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NO. 17.

JUST RECEIVED,

Table listing various books and their prices, including 'Glories of the Sacred Heart' and 'Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost'.

AGENTS FOR THE DOMINION.

CATHOLIC PERIODICALS.

Table listing Catholic periodicals such as 'New York Tablet', 'Freeman's Journal', and 'Catholic Review' with their respective prices.

JUST RECEIVED, SERMONS BY THE LATE

REVEREND J. J. MURPHY,

who lost his life at the fire at Back River on the night of December 4th, 1875. We have just received from our Agents in England a consignment of SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, given by THE LATE REV. J. J. MURPHY, IN 1871. Price, \$2.00. Free by mail on receipt of price from D. & J. SADLER & CO., Catholic Publishers, 275 Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE LION OF FLANDERS;

OR, THE BATTLE OF THE GOLDEN SPURS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued)

"That is the mother of the butcher that made such slaughter of our people at Male," cried one; "death to her!" "Oh, no, no, messire!" pursued the old woman, "dip not your hands in my blood! I beseech you, by the bitter passion of our Lord, let us live! Take all we have but spare our lives!" "Your money,—your gold!" interrupted a rough voice. She immediately seized a casket that stood behind her, and threw it to the soldiers. "There, sirs," she said, "that is all we have left us in the world,—take it; I give it you with good will." The lid of the casket flew open as it fell, and a quantity of gold piece and various costly jewels rolled from it upon the floor. A general scramble for the booty ensued; but while the rest were thus occupied, one of them seized the maiden by the arm, and threw her violently on the ground. "Mother! help me, mother!" gasped the poor girl with a fainting voice that in an instant roused the parent's eyes and quivering lip, she sprang like a wild tigress on the soldier, twined her arms about him, and dug her nails, as if they had been claws, into his face, so that the blood streamed down his cheeks. "My child!" she screamed, "my child! Villain!" Maddened with the pain, and yet unwilling to loose his hold, the soldier brought the point of his sword against the mother's breast, and pitilessly thrust it deep into her body. Instantly her grasp relaxed, her eyes grew dim, her blood gushed upon the floor, and staggering against the side-beams of the loft, she clutched at them for support. Regardless of the maiden's screams, the soldier proceeded to tear the golden drops from her ears, and to strip the pearls from her neck, and the rings from her fingers; then, with a malignant smile he stabbed her to the heart. "Now," said he to the dying mother, with a devilish sneer, "now you can take your long journey in company, you Flemish jades!" With a last expiring effort she sprang forward, and uttering a single piercing cry, fell dead upon the lifeless body of her child. All this scene of horror had occupied but a few short moments; and the mother and daughter had already exchanged this world for a better, ere the other soldiers had finished their scramble for the contents of the casket. When that was over, and every thing that the loft contained of any value appropriated, the plunderers left the house, to repeat the like elsewhere; while throughout the city the unhappy burghers, driven from their habitations by force or terror, wandered through the streets, exposed to the insults of their oppressors, and deeming themselves fortunate to escape so easily. At last about mid-day, a strong party of men-at-arms traversed the city to call back the troops, Messire de Chatillon deeming that the honour of the French crown was now sufficiently avenged; and proclamations were at the same time made, that all might freely bury their dead, and return without fear to their homes. Some of Breydel's Olaward friends now proceeded to his home; took up the bodies of his mother and sister, and conveyed them on a bier, to the gate leading towards Damme. Here was to be seen a new spectacle of misery, enough to move

with pity the hardest heart. Crowds of wailing mothers, weeping children, and men feeble with age, were beseeching on their knees for permission to leave the city; while the soldiers, whose orders were to keep the gates closed, disregarded their entreaties; and only made a mock of their tears and lamentations. Thus they waited and supplicated for some time in vain, till one of the women conceived the happy thought of offering her ornaments as a bribe to the guard; and many others following her example, there speedily lay no inconsiderable pile of costly jewellery before the gate. Greedily the venal mercenaries caught at the glittering ransom, and promised to open the gates if all the articles of price which the women bore about them were forthwith delivered up. The bargain was soon concluded. Each one hastened to throw down whatever of value she had upon her, and the gates were opened amid a shout of gladness from the liberated multitude. Mothers took their children in their arms, sons supported their aged parents; and thus they streamed forth from the town the men who carried the corpses of Breydel's family following them through the gate, which was immediately after closed upon the fugitives.

CHAPTER XVI.

Jan Breydel and his seven hundred butchers had pitched their camp near the small town of Damme in the immediate neighbourhood of Bruges. Three thousand guildsmen from the other companies had also voluntarily placed themselves under his command so that he now found himself at the head of a force not numerous indeed, but formidable from its fearless and devoted courage; for there was not a man among them whose heart was not possessed with the single thought of liberty and vengeance. The wood which the Dean had selected as the place of encampment was thickly crowded for a considerable space with huts and tents; and on the morning of the 18th of May, a little before De Chatillon's entry into Bruges, numberless fires were smoking in front of the huts. Few, however, of the guildsmen were visible about the tents. Of women and children there was indeed enough; but it was only here and there that a single man showed himself, and he was evidently a sentinel on duty. At some little distance from the actual camp, behind the trees which spread their branches over the tents, was an open space free from trees and entirely unoccupied. From this quarter might be heard incessantly a confused murmur of voices, the monotony of which was ever and anon relieved by the sharp or heavy resound of workmen's implements. The hammers rang upon the anvils, and in the wood the largest trees came thundering down under the axes of the butchers. Here long wooden shafts were being rounded and smoothed and pointed with iron; there stood piles of pikes and 'good-days' ready for use. Elsewhere the basket-makers were busily engaged in manufacturing frameworks for bucklers, which were then handed over to the tanners to be covered with ox-hides. The carpenters were at work upon the heavy siege-artillery of the day, especially catapults and other engines of assault. Jan Breydel ran about hither and thither, animating his comrades with words of encouragement. Occasionally he would himself take the axe in hand from one of his butchers; and then, as he hewed away to the astonishment of all that saw him, one of the largest trees would speedily fall under his vigorous blows.

On the left of this open space stood a magnificent tent of sky-blue cloth, with silver fringe. At its summit hung a shield showing a black lion on a golden field, and thus denoting the abode of a member of the princely house of Flanders. Here it was that the Lady Matilda was for the present lodged under the special protection of the guilds, to which she had committed herself. Two ladies of the illustrious house of Renesse had left their home in Zealand to attend upon her and bear her company; and in no respect did she want for anything. The most sumptuous appointments, the most costly apparel had been amply supplied for her use by the noble Zealander. A party of butchers, axes in hand, stood on either side of the tent as guard to the young countess. The Dean of the Clothworkers was pacing up and down before the entrance, apparently immersed in thought, with his eyes bent upon the earth. The guard looked on at him in silence; not a word was spoken among them, out of deep respect for the meditations of the man who was so great and noble in their eyes. The object of his thoughts was a plan for a general encampment. Hitherto, for the better convenience of provisioning he had distributed the whole force into three divisions. The butchers and the various other guilds were encamped at Damme, under the command of Breydel; Dean Lindens lay with two thousand Clothworkers at Sluys; and Deconinck himself, with two thousand men of the same guild, at Ardenburg. But he was far from satisfied with this scattered disposition of the forces, and would gladly have seen the whole reunited into one corps before the arrival of Guy to take the supreme command. It was for this reason that he was now at Damme; and his consultation with Breydel being concluded, he was waiting till he should be admitted to pay his respects to the daughter of his lord.

While he walked, thus meditating on his project, the portion of hanging that formed the door of the tent was drawn on one side, and Matilda stepped slowly forward over the carpet that was spread before it. Her countenance was pale, and expressive of much languor; her steps seemed to totter under her, and she leaned for support on the arm of the young Adelaide of Renesse, who accompanied her. Her dress was rich, but plain; for she had laid aside all ornament, and the only jewel she wore was the golden plate upon her breast, with the Black Lion of Flanders enamelled on it.

Immediately on her appearance, Deconinck uncovered his head, and stood before her in an attitude of deep respect. A sweet smile lighted up the gloom with which the maiden's features were overcast; for it was with pleasure that she beheld the firm and faithful friend of her house and country, and with a faint voice she thus addressed him: "Welcome, Master Deconinck, my good friend; how is it with you? With me, you see, it is ill enough. Every breath I draw is painful to me; but I cannot always keep my tent; the narrow room oppresses me. I have come out to see my father's loyal subjects at their work;—if, indeed, my feet will carry me so far; and you, Master Decon-

inck, shall accompany me. I have many things to ask you; and, I pray you, answer truly to my questions. I hope to find in your discourse some refreshment for my weary heart. There is no need for the guards to follow us. Ah! the bright morning sunshine does me good; it cheers me." She moved forward with Deconinck by her side, who replied to her inquiries as they walked along. With that admirable tact and facility of expression by which he was distinguished, he continued to suggest matter for consolation and cheerful hopes, and so for the while dispelled the heavy melancholy that weighed upon their spirits. Every where, as she passed, the guildsmen greeted the young girl with loud expressions of homage and affection, and soon one universal shout of "Long live the Lady Matilda! long live our noble Lion's daughter!" resounded through the wood. Matilda felt a genuine thrill of joy as she received these testimonies of warm and loyal attachment to her father and her father's house; and approaching the Dean of the Butchers with a gracious smile. "Master Breydel," she said, "I have been noticing you from afar. You really labour harder than the lowest of your guildsmen; work seems to be a pleasure to you."

"Lady," answered the delighted Breydel, "we are making 'good-days' for the deliverance of our country and of our lord the Lion, and that is a work I enjoy with my whole heart; for I feel as if each one we finish here a Frenchman's death upon its point, and every blow I strike seems struck upon the body of an enemy." Matilda could not look without admiration upon the young hero, in whose countenance, as in that of some Grecian deity, the fierce energy of passion was marvellously softened and tempered down by the noble refinement of the features. Its manly beauty seemed but the mirror of the generous soul within, and its whole aspect glowed with the fervour of self devotion and patriotic zeal. Again graciously smiling on him, she replied: "Come with us, I pray you, Master Breydel; it will give me pleasure to have your company in my walk."

Quickly Jan Breydel cast his axe aside, stroked back his long fair locks behind his ears, set his cap more jauntily on his head, and followed the princess, his heart bounding and his step elastic with honest pride. "If my father," she whispered softly to Deconinck, "had but a thousand such, so fearless and so true, our enemies would not long keep foot in Flanders." "Flanders has but one Breydel," replied the Clothworker. "It is but seldom that nature sets so fiery a soul in so mighty a body; and that is a wise providence of God, else should men, when they learn to know their force, become too proud of heart, like the giants of old, who sought to climb up into heaven."

He would have proceeded; but at this moment he was interrupted by a sentinel running breathlessly up, and calling out aloud to Breydel: "Master Dean, my fellows of the watch have sent me to let you know that a thick cloud of dust has been seen rising in the distance from just before our city-gates, and that a noise as of an army in full march is clearly audible. Some considerable body is leaving the city, and advancing towards our camp."

"To arms! to arms!" cried Breydel in a voice that was heard far and near through the encampment; "each man to his place!" "Quick!" The work-people hastily seized their arms, and ran confusedly hither and thither; but this was only for a moment. The companies were speedily formed, and soon the guildsmen might be seen standing firm and motionless in their serried phalanx. Breydel's first care was to post five hundred chosen men about Matilda's tent, to which she had with all speed returned; a carriage, too, well horsed, was drawn up before it, and every preparation made for her escape in case of need; then with the whole remainder of his force he issued from the wood in full array, and ready at all points for battle.

It was not long ere they became aware that it was a false alarm. The body which raised the dust was evidently advancing in no kind of order; and it was soon perceptible that a large portion of it consisted of women and children confusedly mingled together. A prominent object was a bier, or rather hand-barrow, borne by men, round which the women crowded, filling the air with the most piteous lamentations. But although the cause of alarm no longer existed, the guildsmen still kept their ranks, resting upon their arms, and waiting with anxious curiosity the solution of the enigma. At last the approaching train drew near; and while wives and children pressed through the ranks to embrace a husband or a father, a frightful spectacle presented itself to the assembled multitude.

The four bearers of the bier carried it to within a short distance of the Dean of the Butchers, and there set it down upon the ground. Upon it lay two female corpses, their clothes dabbled with blood, their features indiscernible, being concealed from sight by a black veil thrown over the heads. The women meanwhile still kept up their cries; one continued heart-rending: "Woe! woe!" was all that could be heard, till at last a voice exclaimed: "The French soldiers have murdered them!" Hitherto the guildsmen had looked on silently in mingled surprise and curiosity; but as these fearful words reached their ears, their hearts swelled with revengeful fury, and disorder would have ensued but for Breydel's loud command: "The first man that leaves the ranks shall be severely punished!" he exclaimed.

He himself, tortured by a terrible presentiment, rushed impetuously to the bier, and tore away the veil that concealed the faces; but, O God! how fearful the sight that met his eyes! He uttered not a sound, he moved not a limb; he stood there as struck with sudden and universal palsy. Paler he was than the corpses themselves, and his hair stood on end upon his head. His lips quivering, his eyes fixedly bent upon the eyes now glazed in death, one would have said that he felt his last hour upon him.

Thus he stood, but for a few moments only. Soon, with a mighty bound, he sprang forward in front of the ranks, threw both arms up into the air, and in a voice of agony, exclaimed: "Woe! woe! woe!" My aged mother, poor sister!

With these words he flung himself into Deconinck's arms, and lay powerless and almost senseless upon his friend's bosom. With vague and wandering eyes he stared around, while his comrades shuddered with horror and compassion. Anon he furiously raised his axe; but it was instantly caught away out of his hand. Deconinck now gave the word for all to return to their work until further orders. The men, indeed, thought of nought else but speedy vengeance; but no one ventured to dispute the command, for they knew that the Dean of the Clothworkers had been duly appointed their general-in-chief. Giving vent, therefore, to their feelings in murmurs, they returned into the wood, and resumed, though unwillingly, the labours which this incident had interrupted.

By Deconinck's care Breydel was speedily conveyed to his own tent, where exhausted alike in mind and body, he threw himself upon a seat, and rested his head upon the table. He said nothing; but when his eyes met those of his friend, there was a singular expression in them. A bitter mocking smile distorted his features; it was as though he were scoffing at his own wretchedness.

At last Deconinck broke the silence. My unhappy friend," he said, "be calm, for God's sake." "Calm! calm!" repeated Breydel; "am I not calm? Have you ever seen me so calm before?" "Oh, my friend!" resumed the Clothworker, "I will tell you how intense must be the agony of your soul; I seem to see death upon your countenance. Comfort you I cannot; your calamity is too great. I know of no balm for such a wound."

"Not so say I," replied Breydel; "the balm for my wound I know well enough; it is the power to procure it that fails me. O my poor mother! they have shed your blood because your son is a true Fleming; and that son—oh, misery!—cannot avenge you!"

As he uttered these words the expression of his countenance altered; he ground his teeth violently together; his hands grasped the legs of the table as though he would snap them asunder. Then, again, he became more quiet, and seemed to sink into a state of the deepest depression.

"Now, Master Breydel, bear up like a man," Deconinck began again, "and give no way to despair, that worst enemy of the soul. Strengthen your heart against the bitter calamity that has this day befallen you; your mother's blood shall not have cried in vain for vengeance."

Again the fearful smile curled Breydel's lip. "Vengeance!" he exclaimed; how easily you promise what it is not in your power to accomplish,—who can avenge me? Can you yourself? and could torrents of French blood refill my mother's veins? Can the tyrant's life redeem his victims from the grave? No; they are dead,—gone from me forever, my friend. I will suffer in silence and without complaint. There is no comfort left for me; we are too weak, and our foes too mighty."

Deconinck made no reply to Breydel's lament, and seemed to be revolving something weighty in his mind. He appeared like one who was putting violence on himself, and controlling some strong inward feeling. The Dean of the Butchers regarded him with an enquiring look, deeming that something unusual was at work within him. Soon the painful expression passed away from Deconinck's face; he rose slowly from his seat, and in a tone of deep earnestness thus addressed his friend: "Our foes are too mighty, say you? To-morrow you shall say so no more. They have gained their ends by fraud and treachery, and have not feared to pour out innocent blood like water, as though the avenging angel no longer stood before the throne of the Most High. They know not that the life of every one of them is even now in my hands; that I can break them in pieces, as though God had put His power into my hands. They seek their advantage in deceit, and cruelty, and all evil arts. Well, then, their own sword shall pierce them, and they shall perish by it. I have said it!"

At this moment Deconinck looked like an inspired prophet denouncing the malediction of the Lord upon the crimes and backslidings of Jerusalem. There was such an authority in his voice and bearing, as he declared God's judgments on the foe, that Breydel listened to him with awe-struck emotion.

"Wait a little," he proceeded; "I will send for one of these new comers, that we may know how it has all happened; but, I entreat you, do not let your feelings carry you away whatever account he may give. I promise you vengeance even beyond what you would yourself demand; for matters are now arrived at a point at which endurance would be disgrace."

His cheeks glowed with the intensity of his indignation. He who was usually so calm, was now inflamed with fiercer passion than Breydel himself, though his exterior did not betray to their full extent the feelings which agitated him. He left the tent for a few moments, and returned with one of the lately-arrived craftsmen, from whom he demanded a full and particular recital of all that had passed in Bruges. From him they learned the amount of the reinforcements with which De Chatillon had arrived, the execution of the seven citizens, and the circumstances attending it, together with all the frightful story of the sacking of the town.

Breydel, for his part, listened to the horrible recital dispassionately enough, for all was as nothing to him after the murder of her who had given him birth; but Deconinck's emotion sensibly increased as each scene in the hideous tragedy was unrolled before him. It was not the details of the narrative however, exciting as they were, that thus affected him; patriotism and love of liberty were the two main-springs of his soul, and in these all his energies were concentrated. He felt that the latest moment had arrived for commencing in earnest the work of regeneration; that moment must not be lost, or the event of that would spread terror through the Flemish people, and utterly subdue their spirit. The necessary information obtained he dismissed the craftsman, and sat for some time silent, his head supported on his hand, while Breydel awaited impatiently the result of his cogitations.

Suddenly he started from his reverie. "Friend," he exclaimed, "sharpen your axe; chase sorrow

from your heart! Up; we will break the chains from off our country's neck!"

"What is it you mean?" cried Breydel. "Listen: the husbandman waits till the cold of the morning has driven the caterpillars into their nest, then he plucks it from the tree, sets his foot upon it, and with one stamp of his heel crushes the whole brood. Do you understand me now?"

"Apply your parable," replied the butcher. "Oh, my friend, a bright gleam of hope breaks in upon me through my dark despair. But go on, go on!"

"Well, then, the French tyrants have preyed upon our country like noisome insects; and like them they shall be crushed—ay, as though a mountain had fallen upon them. Cheer up, Master Jan; judgment is gone forth against them. Your mother's death shall be requited with usury, and the blood we will shed shall wash the stain of slavery from the Flemish name."

Breydel's eyes wandered restlessly round the tent, seeking in vain for his axe; at last he remembered that it had been taken from him. Seizing Deconinck's hand,

"My friend!" he said with strong emotion, "more than once you have been my preserver; but hitherto it was I who owed you; henceforth I shall be your debtor for all its peace and joy. But now make haste, and tell me by what means you meditate accomplishing this vengeance, that my satisfaction may be unalloyed, and free from any lingering doubt."

"Have patience for a moment, you will soon hear all; for I must immediately lay my project before a general council of the Deans, which I am now about to call."

He hurried out, and despatched one of the sentinels through the encampment, to summon the superior officers to meet at Breydel's tent. Shortly afterward, they all stood before it in a circle, to the number of thirty, when Deconinck thus addressed them:

"Comrades! the solemn hour is come, which must bring us liberty or death. Long enough have we borne the brand of shame upon our foreheads; it is time that we demand from our tyrants an account of our brothers' blood; and if it shall so be that we lose our lives in our country's cause—remember, comrades, that the slave drops his fetters on the threshold of the tomb; we shall sleep with our fathers, free and without reproach. But no; we shall conquer—I feel it, I know it; the Black Lion of Flanders shall not die! Right and justice, I need not tell you, are all on our side.—The strangers have plundered our land; they have imprisoned our Count, with all the nobles that were true to their prince and their country; the Lady Philippa they have poisoned; our good city of Bruges they have laid waste with the sword; and on our own proper soil and territory they have hung up our brethren as infamous malefactors.—The blood-stained corpses of those who were nearest and dearest to our friends lie even now unburied amongst us; unhappy victims of these foreign despots, they have voices which cry in your hearts for vengeance! Well, then, now to the purpose for which I have called you together; but remember, what I say to you must bury in your hearts, as in the depths of the grave. The French garrison have wearied themselves out with this day's wicked work; they will sleep soundly,—most of them only to wake, I trust, on the day of judgment. Nay nothing to your men, but to-morrow morning, two hours before sunrise, have them ready under arms in the wood behind St. Cross. I shall myself proceed instantly to Ardenburg, to make my arrangements there, and to send the necessary orders to Dean Lindens at Sluys; for I must be in Bruges, before the day is over. I see you are surprised,—well, one thing there is that we must not forget; there is a Frenchman in Bruges whom we must not harm, for his blood would assuredly be upon our heads."

"The Governor De Mortenay," here interrupted several voices. "The same," pursued Deconinck; "he has ever treated us with consideration, and shown that he feels for the calamities of our country. Many a time he has restrained that execrable wretch, Van Gistel, in his persecutions, and obtained pardon or mitigation of sentence for such as were condemned to suffer. We must not sully our rightful arms with the blood of the just; and it is to provide for this that I am about to risk myself in the city, be the danger what it may."

"But," objected one of the Deans present, "how shall we obtain entrance into the city to-morrow morning (for that, I suppose, is our object), since the gates are not opened till sunrise?"

"The gates will be opened for us," replied Deconinck; "I shall not leave the city-walls till our vengeance is secured. And now, for the present, I have said enough; to-morrow, at the rendezvous, I will give you further orders; meanwhile do you get your companions on foot. I will take immediate measures for removing the Lady Matilda from the neighbourhood of a spectacle which befiteth not her presence."

All this Breydel had listened to without any expression of approbation, though his countenance sufficiently betokened the intensity of his satisfaction; but no sooner was the assembly broken up, and he found himself again alone with his friend, than, throwing himself upon Deconinck's neck, while tears trickled down his cheeks,

"My best friend!" he exclaimed; "you have brought me back from the bottomless pit of despair. Now can I with an undisturbed heart weep over the remains of my poor mother and sister; and when I lay them in the earth, devoutly add my prayer to the last solemnities. But then—oh, then, when the grave has closed over them, what have I left upon earth to love or to live for?" "Our country, and our country's greatness!" "Yes, yes; country and liberty,—and vengeance! But now, my friend, understand me well; when our land is fairly clear of the French, nothing will remain for me but to shed tears of rage. For then there will be no more heads for my axe to cleave, no corpses for me to trample on, as the hoofs of their horses have trampled down our brothers. What is liberty to me? Only the sight of streaming blood can give me joy; now that they have poured out that of the heart from which my own veins were filled. But haste away, and God