

of their own Church, to attend communion administered by a chaplain of another Church, because they knew him better. He had been with them longer, and in battle with them more, than their own. Where men had not had a chance to receive the communion for a considerable time, they frequently came to the chaplain and asked when it would be possible for them to receive it, and it never seemed to trouble them in the slightest if he did not belong to the same Church as they did.

As a rule soldiers are not very regular in the performance of any routine of religious observances. Their mode of life is not conducive to it. Crowded together in tents and huts, in barns and stables and make-shift bivouacks, in trenches and dug-outs, it is not easy to pray or to read the Bible according to rule. A man is too tired when he gets a chance to lie down; and too tired still when he has to get up again. There is no possibility of quiet or privacy. I doubt if even the most methodical of our saints would be very regular in his devotions under the same circumstances.

But that does not mean that they never pray. An Alberta battalion had gone through a frightful gruelling near Ypres last June. After they came out a chaplain went to and fro among them, asking how they had fared. Out of a big group one young soldier spoke out distinctly:—"If I never prayed before, Sir, I sure did pray that time." "So did I." "So did I." His companions were not ashamed to acknowledge that they, too, had prayed in their hour of need. Men going into action have given the chaplain a quick, strong grip of the hand and said:—"Will you put up a word for me, Sir?" or, "Don't forget me, Sir." And some have asked him, if they did not come back, to write to the folk at home and tell them that "it is all right."

Both officers and men are a bit shy about acknowledging that they ever pray, except in the somewhat formal prayers of the church parade. That is one of the things about which it is not considered good form to talk. But once in a while a bit of light breaks through revealing a different aspect of their characters from that they ordinarily put forward.

This happened in the Somme. A battalion commander had been promoted to a brigade, and was leaving the men with whom he had been in the trenches for nearly eighteen months. He called the officers together and spoke a few words. Among other things he said in effect the following:—"I didn't always go over the top with you. It wasn't necessary. But when all our dispositions were made and you had everything in hand, I used to go into my dug-out and get into wireless communication with Headquarters, a greater