

only then she realized that she had reached the turning which led to paths of peace.—Mary Hayden Haskins in the Ave Maria.

**A MILITARY CHAPLAIN TELLS EXPERIENCES**

**DIFFERENCE IN MINISTRATIONS**

A well-known priest in England gives the following account of a hospital chaplain's duties and the manner in which they are performed respectively by Catholic and non-Catholic clergymen. Under the title "Some Impressions of the Catholic Chaplain," he writes:

The reader of what follows must be warned at the outset not to expect a thrilling account of adventures at the front, for the writer's work as military chaplain has so far been confined to camps and hospitals in Great Britain. Yet, notwithstanding its unexciting character, it has been work of a most interesting nature to himself and the account of some of the points which have especially struck him may interest others also.

The one prominent fact of all his experiences as a chaplain is the utter and essential difference between the relation of Catholic soldiers to their chaplains and of Protestant soldiers of whatever denomination to theirs. It is a difference which only a Catholic can appreciate, for it lies outside the range of any relationship with which the Protestant is familiar. When headquarters, military authorities and hospital staffs show, as they sometimes do, impatience towards army chaplains and their ways, or seem to place obstacles in the way of their work, it is fair to remember that their only conception of our office and work is a Protestant conception. When they see the Catholic chaplain going about his work in camps and hospitals in a reasonable and business-like manner and observing how his presence and ministrations are welcomed by his own men, these august personages soon learn that the Catholic chaplain and the work he set himself to do are very different from that they are familiar with elsewhere. The obstacles which they may occasionally raise to the giving of Holy Communion in a hospital ward, for instance, are due to their experience of the Anglican bedside celebration requiring fussy preparation and lasting for about half an hour. They are astonished to find that the priest has come and gone, and given Holy Communion in the space of a few minutes without upsetting anyone. If they raise objections to the celebration of Mass in some room close to the wards, it is because they associate hymn singing and preaching with divine service and do not want the sick men in the neighboring wards disturbed. If they hesitate to admit the priest to visit in a critical state, it is because they think he is going to indulge in lengthened exhortation, and have no idea of the simplicity and dispatch with which the last sacraments can be administered in cases of necessity. That their fears are not groundless is shown by an incident brought to my own knowledge. A Protestant Tommy was seriously but not hopelessly ill. His chaplain, a Wesleyan, I think, visited him and sat beside his bedside talking for an hour and a half. Next day the poor man was found to be dying, owing to the nervous excitement caused by the chaplain's exhortations. The medical staff were in great wrath, and, in consequence the Catholic chaplain had to suffer for the other's indiscreet zeal.

Very quickly, however, these people discover that the priest knows his own business and that his men understand it too, and so these incomprehensible Catholics are best left to go their own way. More than that, they watch us with a wistful interest wondering what it is which gives such a simple directness to the dealings of the R. C. chaplain with his men and makes those men at once so familiar and so respectful towards him. They are astonished to see that the men show a sincere satisfaction in the services of their chaplain very different from the attitude of the Protestant Tommy. Occasionally, too, in expansive moments, authorities, military and otherwise, lament to the R. C. chaplain how ineffective and useless the other chaplains are, and how little good results come from their ministrations. And it must be admitted the results are meagre. In a hospital ward with about two hundred and fifty beds, out of about forty Catholics more than thirty made their Easter Communion, while at the Anglican celebration on Easter morning one man alone was present.

Between the Protestant chaplain and the Protestant soldiers there is a great gulf fixed. At the sight of a chaplain the Protestant Tommy flees even when no man pursueth. It is as if he regards the minister as possibly an enemy and certainly a bore. If the Protestant chaplain is a man with an attractive personality and can make himself liked for his own sake, he may be able to bridge over the gulf and establish some sort of spiritual relationship with his men, but, even so, the basis of their mutual understanding is a purely natural one. How few men, however, succeed in bridging over the gulf! There is the boisterous jovial chaplain, who calls himself "a sky pilot" and talks slang, and may be welcomed for his jokes and kindheartedness. There is the chaplain of experience who can tell the men stories of

the places where he has been stationed, of his adventures in the Boer war, and who knows men and officers in many regiments, and him the men delight to talk to as a pleasant companion. But neither type exercise much real spiritual influence, nor, indeed, seems to attempt to do so. When face to face with a poor boy in a hospital who is to have an arm or a leg off in a few hours, they have nothing to say except that they will call in to-morrow to see how he has come through the operation. The boy's comrades, who gather round his bed and sing comic songs to him with a view to keep his mind off the coming horror, do more for him. It is chiefly the non-conformist chaplains who make direct attempts at spiritual ministrations, and it cannot be said their efforts are successful. To discourse to a miscellaneous collection of men in a ward about the necessity of having "Jesus in their hearts" strikes the Catholics as profane and the irreligious as funny. The commandant of a hospital was pleased to find the men in one of her wards in high good hilarity, she learned that it was caused by a chaplain who had just sung them a hymn in a cracked and tuneless voice.

Between the Catholic Tommy and his chaplain, however, this gulf does not exist. Often on entering a ward, I have been conscious that the feeling among the men was, "O Lor! Here's another of them"; but when it was seen that the Catholic chaplain occupied himself at first with his own men, that he was welcomed by them at the start with evident pleasure and that what he talked about to them did not hurt them, before long the other Tommies begin to make signs that they too wish to be taken notice of and are quite ready to enter into conversation, and "Sir" gives place to "Father." The relationship between the Catholic and his chaplain is thoroughly understood by both parties from the beginning. Both have the same belief in the priesthood and its powers, but, in addition to this, and flowing from it, there is a marked feeling of trust and good fellowship. I think it is among the British Catholic soldiers that this filial relation to the priest is most strongly marked. A Northumbrian, who had knocked about the world a good deal, said to me: "There's one thing I have always noticed about Catholicism wherever you go, you find a father." It is this which makes a Catholic soldier ready to confess to a priest the first time he sees him, while the Anglican, if he ever goes to confession at all, will only do so after more or less beating about the bush, and then, chiefly because he has taken a personal liking to a particular chaplain. A high church chaplain, who calls himself a priest and anoints people if he gets the chance, complained that he had heard only one confession since his appointment, but on entering the Catholic chapel of the same place was busy hearing confessions for 3 hours. A Catholic soldier who had eagerly seized the first opportunity of confession and Communion that presented itself in coming to a hospital, was bewailing to the Catholic chaplain the sufferings which, along with the other men in the ward, he endured from chaplains and old ladies, who talked religion to them, and gave them tracts and added, "But we like you, Father, because you never talk religion to us." Inquiries as to the length of time since his last confession, and whether he had beads and a prayer-book, etc., was not "talking religion," and he would have thought the chaplain did not know his business had these inquiries been omitted, but it is pietistic effusions which Tommies mean by that expression, and which they hate. In the case of Protestants the misfortune is that from hating that of this kind, they came to hate religion itself which they identify with it.

In view of stories current at an earlier date, it may be worth while to state that from only one man have I heard any story tinged with the supernatural although I have been brought in contact with men of great faith and devotion. There could be no doubt of the absolute sincerity of the man in question and of the depth of the impression his experiences made upon himself. From many, on the other hand, I have heard of the extraordinary preservation of crucifixes and holy images which Catholic and Protestant plainly regard as supernatural. It has been the cause, they tell me, of several conversions.

To sum up, all that I have experienced as chaplain fills me with consolation at the good religious dispositions of our Catholic men, and with great hope in the future of the Catholic religion in England.

**BELGIUM CIVILIZATION THE WORK OF MONKS**

Leon Van Der Essen, Ph. D., LL.D., in his "History of Belgium"

"If the conversion to the Catholic Faith was mainly the task of the missionaries, the introduction of civilization was mainly the task of monasteries. There the Benedictine monks played a very large part, both as civilizers and colonizers. Their monasteries were, from the sixth century on centers of economic and intellectual life. Whilst some of their monks attacked the thick forests of southern and central Belgium with axes, others engaged in literary labors in the monasteries' libraries, transcribing the ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, com-

posing hymns and lives of Saints, and opening schools for the education of the people. They planted in the very hearts of the people the roots of that strong religious spirit, which has steadily developed and which has become one of the characteristics of the national spirit of Belgium. Each monastery became a kind of model farm, where the population of the neighborhood could learn the best agricultural methods. In the monasteries, too, they could find physicians who could take care of the sick. The monastery, being protected by the respect that was inspired by the saint to whom it was dedicated, was also a place of safety in time of danger. Consequently, dwellings became more and more numerous around the monasteries, and villages developed under their influence and protection."

**THE "PALAZZO VENEZIA"**

This historic palace has lately passed from Austria to Italy by virtue of the subjoined decree: "Thomas of Savoy, Duke of Genoa, Lieutenant-General of H. M. Victor Emmanuel III., by the grace of God and the will of the nation King of Italy; in virtue of the authority delegated to Us, in virtue of the faculties conferred on the Government of the King by the law of May 22, 1915, No. 871; considering the Italian character of the Palazzo di Venezia in Rome, which is shown historically to be an inseparable part of Venice; in front of the innumerable and atrocious violations of the law of nations which the Austro-Hungarian Empire is committing in the present war, and the devastations perpetrated beyond all military reason to the damage of monuments and edifices in that city; in title of Italian re-occupation and in title of just reprisals; after hearing the Council of Ministers; on the proposal of the President of the Council of Ministers: We have decreed and decree: the Palazzo di Venezia in Rome enters to become part of the patrimony of the State from the publication of the present decree; Our Minister of Finance, together with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Grace Justice and Cults and Public Instruction, will see to the occupation after a term has been granted in order that whoever represents the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire may transport documents and movable things belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy to the Holy See; the afore said term shall not be prolonged beyond October 31, 1916." Signed by the Premier, Signor Boselli.

The palace was built by Cardinal Barbo of Venice, later Pope Paul II, at an expense of approximately \$125,000. During its time it has been occupied by Cardinals, Kings and Popes and eventually it was given to Venice as a residence for the Ambassador of the Republic to the Holy See. In 1797, when Austria gained Venice, the palace went to Austria and was considered Austrian property with little intermission up to 1849, when the Roman Republic of that year "considering that the palace was the property of the Venetian people and that Venice, being independent, had the right to the re-occupation of its property, restored it to them." The independence of Venice, however, was of short duration and Austria again asserted its claim which had been enforced up to the present time.

The transfer of the Palace is interesting to Catholics the world over, insofar as the property is bound up with the Patrimony of the Holy See. The Italian Government has taken particular pains to indicate that it was within its rights in appropriating the place, and if no other justification for the action could be found recourse might be had to the principle that confiscation may be just in time of war. The palace was built by a Pope, and in the varied vicissitudes of Italian history, it might be difficult to trace a clear title. The fact remains that the historic edifice has been occupied traditionally by Ambassadors to the Holy See, and the recent action simply revives the persuasion that there are many things in and about Rome with a state title, just or otherwise, affixed to them, which were undoubtedly held by the Church in earlier times, and should also belong to her to-day.—Providence Visitor.

**MARRIAGES AMONG PROTESTANTS**

The old lies that Catholics do not acknowledge the marriage of Protestants is one of the hardy calumnies against the Church and one that, if it ever die, will die a hard death, says a writer in Truth. As a matter of fact, Catholics consider the marriages of Protestants as more sacred than they do themselves. The majority of them think that the matrimonial bond can, under certain circumstances, be dissolved by the civil authority. Catholics, on the contrary, hold that there is no authority on earth, whether civil or ecclesiastical, that can do such a thing. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." This teaching is not palatable to a giddy world where matrimonial alliances are formed almost at random. In reality the choosing of a wife and the acceptance of a husband are among the most solemn things in human life. Most of the matrimonial legislation of the Church has

for its aim to prevent irremediable mistakes.

So far, then, from considering the marriage of Protestants null and void on the ground of their not being solemnized by a priest, we hold that they are so valid that, in spite of their own persuasion to the contrary, no power on earth can dissolve them. What they do among themselves is none of our business, but what Catholics think about their marriages—this is what we ought to know better than they. We think that the restoration of Protestants are binding "until death." Let Protestants not only learn what Catholics think of Protestant marriages, but come to the same view themselves, and they will be the better for it.

**THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE HOLY SEE**

Cardinal Newman, in referring to the manner in which the occupant of the Chair of Peter has dealt with the world's problems as they presented themselves in successive ages, says: "From the first he has looked through the wide world, of which he has the burden; and, according to the need of the day, and the inspirations of his Lord, he has set himself now to one thing, now to another; but to all in season, to nothing in vain." In these words we have a condensed statement of the part the Father of Christendom has ever enacted. In our own times we have seen Leo XIII. devoting himself to the solution of the labor question. Pius X. in his encyclical on Modernism combating the insidious attempts to de-Christianize the world, and Benedict XV. working for the restoration of peace to a war-devastated Europe. It may be predicted with an absolute certainty that the successors of Benedict XV. will grapple with the various menaces to society, which are still hidden in the womb of time.

The Catholic Church is the Mother of Christian civilization. With a mother's anxious care she is ever on the alert to guard her offspring from possible danger. In the centuries that are dead and gone she stood between the oppressed and the oppressors and never relaxed her efforts till the wrongs she combated ceased to exist. In our days she is prepared to re-enact what she performed in the past. The Rev. W. S. Lilly in 'The Claims of Christianity' referring to the possibility of this happening says: "It is well conceivable that in the New Age, which is even now upon us, the Pontiff's moral influence will be of unparalleled greatness, as from his seat by the tomb of the apostles he surveys his ecumenical charge, and

'Listening to the inner flow of things. Speaks to the age out of eternity.'

reproving the world of sin, of righteously and of judgment; maintaining the divine testimonies before kings and democracies; upholding the rights of conscience and of the moral law amid the social tyrannies, the national jealousies, the political animosities, which will doubtless be the staple of future history, as they are of the past."

These words were written years before the first gun was fired in the greatest of wars. Europe and the rest of the world had been asked to rest satisfied with the fruits of materialism and to turn a deaf ear to the claims of the higher life. The horrors enacted during the last two years on European battlefields have suggested the question: Is this the outcome of your much-boasted progress that was to bring about the millennium after eliminating all thoughts of God from human affairs? Such questioning may yet lead to far-reaching consequences. Already in unlooked for quarters there is heard talk of adopting means to place the Successor of St. Peter in such a position that he will be enabled to exert, without let or hindrance, beneficial influence so sorely needed for the restoration of society to a healthy condition.

In the Congress, that will assemble at the end of the war for the discussion of international affairs, the question of the status of the Holy See will assume an importance such as it has not possessed since the Italian Government despoiled the Holy See of its temporalities.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

**NO RELIGION IN HOME CAUSE OF DIVORCE**

An excellent little homily has been delivered by Judge Rooney in the Court of Domestic Relations, Chicago. "Three out of every four cases of domestic trouble which have come before me since I have been on this bench," he said, "have resulted from the neglect of husband and wife to attend any church services. I do not care what church one attends, but I do think any man or woman could spare at least an hour a week to pay reverence to the Omnipotent. Every day I have parents before me neither of whom attends church. How can they expect to have any influence on their children's moral training if they themselves do not set the example in attending church?"

Do not be discouraged by trifles. And do not waste time in immaterial disputes and discussions: "If the postman stopped to fight every dog that barked at him," said a successful man, "he would never get any mail delivered."

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