Chapman was surprised how well informed Father Fisher was concerning the affairs of the world. He expected him to be an authority in his sacred calling, but he wondered how he found the time to learn so much about current affairs. He touched on many topics and he illuminated and clarified every subject he discussed. In the midst of their talk there was a call from the little office adjoining the study. The door between the rooms was not entirely closed as the priest went to answer the summons, and Chapman could not help but see and overhear. A young woman in black, with a shawl drawn over her head, was speaking:

"Oh, Father," she said, "they've taken Ann to the Municipal Hospital and I don't know whether she'll ever come back. She cried to see you before she left, but they wouldn't wait."

"What was the trouble?"

"Diphtheria, and in an advanced stage. She may not last until morning, and no priest to console her!"

Father Fisher pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"It's past the usual hour," he said, more to himself than to the woman, "but I know they'll let me in."

In five minutes he had excused himself to his callers, put on his hat and coat and left the house. At the door he paused to speak a word of comfort to the woman in the shawl, and promised to let her know the condition of her child. Chapman and Higgins left the house at the same time and started homeward.

"Think of that man going to the pesthouse," said Chapman. "Why, he's taking his life in his hands!"

Higgins smiled.

"It's all in a day's work with Father Fisher—and with every other priest."

Chapman was silent all the way home. He was thinking profoundly and when he said good night it was in an absent-minded way.

But in spite of the young man's alarm, the priest came out of the visitation unscathed, as he had so many times before. The child in the hospital recovered too, so the incident was not depressing by any means.

In the meantime Chapman absented himself from the Higgins' home. Agnes and her father wondered if they had unwittingly offended him.

"You havn't quarreled with him about religion have you?" asked Higgins.

"No," replied Agnes, with opened wonder. "I followed your advice and never touched on the subject—after the first time."

At the end of six months Chapman appeared, bringing a great bunch of roses to Agnes. She was glad to see him — more so than she cared to confess.

"Agnes," he said, and the sound of her Christian name from his lips was very musical indeed, "I've some news which I think will please you."

"What, for instance?"

"I've been received into the Catholic Church."

She grasped both his hands impulsively, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"You've surprised and made me very happy indeed."

"I thought I would, and now I want you to make me very happy."

"How?"

"By becoming my wife. Please say that you will."

He could scarcely hear her reply, but he knew that it was the word he had hoped would come from her dear lips. After some moments she looked up shyly.

"John—what sort of argument ever brought you into the Catholic Church?"

He beamed on her.

"It wasn't argument at all—although during my period of probation, I've satisfied my reason perfectly — but action. I've watched Father Fisher in his work, day by day, and I am fully convinced that the Church which can produce men of that kind must be a divine institution. And my only wonder now is that I've been blind to the truth so long." — George Barton, in the Magnificat.

MOTHERHOOD

No more deserved and touching tribute could be paid to any class of individuals than was paid to the mothers of the nation Sunday, May 12. In their hands is the construction of our civilization. Their strength is the measure of the nation's strength, as their purity and integrity is the measure of the fidelity of the nation to the ideals of morality, justice and right.

Well might the country turn to them and do them honor at all times, but particularly now, when the world is passing through its Gethsemane and the sacrifices and deaths of their children are writ large on the pages of immortal history. To fight and die for one's country has always and in all lands been esteemed an honor. And in this glory the mother naturally shares. For the child is the parent's very own, and the honor that comes to him is reflected likewise on her.

The mother's part in the making of brave soldier lads is incalculable. Her courage and fortitude have nerved them to the performance of the mightiest deeds. Her example has been a tower of strength to her sons when the heat of battle has brought exhaustion and life seemed not worth the living. The thought of home and mother, of the day when all will be united in the happiness of unending peace now stimulates the soldier at Picardy and Seicheprey, as it did those who fought and fell at Vimy Ridge or in the valley of the Somme.

Again, on the mother devolves a great work of conservation. By saving food, fuel and all that the Government asks she is building mightily for her son in the trenches. It has been said and truthfully that food and fuel will win this War. And the mothers are saving food and fuel for those sons. They are employing substitutes for coal and food so that their sons in faraway France, fighting for the boon of freedom and the preservation of human rights, may not suffer from the severity of the elements or from lack of invigorating food. Here the mothers are doing a high and noble duty, and with a lightness of heart and nobility of spirit that well become the best traditions of honorable and self-sacrificing motherhood.

On distant battlefields the greatest safeguard to morals, outside religion, and the greatest spur to upright conduct is the very thought of that mother at home, laboring, sacrificing, waiting. All untoward acts are nipped in the bud as the thought of mother and the honor of her family rush into the balance against the desire to do evil. Truly, God has blessed motherhood, and the honor men do to them will be reflected in national vigor and be rewarded by the God of battles.—Boston Pilot.

THE SOLDIERS AT THE ALTAR

TOLD BY LIEUT. MARCEL DUPONT, OF THE FRENCH CHASSEURS

Now one morning after countless ablutions with hot water and a clean shave, I was going, with brilliantly shining boots, down the steep footpath which led to the little house of our good Monsieur Cheveret, when my attention was drawn to a small, white notice posted on the door of the church. It ran:

"This evening at six o'clock
Benediction of the Most
Holy Sacrament."

It occurred to me at once that this happy idea had been conceived by the chaplain of the ambulance, for until then the church had been kept locked, as the young parish priest had been called up by the mobilization. I made haste to tell our captain and my comrades the good news, and we all determined to be present at the Benediction that evening.

At 5:30 o'clock our ears were delighted by music such as we had not been accustomed to hear for a very long time. In the deepening twilight some invisible hand was chiming the bells of the little church. How deliciously restful they were after the loud roar of the cannon and the rattle of the machine guns! Who would have thought that such deep, and also such solemn notes could come from so small a steeple? It stirred the heart and brought tears to the eyes, like some of Chopin's music. Those bells seemed to speak to us; they seemed to call us to prayer and preach courage and virtue to us.

At the end of the shady walk I was passing down — whose trees formed a rustling wall on either side—appeared the little church, with its slender steeple. It stood out in clear relief, a dark blue, almost violet silhouette against the purple background made by the setting sun. Some dark human forms were moving about and collecting around the low, arched doorway. Perhaps these were the good old women of the district who had come to pray in this little church which had remained closed to them for nearly two months. I fancied I could distinguish them from where I was, dignified and erect in their old-fashioned mantles.

But as soon as I got closer to them I found I was mistaken. It was not aged and pious women who were hurrying to the church door, but a group of silent artillerymen wrapped in their large blue caped cloaks. The bells shook out their solemn notes, and seemed to be calling others to come, too; and I should have been glad if their voices had been heard, for I was afraid the chaplain's appeal would hardly be heeded and that the benches of the little church would be three-parts empty.

But only gently pushing the door open, I found at once that my fears were baseless. The church was in fact too small to hold all the soldiers who had come long before the appointed hour as soon as they heard the bells begin. And now that I have no fears about the church being empty, I wondered how I was going to find a place myself. I stood on the doorstep, undecided, on tiptoe, looking over the heads of all those standing men to see whether there was any corner unoccupied where I could enjoy the beauty of the unexpected sight in peace.

The nave was almost dark. The expense of lighting had no doubt to be considered, for for several days past no candle or taper was to be had for money. And no doubt the kindness of a motorist of the Red Cross had been appealed to for the supply of all the candles which lit up the altar. This was indeed resplendent. The vestry had been ransacked for candlesticks, and the tabernacle was surrounded by a splendid aureole of light. All this increased the touching impression I felt on entering.

Against the brilliant background of the choir stood out the black forms of several hundred of men standing and looking toward the altar. Absolute silence reigned over the whole congregation of soldiers. And yet no discipline was enforced; there was no superior present to impose a show of devotion. Left to themselves, they all understood what they had to do. They crowded together, waiting in silence and without any impatience for the ceremony to begin.

Suddenly a white figure came towards me through the crowded ranks of soldiers. He extended his arms in token of welcome, and I at once recognized the chaplain in his surplice. His face was beaming with pleasure, and his eyes shone behind his spectacles. He appeared to be supremely happy.

"This way, Monsieur l'Officier, this way. I have thought of everything. You must have the seat of honor. Follow me."

I followed the holy man, who elbowed a way for me up the crowded aisle. He had reserved all the choir-stalls for the officers. Before the War they had been occupied, at High Mass by the clergy, the choir, and the principal members of the congregation. He proudly showed me into one of them, and I felt rather embarrassed at finding myself suddenly in a blaze of light, between an artillery lieutenant and a surgeon-major.

The low vestry door now opened and a very unexpected procession appeared. In front of a bearded priest walked four artillery men in uniform. One of them carried a censer, and another the incense box. The other two walked in front of them, arms crossed and eyes front. The whole procession knelt before the altar with perfect precision, and I saw beneath the priest's vestments muddy gaiters of the same kind as those worn by the gunners.

At the same time we heard, quite close to us, strains of music which seemed to us celestial. In the dim light I had noticed the harmonium, but now I could distinguish the artist who was enchanting us by his skill in drawing sweet sounds from a poor worn instrument. At once all eyes were turned toward him; we were all enraptured. None of us dared to hope that we should lift our voices in the hymns.

The organist seemed unconscious of his surroundings. The candle placed near the keyboard cast a strange light upon the most expressive of heads. Against the dark background of the church the striking features of a noble face were thrown into strong relief: a forehead broad and refined, an aristocratic nose, a fair moustache turned up at the ends, and, notably, two fine blue eyes, which, without a glance at the fingers on the keys, were fixed on the vaulted roof as though seeking inspiration there.

The chaplain turning to the congregation, then said: "My friends, we will all join in singing the 'O Salutaris.'"

The harmonium gave the first notes, and I braced myself to endure the dreadful discords I expected from this crowd of soldiers—mostly reservists—who, I suppose had come together that evening mainly out of curiosity.

Judge of my astonishment! At first only a few timid voices joined the chaplain's. But after a minute or so a marvel happened. From all these chests came a volume of sound such as I could hardly have believed possible. Who will say then that our dear France has lost her faith? Who can believe it? Every one of these men joined in singing the hymn, and not one of them seemed ignorant of the Latin words. It was a magnificent choir under a lofty vault, chanting with the fervor of absolute sincerity. There was not one discordant note, not one voice out of tune, to spoil its perfect harmony.

Who can believe that men, many of them more than thirty years old, would remember all the words unless they had been brought up in the faith of their ancestors and still held it?

I could not help turning to look at them. In the light of the candles their faces seemed to be wonderfully transfigured. Not one of them expressed irony or even indifference. What a fine picture it would have made for a Rembrandt! The bodies of the men were invisible in the darkness of the nave, and their heads alone emerged from the gloom. The effect was grand enough to fascinate the most skeptical of painters; it soothed and charmed one and wiped out all the miseries that the War had left in its wake. Men like these would be equal to anything, ready for anything; and I myself should have liked to see a Monsieur Homais hidden away in some corner of the church.

Meanwhile the sacred office was proceding at the altar. At any other time we might have smiled at the sight of the soldier-priest served by choristers of thirty-five in uniform; at the cermony it was inexpressibly touching and attractive, and it was especially delightful to see how carefully and precisely each performed his functions that the ceremony might not lack its accustomed pomp.

When the singing had ceased the chaplain went up to the holy table. In a voice full of feeling he tried to express his gratitude and happiness to all those brave fellows: I should not imagine him to be a briliant speaker at the best of times, but on that occasion the worthy man was completely unintelligible. His happiness was choking him. He tried in vain to find the words he wanted, used the wrong ones, and only confused himself trying to get them right. But nobody had the least desire to laugh when, to conclude his address, he said with a sigh of relief:

"And now we will tell twenty beads of the rosary; ten for the success of our arms, and the other ten in memory of soldiers who have died on the field of honor. . . . Hail! Mary, full of grace. . . ."

I looked around the church once more, and everyone's lips were moving silently accompanying the priest's words. Opposite us I saw the artillery captain take a rosary out of his pocket and tell the beads with dreamy eyes; and when the chaplain came to the sentence, "Holy Mary, Mother of God . . ." hundreds of voices burst forth, deep and manly voices, full of fervor which seemed to proclaim their faith in Him Who was present before them on the altar, and also to promise self-sacrifice and devotion to that other sacred thing, their country.

Then after the Tantum Ergo had been sung with vigor, the priest held up the monstrance, and I saw all those soldiers with one accord kneel down on the stone floor and bow their heads. The silence was impressive; not a word, not a cough, and not a chair moved. I had never seen such devotion in any church. Some spiritual power was brooding over the assemblage and bowing all those heads in token of submission and hope. Good, brave soldiers of France, how we love and honor you at such moments, and what confidence your chiefs must feel when they lead such men to battle!

ANOTHER DRIVE ON THE POPE

One of the distressing by-products of the War has been a violent outbreak of anti-clerical, sectarian and Protestant hatred against the Pope. Wild talk has been revived concerning the temporal power, although the last vestige of it has been in its grave these many decades. Deep-seated antipathy has taken alarm at the prestige of the Vatican and has protested in surprised indignation at the immense spiritual authority evidenced by the lonely prisoner in Rome, whom it thought long since discredited. But this is not all. A campaign of calumny has been set afoot, it would almost seem systematically organized, and bigotry and hatred have had an ugly recrudescence. All of which, apart from the indignation it has caused millions of Catholics, is seriously hurting the common cause. It is incredibly shortsighted, to say the least, now that some measure of success is assured by long-hoped-for unity of military command, to raise the cry of "No Popery!" and to try to effect a breach in the unity of citizens.

What lies behind the wide publicity given to false statements and wholly unfounded rumors concerning the acts and plans, past, present and future, of the Pope, which are being recklessly disseminated in Italy, France, Great Britain and the United States, without a shred of evidence and with no respect for the truth? How comes it that a word derogatory to the Jews is sufficient to put a man in prison, whereas the Pope is considered legitimate prey for any chance reviler who may care to take a fling at him, no matter how poisoned it may be with falsehood? How is it possible that the very papers which pride themselves on the loftiness of their principles, as contrasted with Germany's, throw ethics to the winds when there is question of the Pope?

It is inconceivable that any well-informed, fair-minded man should write these words, recently printed in the Wall Street Journal:

"Already the failure of the German drive in the west in securing any of its objectives has revived peace activities from a new angle, or rather from one which had been discarded. The Cologne Gazette, which correctly forecast the Pope's first effort to secure a German peace, predicts another attempt of the kind about the middle of this month. If this is correct nothing but failure can result. The attitude of the Vatican as disclosed in Ireland, Belgium, Austria, Germany and in Italy itself puts such mediation out of the question."

What is the purpose of these contemptible insinuations? The writer speaks of "the Pope's first effort to secure a German peace." By the same token he implies, unless he is hopelessly illogical, that President Wilson, in his address to Congress on January 8, 1918, advocated a German peace. For even in so anti-clerical an assembly as the Italian Chamber the substantial identity between the principles outlined by the Pope and those insisted on by the President was openly proclaimed. No chicanery can call the Pope's peace proposals a German peace without stigmatizing the President's fourteen articles in like terms.

The truth is, of course, that neither one nor the other was in any sense pro-German. By what stretch of imagination can the Pope's proposals be called a German peace, seeing they would exact from Austria-Hungary the renunciation of the occupied territories of Serbia, Montenegro Rumania, Russia and Italy; from Germany the abandonment of the conquests in Belgium, France and Russia; from the former, concessions in the matter of the Italian-speaking provinces along the Adriatic, and from the latter a just settlement of the vexed question of Alsace-Lorraine? The truth is, as has been repeatedly asserted by the Vatican, stated without contradiction in England and Italy, that the Pope's note, if it seems to favor one side more than the other, looks to the interests of the Entente rather than those of the Central Powers. The veiled accusation about the Pope's attitude towards Belgium is equally at variance with the facts. The kingdom of Belgium, the Belgian Government and Cardinal Mercier have all officially expressed to the Vatican their intense gratitude for the Pope's attitude towards Belgium. If these three unimpeachable and competent witnesses are satisfied, what show of justice has the complaint of the Wall Street Journal?

Furthermore, only crass, inexcusable ignorance or deliberate suppression of facts can explain the echo of the false reports to the effect that the resistance to conscription in Ireland is the result of Papal pressure. Before the Wall Street Journal made its calumnious insinuation there had appeared in the New York Times, and every well-informed person was aware of it, this deliberate denial from Cardinal Logue:

"I don't suppose you yourself need telling, but if you think anybody else needs telling, then tell him from me that it is nonsense. The Irish Bishops have received no instructions and no suggestions from the Vatican, about their attitude toward conscription. If they had, it is surely myself who would know, and I do not know anything of the kind. But everybody knows that the Catholic Church has sons on both sides in this horrible War, and everybody ought to know that so far as the Vatican is concerned, it has been neutral throughout. The Vatican could have been no other."

Why did the Wall Street Journal ignore this statement?

The Italian calumny, which the same editorial repeats, was challenged by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster as soon as it appeared in the London Morning Post, and its author, so far from substantiating it, failed to produce proof and was compelled to lapse into inglorious silence. Cardinal Gasparri at once contradicted it and characterized it as "an atrocious calumny;" his statement has not been disproved. The Italian Government, which was most concerned, so far from asserting the odious charge, went out of its way to pay a high compliment to the loyalty of the Italian clergy and Hierarchy.

The writer, therefore, in the Wall Street Journal is confronted by an awkward dilemma. Either he was not acquainted with the facts, in which case his ignorance is inexcusable; or he was acquainted with them, but deliberately suppressed them, in which case his conduct is beneath contempt.—America.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

Two lights on a lowly altar;
Two snowy cloths for a Feast;
Two vases of dying roses;
The morning comes from the east,
With a gleam for the folds of the vestments
And a grace for the face of the priest.

The sound of a low, sweet whisper
Floats over a little bread,
And trembles around a chalice,
And the priest bows down his head!
O'er a sign of white on the altar—
In the cup o'er a sign of red.

As red as the red of roses,
As white as the white of snows!
But the red is a red of a surface
Beneath which a God's blood flows;
And the white is the white of a sunlight
Within which a God's flesh glows.

Ah! words of the olden Thursday!
Ye come from the far-away!
Ye bring us the Friday's victim
In His own love's olden way;
In the hand of the priest at the altar
His Heart finds a home each day.

The sight of a Host uplifted!
The silver-sound of a bell!
The gleam of a golden chalice.
Be glad, sad heart! 'tis well;
He made, and He keeps love's promise,
With thee all days to dwell.

From his hand to his lips that tremble,
From his lips to his heart a thrill,
Goes the little Host on its love-path,
Still doing the Father's will;
And over the rim of the chalice
The blood flows forth to fill

The heart of the man anointed
With the waves of a wondrous grace;
A silence falls on the altar—
An awe on each bended face—
For the Heart that bled on Calvary
Still beats in the holy place,

The priest comes down to the railing
Where brows are bowed in prayer;
In the tender clasp of his fingers
A Host lies pure and fair,
And the hearts of Christ and the Christian
Meet there—and only there!

Oh! love that is deep and deathless!
Oh! faith that is strong and grand!
Oh! hope that will shine forever,
O'er the wastes of a weary land!
Christ's Heart finds an earthly heaven
In the palm of the priest's pure hand.

—REV. ABRAM J. RYAN

In Holy Communion, we reverse, in a manner, that token of love and friendship which passed between Jesus and St. John at the last Supper; for there the disciple leaned on his Master's bosom, but here the Lord condescends to repose in the breast of His unworthyy servant. Oh! how pure and brightly clean should we keep the couch on which He thus deigns to rest.—Cardinal Wiseman.

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