



1877 : Lavigerie's visit to Tunis

1879 : Lavigerie leaves for France and Italy until September 22.

### Conference given at Saint Sulpice (1st July 1888)

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 barba-

rous 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?

