

APRIL 28, 1917

going to—
"Saturday is your holiday, isn't it?"
Father asked, looking at us all in that queer way he has sometimes.

SOEUR JULIE

HER STORY AS TOLD BY HERSELF TO VISITOR FROM THE AMERICAN FUND FOR FRENCH WOUNDED

Fifty brave lads were told to guard the bridge la Mortagne leading to the city of Gerbeville. Fifty brave lads they were, who earned their name of "Fighting Blue Devils," as all the chasseurs a pied and chasseurs Alpins are now called.

The Germans were coming from Lumeville, and these boys, so very young, were told to check the entrance of the enemy. They checked it, but could not halt it. On came the ruthless troops, men from Bavaria whose homes were so like these they were about to destroy that only wine and lust and fear of superior officers could have forced them to do the demon's work they did.

There had been hard fighting in the near neighborhood, and the wounded had been brought into Gerbeville. Sœur Julie told me all about it. In the night the convent was roused and Sœur Julie and four other sisters hastily arose and dressed.

"Not as ladies usually would," she explained, "by putting on a peignoir and slippers, but carefully and accurately as though we were going to Mass. We must not be seen without our coiffe and collars, and it takes time, even though soldiers are pounding at the door, to pin them straight and to look neat. After this night we never took them off for many days, but sat all dressed and upright in our chairs, and dozed when we could. And the wounded came in numbers. We placed them on our cots, on the floor, and in the corridors. We fed them and dressed their wounds as best we could, but we had had no preparation. We tore our sheets and our underclothes to make them bandages, and then we evacuated them to another town, for we knew the enemy was coming upon us.

"But thirteen brave boys were seriously hurt, and could not be sent away, so I kept them and placed them all in one room and promised to save them if I could.

"From my doorway I watched the enemy burn the houses. They didn't burn them all, only every one in three or four. It was a better method of terrorizing, for no one knew whether his house was to be sacrificed or not, and if he stayed, more than likely he was burned with the house—like the baker down the street—or if he fled, his house was left standing, only its interior was pillaged and destroyed. Yes, the Boche has a remarkable way of torturing the mind as well as the body.

"When the city was in flames and the inhabitants fleeing, I stood in the doorway of my convent and prayed that Heaven's help would be sent me for the sake of my thirteen wounded. The other sisters I sent away with old and feeble people of the town. They were hiding in a cave and the sisters were caring for them. As I stood in my doorway I saw four German officers ride down the street. I shall always see them. They looked like four giants. The smoke of the burning town rolled back of them, the flames of the burning houses lighted their faces, and like powerful demons of evil they came on. I stood, turned to stone. My lips were murmuring a prayer and my fingers were fumbling my beads. They halted. The superior spoke. He spoke in German. I shook my head. 'Please speak in French,' I said. 'It is forty years since I spoke one of your long sentences.' Then in guttural French he asked to be shown the armed men I was harboring.

"'Before God,' I answered, 'I am harboring no armed men. I have thirteen poor fellows too wounded to move, but no one else.'

"'He drew his revolver.

"'Come,' he said, 'show me the way—and dropping from his horse he pointed to me to lead the way, and followed by one of his men, they both forced me into the convent. I took them to the room where around three sides of the walls I had placed the cots. They were separated sufficiently for one to pass between. The Germans entered. So tall were they that they stooped their heads to pass the lintel of the door. The leader with eyes of fire looked about the room, then stepping to the head of the bed nearest him, where lay a young lad (with fright so written on his face that his wounds were painless), and with the gesture of a fiend, he drew his sharp-pointed poniard from his tunic and brought it down to the boy's throat. But I was there, too!

"'Although I am slow and fat, I too, can make quick gestures, and my hands flew to the boy's throat as quickly as did the dagger, and when the point came down it grazed the back of my hand and not the throat of the little soldier. And, as he thought to stab the boy, he spoke with all the venom of an intoxicated brute.

"'You contemptible little fiend, you wretched scum of the earth, you have brought suffering and pain on my brave lads, you have killed them and wounded them, why should I spare you?' And his poignard point pricked my hand.

"'Captain,' I said, 'captain, spare him, and I promise by all I hold sacred to save your German wounded. They shall be brought here, and be cared for, and well cared for.'

"'Whether it was my voice or my words that stayed him, I know not,

but a moment of silence passed and his poignard remained immovable. Then, with a gesture as though half-hypnotized, he replaced it in his tunic. But he threw back the bed-clothes with fury and ran his hands down the sheets to find concealed weapons. Finding none, he passed to the other bed and did the same, and so on to all thirteen. And I passed with him—wherever he moved, there was I.

"After his inspection he gave word to his companion to go, and we three passed out of the door. Feeble cries of 'Ma Sœur, stay with us,' came from the terrorized boys, but I motioned them to keep quiet and I would return. At the convent door I barred the two big officers' way. I am square and stocky, and I took up all the door.

"'Officer,' I said, 'is it your promise that my convent shall not be burned? I gave you my promise that your wounded shall be cared for.'

"'He tried to push by me, but I blocked the way. Your promise, captain,' I insisted. We stood there in the open door, smoke and fire around us.

"The German troopers were in the street; one I saw with a bottle of wine in each hand, and he forged out the cork and drank one bottle down without taking breath, and then lifted the other to his greedy mouth and drank that. And though I saw this soldier drink, my eyes never left the face of the German giant before me. Heaven had helped me thus far, would Heaven help me further? Could that force that stayed the poignard force him to clemency for the future?

"'Agreed,' he thundered; 'let me pass.'

"I stepped aside. They mounted their horses and rode down the street. Smoke and flame surrounded them; cries of martyred civilians accompanied them; shouts of drunken soldiers greeted them; and mumbling my prayers and fumbling my beads, I went back to my wounded boys.

"And afterwards, sister, weren't you decorated?"

"Oh, yes; but that is of no consequence. I am a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.—N. Y. Evening Post.

"CATHOLIC REVIVAL" FOR ENGLISH SCHOOLS

AMAZING ADMISSIONS OF ENGLISH PROTESTANT'S

Reference was made recently to the movement inaugurated by some of the London High Churchmen to "improve the religious instruction given in the Public Schools"—that is, of course, to make it more "Catholic."

"That veteran Ritualist, the Right Hon. George W. E. Russell, in pressing for a more "sacramental view of religion," touched humorously on the difficulty of boys getting to "Confession" in the school if they wanted to. The Church Times reports the following reminiscence in his speech:

"As hearing upon the practical and important question of having a chaplain, apart from the head master, and not charged with the maintenance of discipline, Mr. Russell described how on one occasion the late Preliminary Villiers was requested by the head master of a great Public school to give an address to the boys after their confirmation in view of their communion. The Preliminary made it quite clear that if he was to give the address he would give the same teaching about confession as he gave in his parish. No objection was raised; the address was duly given, and afterwards the Preliminary said to the head master: 'I hope what I said did not distress you.' 'Oh, no! it was an excellent address. We are all grateful for it; but the practical difficulty occurs to me. If a boy here wanted to make his confession, and came to me and confessed anything—wrong, I should have to flog him.' (Loud laughter.)

"With that extremely frank admission," said Mr. Russell in conclusion, "I do not think I need labour the point that if this great means of grace is to be popularized in our Public Schools the chaplain should be a different person from the head master."

Mr. Ian Malcolm, M. P., another leading High Church speaker, was also very satirical about the lack of "Catholicity" in English schools.

"Eton was not so fortunate in preaching during his time as Harrow evidently had been in the chairman's time. He doubted if he or his contemporaries had any recollection of more than two sermons preached during the period. Every morning shortened Matins was provided—a most boreome experience—and on Sundays a sort of cathedral service with a sort of cathedral sermon. They had also an abomination called Sunday questions, which had to be answered, about nothing in particular. For example: the number of strings to David's harp and Christian names of the minor prophets, (Loud laughter.) On Monday morning the great feast of religious instruction was finished up by your trying to translate Greek Testament into what you thought was English. When I hear people complaining of the godlessness and paganism of England today, he added, and reflect how little of our religion either our schoolmasters or boys know, I am not surprised that they are so bad, I am surprised that they are so good. (Applause.) Preparation for confirmation was done by men who had

no training for the job, and knew as much about it as about cooking a dinner. All this carelessness about religion seemed to him to arise out of a widespread and deeply-rooted Protestant ignorance of the Catholic Faith. Religion became just a Sunday fetish instead of an everyday festival. By a custom dating back to the days when people knew and cared about the saints, saints' days and big Church festivals used to be observed at Eton by a whole holiday; quite recently he found that a festival was pitched forward or backward with a total disregard for the saint or the calendar to suit the convenience of the Officers' Training Corps. They had arrived at the point where the saint is superseded by the sergeant-major. (Laughter.)

To secure a "Catholic revival" in the Public Schools Mr. Malcolm advocated agitation; and we are told by the journal aforementioned that "Mass" was rehearsed with special attention for the object of the meeting.—H. G. G. in Catholic Herald.

CATHOLIC WORKERS IN PROTESTANT HOMES

At the time of the celebration of the centenary of the Church in New York, Cardinal Farley paid a marked tribute to Catholic workers in Protestant homes. By the silent force of their good example, and, when necessary, by outspoken witness to the faith that was in them they had been the cause of bringing many converts into the Church. The words of His Eminence were recalled by the death in Minneapolis, early in January, of Mrs. Helen Day Chute who owed her conversion, under God, in part to the influence of a Catholic maid in her home. Even as a child Mrs. Chute was devoted to prayer. She readily committed to memory prayers, and texts from the Scriptures. In her uncle's home, where she grew up in the Methodist belief, she found a copy of a Douay Bible, and in it a prayer to the Holy Ghost, for light, which she thereafter recited daily. After her marriage to Dr. Chute she went with him for a time to the Presbyterian church. But through the influence of books by Father Hecker and Father Kent Stone, and others that Julia lent her, she became a Catholic in 1869. For forty-eight years she lived the life of a model Catholic. The Catholic Bulletin, St. Paul, Minn., from whom which we took these facts, says:

"She lived the life of an ideal Catholic mother and by the sheer persuasiveness of her virtuous example drew into the Church her children, who all received conditional baptism, save one who was baptized a Catholic. Her husband also died in the faith. Up to the time that she was baptized by Father Tissot she had met only one other priest, Reverend Louis Caillet. When she became a Catholic, she became one to the core. She was a Catholic in mind and will and heart and affections. All who knew her knew her to be a Catholic. She was a regular attendant at St. Lawrence's Church where she heard Mass for the last time New Year's Day. She died as she had lived, beautifully and peacefully, repeating to the last the ejaculations that to her were so real and full of consolation."

There are many household missionaries of the type of Julia Duff. We hear much of the books that bring about conversions, but all too little of the vital spiritual forces exerted by the staunch Catholics who work in Protestant houses. All honor to their sterling work. There are no more devoted workers for the Church in this country than these women whose names are not seen in the society columns, but are never missing from the contribution lists that rear churches and build schools. The alumnae of our Catholic schools and colleges will have to be generous indeed in their contributions of service and money to emulate the example set for them and for all Catholic women by these household missionaries.—Sacred Heart Review.

FACTS AND FAITH

Some "thinkers" left-overs from the mid-Victorian period, still hold that science and religion are mutually exclusive explanations of the universe. But science only records the laws of the universe, she does not explain them. In one sentence, all her discoveries amount to this: the workings of Nature can be reduced to law. Religion says that such discoveries merely sustain her theistic explanation of the universe, for cosmic law indicates a cosmic Law-maker.

Back in the nineties, science began to realize that she was no more than the hand-maid of religion. The great old Dana of Yale university concluded his famous text-book on geology with these words:

"In spite of all difficulties and uncertainties, geology is thus able to give in outline the history of the evolution of man himself and his dwelling place. . . . While it is the work of science to trace the method of this two-fold evolution, science as such knows nothing of efficient cause or of purpose; but it leaves full scope for faith that the Power, whose modes of working science may in part reveal, is intelligent and personal, and that the whole process of the evolution of man and his dwelling place has been guided by infinite Wisdom to the fulfilment of a purpose of infinite Love."—New World.

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DOUBLY FORTUNATE The Ave Maria makes this comment: "Fortunate is the man whose conscience assures him that he has squandered none of his time since the last New Year dawned upon his life,—fortunate and rare."

Moderate pleasure relaxes the spirit, and moderates.—Seneca.

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