisters to the French Sudan. The account by one of the Sisters who was part of the caravan, Sr. Théophane, will help us to follow them on their journey.

On October 25th, eight Sisters, together with three Fathers and two Brothers, embarked in Marseille; they reached Dakar on November 25th. A small train brought them to Saint-Louis. On November 10th, they boarded a steam ship headed for Senegal. On the last three days, the journey to Kayes had to be continued on barges since the water was too shallow. They went on by train, and then on horseback for the Fathers, while the Sisters travelled in two “Lefevre cars”, really just iron boxes on two wheels. The caravan arrived in Kati on December 17th where four Sisters remained while the others continued on to Ségou. When they arrived on December 27th, they found waiting for them a house made of baked bricks with a thatched roof. Twenty children, captives of the Tuaregs, were waiting for them also:

“Fr. Hacquard, wishing to thank the Virgin Mary for our safe trip, had promised to ransom eight slave girls if possible, who would be living “ex-votos” and this was done during the first days. We could have bought entire groups of these poor slaves if we had only had sufficient funds. In the market place they are on display along side the sheep and chickens!”

“By the time the cold season arrived, there were about 40 children. After the capture of Sikasso, ten little slave girls were brought to us by the army officers returning from this expedition.”

On October 25th 1898 a second caravan left Marseille for the French Sudan, arriving in Kati on December 27th. The Sisters were destined for the military hospital there. They would spend the entire day at the hospital, leaving the house in the cook’s care. A month later another Sister arrived from Ségou to help them.

“One day the doctor brought us a gift of eight little captive girls from Bobo-Dioulasso. The presence of Sister de l’Annonciation was so precious because without her we could not have accepted these children, dear first-fruits of our Mission.”

This is an interesting piece of information because it was rare that the origins of the captives were known let alone mentioned. Let’s continue with the diaries of the communities in the French Sudan:

Kati, 1898

4th May: “In the evening we witness a disturbing scene. A family of captives who had taken refuge at the mission is found by their master. He had gone to the army commander to claim his slaves. After having spent the entire night at the military post, they were forced to return with their master. One little girl managed to escape and came to take refuge with us, but alas, we were obliged to let her go...”³²

5th May: A captive and her daughter ran away because their master wants to sell them. They find refuge at the Sisters’ house...³³

6th May: "This morning we find the woman captive at our house, but since we cannot keep her, we ask someone to explain to her that she must leave. Poor people! What a sad existence! And what suffering it is for us not to be able to welcome those who show us so much trust!" During the month of May the Sisters often receive little girls sent to them by the Fathers in Timbuctu.³⁴

Ségou, 1898-1899

31st December: "Today Fr. Hacquard ransomed a little boy for 32,50f; it was to thank God for the safe journey we had; he named the little boy Charles."³⁵

3rd January: "Six little girls are brought to us. They were ransomed by the mission a while back and, while waiting to come to us, were placed in a family of catechumens under the supervision of the Fathers."³⁶

7th January: "In the morning a little girl about five years old was brought in order to sell her to us. Fr. Hacquard bought her and left her with us, to our great satisfaction. This good Father wanted to thank the Virgin Mary for our safe journey. Feeling that the best thing he could do was to offer Mary a living ex-voto, he promised to ransom eight captives. This little girl is the first. At first she was frightened of us; we wrapped a cloth around her waist and this reassured her. Then we brought her to work along with the other little girls who are carrying earth for building the huts."³⁷

28th February: "A little girl from the village of Liberté went to find Fr. Hacquard, begging him to bring her to us. After getting some information, Father paid her master, and brought her to us in the evening. We have named her Marie-Marguerite."³⁸

1st February: "A young captive widow and her three-month old child have been ransomed; she is staying in the home of some catechumens. We have given her a piece of cloth for her and the child, as well as two medals."³⁹

Kati 1900

1st April: Some Europeans who are returning to France have promised to entrust several slaves to the Sisters.⁴⁰

10th April: "A fifteen-year old slave girl has taken refuge with us. She has begged us to keep her saying that her master beats her continually. The Major has granted this child her desire. She is staying with us and this brings the number of children in our care to nine."⁴¹

24th May: "Two slaves from Ségou who are being mistreated by their masters have come to find refuge with us. We have accepted them with the authorisation of the Major. We are instructing them in our holy religion."⁴²

18th August: "Madame Vimard, who for some time has been keeping a little Touareg girl whom her nephew, Lieutenant Uriez, brought to her from Timbuctu, came to offer this child to our Mother who gladly accepted her."⁴³

IV- Involvement of our Sisters in North Africa in the struggle against slavery

Slaves had been brought to the southern part of Algeria in the 19th century. The principal region of import was the Mزاب. In spite of having been banned in 1883, the smuggling of slaves continued on a smaller scale.⁴⁴ Facts collected in the diaries of Ghardaïa, where the Sisters had been present since 1892, reflect the importance of this town as a center for receiving and selling slaves.

Ghardaïa 1894

No diaries from the beginning of this year were received, but the Sisters gave news to the Motherhouse in a letter which is dated January 21st 1893. This letter gives details about life in the post. According to the letter, the Sisters are in contact with black slaves. They often hear terrible stories from freed slaves about the atrocities they had endured before the arrival of the French: the massacre of slaves in the market place, the inhuman butchery of young people... The Sisters also know about the terrible treatment suffered by those who are still under the yoke of slavery. Here are some parts of this letter:

“...The chains with which the slaves were bound can still be found in the market; they are at least three meters long and are as thick and heavy as deck chains... these Negroes benefit more under French domination which has at least freed them from slavery. Some have been able to start a family and live in freedom and these are the happiest. Others have remained in the service of their former masters and, though their situation has improved, they still have to suffer from the miserliness of their masters who give them nothing more to eat than a handful of dates or barley... May God deign to receive our daily sufferings and even our lives for their salvation?”⁴⁵

21st October 1899: “A poor negress came to the hospital today. As she is a bit mad and was almost naked, she roused Mother’s pity. Mother gave her a piece of cloth to cover herself with. But the woman pushed the gift away saying: ‘I don’t want this cloth, you bought it with my money and it isn’t even nice!’ This woman had been sold by her husband to the Kaïd of Malika who robbed her of all her belongings: jewelry, clothes, etc. and then sent her away. Yamina’s pain is the cause of her madness. Today she has one obsession: she imagines that Mother is the cousin of the Kaïd, and that together they have divided up her belongings and are now enjoying them. She also says that we owe her shelter and assistance because, after all, we will take from her personal income what is necessary for her upkeep.”⁴⁶

A Negress captured in the French Sudan

Who is Mabrouka? A Sister who remains anonymous has told the child’s story in a small undated brochure edited by the printing press of our Motherhouse in St. Charles: “Mabrouka, the story of a little black girl”. She had been captured in the south of the French Sudan by the Tuaregs when she was 8 or 9 years old and ransomed by the Fathers who then brought her to our Sisters in Ghardaïa. “When she arrived, she spoke neither French nor Arabic; her mischievous eyes revealed a clever intelligence but at the same time her attitude betrayed a vivid impression of fear... we only discovered why she was afraid a long time afterwards when Mabrouka was able to express herself in French and had grown more at ease with us... the child was simply afraid of being eaten”.

Mabrouka told the Sisters about her origins and her childhood, her capture by the Tuaregs, the long journey on camelback to the slave market, the time she had spent with three different masters. She stayed the longest with the last one who severely mistreated her. Some missionaries travelling in the region ransomed her and brought her to the Sisters. We will find her again in the 1899 diaries of the Marseilles community.

V - Involvement of our Sisters in Europe in the struggle against slavery

In the diaries of our houses in Europe we read of the presence of domestic slaves, some of them natives of Black Africa. The domestic slaves were brought to the country by expatriates and those from Black Africa had been introduced by the slave traders. The facts we have gathered show that the Sisters, faithful to the teachings of the Cardinal, were very sensitive to the problems of slavery wherever it was found. M. Marie Salome reminded her daughters of these teachings when she said to them:

“He had a heart as big as the world, a heart in which all sufferings, all weaknesses, all human miseries found a refuge and a defender; and as he had begun his apostolic career by going to the help of the ill-

treated Christians in the Orient, he pursued this career by founding a three-fold militia destined to evangelize and teach moral behaviour to the infidel populations of Africa ; he crowned this career by spending his strength to the end in the crusade against the slave trade.”.47

The diaries of the community of Lyon in 1894 mention many interesting facts we should note: the presence of African domestic slaves in Europe, brought from Africa by Europeans returning to their home country, as well as one of the consequences of domestic slavery in France: the abandonment of a sick slave once he was no longer useful to his masters. Add to this the sensitivity of our Sisters to the problems linked to slavery.

Here is a resume, dated October 21st, of a significant event which had occurred in Lyon: The Sisters found an abandoned slave woman. Her masters had brought her from Mauritius in 1893. She was not able to adapt to the climate and had fallen gravely ill. Since she was now useless in the service of her masters, they had abandoned her. The Sisters took charge of her, cared for her, and thanks to their insistence before the British Consul, they obtained for her a free journey back to her country. Two months later she was able to leave France “where the climate was slowly killing her” and return to her country a free woman.48

Marseilles

The diaries of Marseille tell us about the presence of black slaves in that city. In the diaries of 1899 we read:

12th May 1899: “Sr. Eugène has just been entrusted with a truly apostolic mission: to help a black woman who needs someone to take an interest in her. Decetta, recently married, is very temperamental and like a grown-up child. Her husband is an excellent black man brought by a navy officer to Marseille where he has remained in the service of the officer’s family ...”49

24-09-1899: “The whole community has been to visit the cemetery of Marseille...the black woman Mabrouka, who accompanied the Sisters..., attracted the attention of all the passers-by who retraced their steps in order to take a better look at her.”50

VI - Conclusion: what do all these events have in common?

There is a consistency throughout all the facts we have discovered: in all their posts the Sisters have the same commitments and follow the same directives. This is why in all the places where they are, there are centers of welcome:

- The persons received in these centers come from different horizons : Living in these centers one finds: women and children slaves (boys and girls) who have been ransomed in the markets by various persons or have been living with families, and have been brought to the Sisters by the White Fathers, Protestant pastors or army officers ; slaves who have run away from their masters and have then been ransomed in the slave centers ; children who are not slaves but who have been brought by their parents in order to get an education ; and orphans.

- A welcome full of goodness and attention: As soon as they arrive, all begin the catechumenate in view of receiving baptism. At the same time, they receive training in view of a good job. They are kept close to their customs the entire time. Thus the women learn sewing, cooking, care for the home, cleanliness... As for the young boys, they are sent to the Fathers for their education as soon as they are old enough to become apprentices. Thus the foundations of the church in Africa are laid.

- A complete education: The education of women and girls was of the greatest importance in the eyes of M.Marie-Salome who considered it one of the loftiest apostolic tasks confided to the Sisters. Hence the value she attached to it.51

“The Sisters responsible for the education of children take the place of their parents and for this reason they are obliged to do for these children whatever a good Christian mother does for those to whom she has given birth... It does not suffice to train them for work and to punish their faults; it is necessary above all to form the hearts of these poor children... (Teach them how to correct their faults and overcome their evil tendencies and that, in order to please God and gain heaven, they must also develop virtues).”⁵²

Further on she adds:

“The success of the Mission could well depend on the good education of a large number of pagan girls. Therefore, it is important not to neglect this work. The education of our orphan girls is one of the loftiest tasks of the Sisters’ apostolic life... My dear Sisters, accustom yourselves to treating these children with love, with justice, with a goodness that is firm, yet as removed from harshness as it is from weakness.”⁵³

- Solid foundations for the infant Church: The young women formed in this way were asked for in marriage by the catechists who had been formed by the Fathers. Even after their marriage, the Sisters continued to accompany the young Christian couples. Thus were born the first Christian families which would become the pillars of the young African Church. The diaries explain the important role played by the catechists, these apostles to whom the Cardinal attributes the success of a lasting work: “The missionaries must be the initiators, but the lasting work will be done by the Africans themselves become Christians and apostles.”⁵⁴

- Respect for the directives received from the Founder: As mentioned above, the Sisters were very reserved concerning slavery and the slave traders. They simply related the atrocities which they had witnessed. It was in fidelity to the Cardinal’s directives that they kept a silence that surprises and at times shocks us. But the information they sent was used to sensitize international opinion about the slave trade in Africa. The Cardinal thus gave us an excellent example of how to network.

Notes

1 J. Grosjean, *Lavigerie à ses missionnaires – Choix de textes*, Rome 1979, pg. 141

2 Id. pg. 35, last paragraph and following pages.

3 Srs. Marie-Josée Dor et Marie-Aimée Jamault, *Relecture de l’histoire de notre famille SMNDA*, pg. 11

4 Id. pg. 11

5 Lavigerie, *Enseignements sur la vie religieuse et l’apostolat africain*, St Charles, Kouba 1951, pgs.78-81

6 Lavigerie, *Documents pour l’œuvre antiesclavagiste*, Saint Cloud 1889, pg. 112

7 Sr Marie-André du Sacré-Cœur, ‘*Histoire des origines de la Congrégation des Sœurs Missionnaires de Notre Dame d’Afrique 1869-1892*’ St Charles, Kouba 1946, pg. 423

8 Id., pgs. 501-503

9 J. Grosjean, *Lavigerie à ses missionnaires - Choix de textes*, Rome 1979, pg. 147

10 Sr. Marie -André du Sacré Cœur, *Sous le ciel d’Afrique*, Alsatia, Paris 1948, pg. 97

11 Sr. Marie Lorin, After “*The history of the Origins of the Congregation 1910-74*”, Msola 1974, pg. 4

12 M. Marie-Salomé, *Recueil des lettres circulaires 1892-1915*, pg. 15

- 13 Sr Marie André du Sacré-Cœur, Sous le ciel d'Afrique, pg. 98
- 14 Id. pg. 98
- 15 Msola Diary 1894, 5-7, pg. 363
- 16 Lavigerie: Lettre au P. Livinhac 10 février 1881, Instructions aux Missionnaires, 1950, pgs.167-168
- 17 Id. pgs. 167-168
- 18 Msola Diary, 1896, pg. 327
- 19 Id. pg. 329
- 20 Msola Diary, 1897, pg. 416
- 21 Id. pg. 420
- 22 Id. pg.394
- 23 Diary, 1898 pg. 216
- 24 Id. pg. 399
- 25 Cf. Recueil des lettres circulaires, pgs. 46-47 and 71-72
- 26 Document L'esclavage à Tabora Archives MSOLA Generalate
- 27 Msola Diary 1908, pg. 580
- 28 Msola Diary 1909, pgs. 117-118
- 29 Diary 1909, pg. 297ff
- 30 Id. pg. 299
- 31 Sr Marie-André du Sacré Cœur, Histoire des Origines de la Congregation 1868-1879, pg.719.
- 32 Diary 1898 pg. 204
- 33 Id.
- 34 Id.
- 35 Id. pg. 84
- 36 Id. pg. 85
- 37 Id. pgs. 85-86
- 38 Id. pgs. 87-88
- 39 Id. pg. 88
- 40 Diary 1900 pg. 303
- 41 Id.
- 42 Id. pg. 309
- 43 Id. pg. 443

44 François Renault, *Lavigerie: l'esclavage africain et l'Europe*, Boccard, Paris 1971 T.2 p. 11.

45 Diary 1894 pg. 71

46 Diary 1899 pgs. 443-444

47 M. Marie Salomé, *Recueil des lettres circulaires 1892-1915*, pg. III

48 Diary 1894 pgs. 529-530

49 Diary 1899 pg. 246

50 Id. pgs. 246 and 323

51 M. Marie-Salomé, *Recueil des lettres circulaires 1892-1915*, pg. 71

52 Id. pg. 46

53 Id. pg. 72

54 *Lavigerie, Ordonnance au sujet des séminaires indigènes 1874 (Instructions aux missionnaires, pg. 250)*

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