

And then, 50 years ago in the later months of 1921, the persistent interest of a young Canadian surgeon, Frederick Grant Banting, in research on diabetes, was finally rewarded. Together with his younger collaborator, Charles Herbert Best, they isolated insulin and in January 1922 used it successfully in the treatment of patients. One of the greatest and most dramatic discoveries of modern medicine, it completely transformed the outlook for the majority of sufferers from diabetes . . .

. . . Despite these discoveries, diabetes appears to be on the increase, and there are many undetected cases, particularly amongst men and women above the age of forty, who are overweight. This knowledge has led many public health authorities to try to detect such cases by organizing community screening surveys, using blood or urine tests . . .

. . . Diabetes is still a serious disease and neglect of the prescribed treatment can lead to dangerous complications—coma, blindness, kidney and nervous disease, skin infections and, above all, degenerative changes in the heart and blood vessels.

The more people know about the disease the better they will be able to fight it. Information and education at all levels can therefore help to promote both early detection and proper care. Physicians and other members of the health team—including nurses, dieticians, health educators, medical social workers and pharmacists have all a part to play in the educational process . . .

HENRY DUNANT IN NORTH AFRICA

Henry Dunant went in 1853 to Algeria and later on to Tunisia. In the course of his travels, as well as after his return to Geneva, he showed a keen interest in the language and customs of these two countries. He also delved into their culture, as is apparent in his *Notice sur la Régence de Tunis* and in the notes which he compiled in Heiden.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Reda Chalaby, in a paper on "Henri Dunant in North Africa", has noted some significant passages from Dunant's writings, two extracts of which are given below. He recalls that the author of *A Memory of Solferino* wished to associate the local inhabitants in the undertakings which he wanted to set up in North Africa, and that he paid a tribute to the civilization whose values he appreciated.

"Dunant", writes Mr. Chalaby, "expounds the doctrinal bases of Islam, with respect and great accuracy... But he marvels, more than anything, at Arab hospitality. This is what he says: "Visitors are sacrosanct, and in that capacity, an Arab can feel safe even in the home of his fiercest enemy. It is often said of two enemies who have made peace that they have eaten bread and salt together. Everyone is familiar with the story of the Arab chief who had just lost his only beloved son and who, perceiving strangers approaching his dwelling, stifled his deep sorrow the whole day long in order to provide a worthy and fitting welcome to his visitors; moreover, he kept company with them continuously, and did not allow them to detect any signs of grief until the moment of their departure, which happened to be the time set for the burial of the dear child he had lost"...

... But Henry Dunant was not satisfied with writing a few articles on the Arabs. In order to get to know them better and to understand more fully their customs, he decided to learn Arabic. He found it a rich and beautiful tongue, but that it was very hard to learn. A number of Dunant MSS written in Arabic are kept in the Geneva Public and University Library".

Mr. Anouar Louca has sounded a similar note in the following extract¹:

"Our so-called European civilization", Dunant declared, "is derived from the East". In order to bring to fruition his most ardent wish, that of "establishing brotherhood throughout the world", he summarized thus a mental concept which he had assimilated within himself:

¹ See *Musées de Genève*, Geneva, Nos. 81 and 107.

“The gradual development of civilization is to be displayed by gathering the scientific and literary masterpieces of all ages and of all countries, and co-ordinating them according to their natural appresentation (. . .). By demonstrating what each nation has contributed towards our common edifice of civilization, a number of prejudices are destroyed, while the bonds of sympathy between countries are multiplied, and the reign of justice and peace for all men becomes more attainable and durable”. Here may be seen the germ of his brilliant plan for an international universal library, that would place each of the successive masterpieces of the human spirit within the reach of every person.

Is not the forefather of the Red Cross also the apostle of comparative literature? . . .

However it may be, the early approach made by Henry Dunant to Arab culture represents a significant and little-known stage in the progress of this figure towards the universality of the movement which was to immortalize his name”.

The second edition of *Notice sur la Régence de Tunis* is to be published in a few months time by the Henry Dunant Institute jointly with the Société tunisienne de diffusion. It will have illustrations concerning Dunant and the places he visited in Tunis.

The first edition, printed in Geneva in 1858, bore the inscription *Cet ouvrage ne se vend pas.*