

flor are necessary to attain that end! The slow-moving, monotonous days, the selfsame tasks, again and again—the Rule, strict and inexorable. Mortifications are nothing. I rather like them. I have no complaint to make on that score—none whatsoever."

He leaned against the window frame. The students had augmented their numbers, and from the courtyard below came the subdued hum of young voices.

"A delicious evening," he continued, still talking to himself. "Outside these walls how many young men like myself are enjoying the bright summer weather—returning from football, from a ride—from fishing, speeding canoes through clear and tranquil rivers, with long, firm, clean cut strokes! Ah, what would I not give to be strolling once more through the dear old garden, or seated there, on the stone bench, beside my mother? What is she doing at this moment? Dinner is over. She is moving slowly down the arbor with the rosary in her hands. She is praying—praying for me, her George." Suddenly the young man turned from the window and fell on his knees before the crucifix, the only ornament of that small, bare, cell-like room.

"O my Lord and Saviour!" he cried, "help me—guide me! They well knowest I am Thine—Thine only. It is my joy and my pride to belong to Thee. Aid me to conquer this languor, this indifference. Reach forth Thy hand, O Lord, and lead me aright. Give me a joyful and courageous heart. My mother is praying for me. Harken to her prayers. I wish to be Thine, Lord, Thine alone."

It grows dark outside—the voices below are hushed. The moonlight pierces a slender shaft through the deep, embrasured window. The seminary rises to his feet. He can see the shadowy garden—he can hear his mother's voice as the beads slip through her fingers. "Ave Maria! Ave Maria!"

The sun was setting on the bloody field where yesterday the soldiers of France were mowed to earth like grain before the sickle. Behind a hillock, pencil and paper on his knee, an old corporal was busily writing.

"What are you doing, Menard?" inquired his young lieutenant, pausing beside him. They were from the same village.

"Making my will, mon lieutenant," replied the old man, lifting his gray head.

"Your will? Have you anything to leave?"

"Very little," answered the corporal. "But what there is will go to M. le Cure and yourself, mon lieutenant. We fight again tomorrow, and I wish to settle my accounts. It is only right when one is about to face death."

"Death! Death!" echoed the young man, half-aloud.

"Yes, mon lieutenant, the bullets fly thickly, and seldom miss. How many of our comrades did we not bury this morning? Tomorrow it may be our turn. Vive la bataille! Vive la France!"

"Vive la France!" repeated the young soldier as he passed on.

Presently he sat down on a freshly made mound which covered the bodies of a hundred men.

"To die?" he thought. "It is a glorious thing to die for one's country. But to give up this world for ever! Honor, glory, home, friends, the blue sky, the pleasant fields, the joy of life. That is what it means to die."

He covered his eyes with his hands. It seemed to him then that he could see his mother's face, could hear her sweet and loving voice as she called him, the youngest: "My little Henri! My dear, brave boy!"

When he was a child, playing after dinner with his brothers and sisters in the garden, there always came a time when the mother, approaching through the long alley, would call them gently to her side.

"Come, children, you have played long enough. It is time to say the Rosary." And, hushed and reverent, the little troop would follow her to the old stone bench beneath the platan tree.

The eyes of the young soldier were wet. He rose to his feet. The words of his old comrade rang in his ears. "I must settle my accounts."

With quick, decisive steps, he passed through the camp, pausing before the tent of a priest sergeant.

"Father, can you hear my confession? We have a hard fight before us tomorrow."

"Ready?"

"Yes, Father, at once."

The shadows of the platan trees fall across the old garden. The dead leaves rustle as the long black robe sweeps the gravelled path. Under the delicate lace coiffure, waving bands of soft white hair outline the fine profile, while the tireless lips repeat again and again, "Ave Maria! Ave Maria!"

"Ave Maria! Watch over them, holy Mother, my daughter, my two sons. I am a poor helpless woman. I can do nothing for them—nothing, but recite my Rosary. Ave Maria! Ave Maria!"—Adapted from the French by Mary E. Mannix in the Rosary.

DO WE NEED A CENSORSHIP?

On September 9, the showing of a widely advertised moving picture was forbidden by the New York Commissioner of Licenses, the Honorable George H. Bell, on the ground that it was "not a proper production." As usual, a temporary injunction was secured, and on September 22, Supreme Court Justice Cobhan handed down his decision. It sustained Commissioner Bell on every point.

Two important lessons may be drawn from this decision. The first is the absolute need of adequate legal censorship in New York, for the theater and the moving picture. Judge Cobhan lays down the admirable principle, which should be insisted upon, that "no depicted film that leads the beholder through such scenes of depravity and degradation can help society."

I think such a play offends public decency and tends to the injury not only of the young of the community, but of all persons who witness it.

There is danger in an appeal to the imagination, and when the suggestion is immoral, the more left to the imagination, the more subtle the influence.

Yet on the very day on which this decision was rendered, the National Association of the Moving Picture Industry declared its opposition to all censorship, except that of the producer himself, on the ground, reports the Sun, that it is "repugnant to art and American institutions." Nor will this declaration remain a mere "resolution." According to the daily press, the Association has already defeated, for renomination to the State Senate, the author of an excellent censorship bill which passed the Legislature but failed to secure the Governor's signature, and is preparing to defeat a New York Assemblyman who has shown a fondness for censorship.

The situation is serious. The Association, it is said, urges decency upon the film producers: what action it may take if the recommendation is not followed, has not been disclosed. Against the film declared by Judge Cobhan to be "offensive to public decency," and whose producer the District Attorney termed "vice-mongers," the Association, so far as is known, made no protest. Obviously, the censorship advocated by the Association is worthless. As the prosecuting attorney remarked, it forces the courts "to pass judgment upon a self-evident fact," and in the meantime "under cover of a temporary injunction, the manager reaps a rich harvest."

The second lesson to be drawn from Judge Cobhan's decision is of importance to all who are interested in keeping public "amusements" within the bounds of common decency. The successful prosecution in the present instance is due to the energy and fearlessness of Commissioner Bell, but his hands were strengthened by the many private citizens who joined him in protesting against this vile exploitation of unsavory Grand Jury reports. What has been done in New York can be done, more readily perhaps, in every American city. Catholics in particular should feel themselves bound to protest vigorously against the unholy desecration of womanhood which is now occupying so large a place on the stage and in the moving picture; and these protests should be lodged with the proper city authorities. What is sometimes censured as remissness in public officials, finds its root in the fact that these men, contending against the capitalized vice of the stage, have sought the help of the decent part of the community and have not found it. It is not a bad thing to deplore the evil that flaunts itself on the stage, but a more practical way of removing it is to aid the authorities in the prosecution of their duties. Without the support of public opinion they can do little. With it they may ultimately succeed in replacing the present license of the stage by decency—America.

THE ROSARY IN THE TRENCHES

By Anthony Hardin Lynch in Rosary Magazine

It is strange how quickly men grow accustomed to horrors—even the horrors of war! During the first weeks of the present great conflict a wet blanket seemed to be spread over the lightest hearts and the liveliest imaginations, not only because of the uncertainties of the immediate future, but also because of the indescribable scenes which were known to be occurring at the front. Now, however, after the lapse of two years, we read of the battles in which thousands of men have been ruthlessly slaughtered or maimed for life without so much as a visible trace of emotion. We seem, indeed, to be on the point of forgetting that half of the civilized world is plunged in deepest mourning as the result of the most desolating war in its history, and to be intent mainly upon its final outcome.

Even the men at the front who are suffering untold hardships whilst looking death squarely in the face, have become so inured to their misery as to seem almost insensible of it. They know well that death at any moment may invade their burrows, for hand grenades, bombs and the missiles hurled by the machines especially invented for trench warfare hiss continuously above them, and the marksmanship on both sides is so perfect that any

man who is reckless enough to lift his head above ground is instantly picked off. So deadly, however, is the monotony of their lives that this gambol with death is almost welcomed as a diversion.

But trench life has one aspect fraught with blessings which many short-sighted men have failed to notice. To the countless thousands who lie half buried on the firing line it has brought time to think! Formerly they never gave themselves pause to consider the fundamental things of life—the things that really matter. For the most of them the grim battle for the bare means of existence was amply sufficient to absorb their attention. Some, few, perhaps, had occasional moments left over for a hurried reading of the daily papers or even for sport; but, on the whole, only a very small minority of the men of Europe had time—or thought they had time—to ponder the truths of religion and the things of God.

But now thousands of soldiers in the trenches are writing home that, as far as they are personally concerned, trench life has proved a real blessing. In the many letters from the front that are being published in the Continental papers one finds continually recurring this note of gratitude—for a moment's time to think! Silence, they say, is the native air of the strong. The silence of trench life has become the native air of the children of God. Many a man who had forgotten God in the busy streets and the noisy wine-shops has found God in the long, dull hours spent in the trenches. Perhaps a momentary vision of God's relation to man has been flashed upon him—as happened to Paul amid the apple groves of the Damascus Road—when the hand grenade exploded just above his head. Certain it is that these men who within the last months have had intercourse with none but their fellow warriors have found great consolation in keeping company with God and His saints. They have found the Prince of Peace far more companionable than the lords of war. They have come to realize that religion can be even more engaging than plans of battle or methods of assault.

No wonder, then, that a notable revival of religion has taken place in the trenches. Men have found God where they least expected to find Him. In the cannon's roar they have seen a symbol of His might; in the long silent hours of the night-watch they have heard His words—the words that have been ringing down the centuries. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Or, again, "My son—for there is such a thing after all as the Fatherhood of God, which makes us all brothers—My son, give Me thy heart."

Now, any Catholic who sets out consciously to find Christ will inevitably find His Mother. It was so during our Blessed Saviour's life here on earth. He went down to Nazareth and was subject to Mary and Joseph. Surely He was never out of Our Lady's sight, except when for three days she lost Him in Jerusalem. We can imagine what agonies then tortured her mother's heart. Perhaps it was because of Our Lord's realization of what His bodily absence had meant to her that after her blessed death He took her bodily into heaven, that she might there feast her eyes upon His ineffable beauty for all eternity?

And just because there is this close bond of union and companionship, so to say, between Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, we find that they are never separated in the Church. It is an inhuman, cruel piety that would part the Mother from her Son. The Catholic instinct cries out against such a divorce. Genuine piety is broad enough to embrace both Son and Mother; and therefore the soldiers in the trenches who have found Christ have also found her. And finding Mary, they have found her beads!

It is a well-established fact that the Bavarian soldiers, as they marched to the front, frequently recited the beads. One who was present writes that the procession seemed more like a pilgrimage than an army on the way to battle. He goes on to state that sometimes the chaplain carried the Blessed Sacrament with him inclosed in a golden pyx, and that on such occasions the soldiers, upon being informed of it, would seek permission immediately to precede or follow him reciting the beads.

A soldier serving in Champagne writes to his loving wife at home: "On several occasions I have had an opportunity to present to the lips of some dying comrade the cross of the rosary which you gave me before I left. Truly, a soldier going into the field cannot be given anything better than a rosary. I am glad to be able to tell you that every one of my Catholic comrades carries his beads. Those who did not bring them from home have received a pair from the division chaplain, Father J— of Mainz."

Another soldier in a letter to his parents, after describing a scene on the battlefield, says: "Here one learns to pray. This war is a blessing for many. One learns again to love and honor one's God. I have made a solemn promise that if I ever reach home again I will attend every possible religious service, and honor the Blessed Virgin whenever and wherever I can. I have promised her that as long as I live I will say the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary every day."

A young soldier of twenty-six years, a reservist from Cologne, who has been fighting on the Western front, writes thus: "You write me that

war has also its good side. And I can confirm it. Here many a one learns again to say his beads, which he had in his hands for the last time on the day of his first Communion. It is precisely the Rosary which has become our inseparable companion. Five decades each day is the rule; but when I go on watch I often say all of the fifteen mysteries."

Another soldier in the hospital at Trier wrote to his pastor: "That my wounds are not dangerous I ascribe to the fact that our Blessed Lady kept watch over me. When I was wounded several of my companions were also more or less seriously hurt. One of them who had received a fatal wound in his abdomen said to those around him: 'Comrades, say with me a "Hail Mary," and when this was finished, as death had not yet come, he bade them repeat the prayer: "We fly to thy protection, O holy Mother of God." Holding his rosary in his hands, asking to be buried with it, and securing from his comrades a promise to say the beads at least once for the repose of his soul, he died what I think may be called a happy death. May our Blessed Lady in whose honor he always said the beads, be a good intercessor for him with her Son!"

The well-known writer, H. Koch, tells in his inimitable Cologne dialect the following anecdote: "On parting a soldier's mother pressed into his hand a rosary, saying, while the tears trickled down her cheeks: "Here, dear Fritz, take this blessed rosary with you to the field and say it as often as you can. Then you'll have luck, and the protection of the Blessed Mother." Fritz fulfilled the wish of his mother and whenever he could said the pious prayer of the rosary. One day in an assault—how it came about he never knew—he lost his beads. That was hard, very hard for him since they had been his mother's parting gift. It seemed to him as if his best weapon had been taken out of his hands—the weapon which in the greatest danger had never failed to protect him. A few weeks later, sorely wounded, he was taken to the hospital in Trier. Being conscious, despite the serious nature of his injuries, he asked the little nun who nursed him: "Where is my rosary?" The good nun began to go through all his pockets—but no rosary could she find. Finally, from the very last pocket she drew out something which she carried to the bedside of the young hero, asking: "Can this possibly be your rosary?" A smile of joy lit up the face of the boy as he held out his injured left hand, crying: "Yes, that's it! That's my field rosary!" And what was it? Because he did not have anything else, Fritz had made a rosary for himself out of bits of wood and a piece of cord, using one small piece of wood for each "Hail Mary" and two for each "Our Father." To complete it, he had whittled a little cross out of wood. The good nun, visibly affected by this evidence of loyal devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, told the whole incident to the Mother Superior. On the very same day she brought Fritz the most beautiful pair of beads she could find. The field-rosary the Mother Superior sent to Fritz's mother, together with a little note telling her of the bravery, goodness and patience of her soldier boy. And this rosary is the dearest treasure of the mother, who keeps it on her dressing table inclosed in a glass case.

It is generally known that, owing to the great difficulties experienced by the Sisters in distributing religious articles among the soldiers, many of the valiant sons of France have been obliged to follow the example of the little German and make their own beads. It is not an unusual thing to find them carrying rosaries made of pebbles, or beans, or berries, or in some cases, when none of these are to be had, of string, the "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" being indicated by knots tied at regular intervals. No wonder that the example of such devotion to our Blessed Lady has moved the fatherly heart of Pope Benedict XV. to permit the soldiers, during the continuance of the war, to gain the Rosary indulgence without having their beads blessed. He has also permitted them to share in all the indulgences granted to members of the Confraternity even though they have never been enrolled in it.

The example of the Catholic soldiers on all fronts has had a blessed influence upon Protestants. The Glasgow Observer relates the following: "A non-Catholic soldier went into a repository and asked for 'one of those bead necklaces.' What he wanted was a rosary, and he explained that each of his Catholic comrades had one and it seemed to make him happy. In addition to the Rosary a medal of the Immaculate Conception was bestowed upon him. The repository keeper felt that the rest could be left to Our Lady."

And Sapper Clifford Perry writes to a friend in Cardiff: "Rosaries are very popular here. I think I can safely say that four out of every ten men that one meets wear them around their necks. Strange to say, they are not all Catholics. Nor do those who are not Catholics wear them merely as curios or ornaments; on the contrary, it is clear upon inquiry that they attach some religious value to them even though they are unable to explain what it is. At any rate, nothing could induce them to part with them."

In the spiritual life it is not an unusual thing to find hearts hardening to the motions of grace. The saving dew does not often fall twice

in the same spot. But it would almost seem that in this terrible cataclysm God's voice is making itself heard above the mad and angry clamor of passion in the hearts of men. God alone knows how many of the soldiers who during the past two years have died good Christian deaths on the field of battle would but for the war have gone on in a life of indifference to if not absolute rebellion against Him. God is the God of battles, as the Scripture says. And surely He has battled and wrestled with many a stubborn soul whilst men all around were doing each other to death in the name of king and country. And His Mother's sweet influence, too, has been all-powerful. She it is who has poured balm into their bruised hearts; she it is who has given them courage to lift their eyes to those of her Divine Son with the

confident expectation of seeing there pity and forgiveness. By the living wire of her blessed beads Mary has invigorated the faith of countless lukewarm Catholics; through them, she has restored to life spiritual countless others whose souls were dead even whilst they thought themselves to live.

The example of the valiant men who are not ashamed to carry and to say their beads before their comrades, who are not ashamed to confess that Mary's arm is a stout arm upon which to lean, who do not feel that devotion to Mary's beads is good for women only, should be a powerful incentive to all of us to be unwavering in our loyalty to the Queen of the Rosary.

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