

"THE STANDING ARMY"

Nearly every parish has one.

Are the priests proud of the "standing army?" Not so that you could notice it. They are doing their utmost to disband it. Observant Catholics have seen this "awkward squad" that rouses the pastor's ire, or his "Irish" as the case may be.

The church-door on Sunday mornings is its parade-ground, or some convenient nook or cranny just inside the door, from whence the last ones in, may be the first ones out. Mass has been going on for several minutes before the first straggler appears. As the squad increases, its members are seen to be chiefly young men, whose eyes drowsily declare that they were among those present, when the Saturday night dance ushered in Sunday morning. They are at Mass, but not to adore the Body and Blood of Christ.

"They drop on one knee, or take a crouching position, like sharpshooters on a skirmish line," said the justly indignant pastor who dubbed them the "standing army."

The priest is not a "crank," when he insists that we should assist at Mass with interior piety, and outward respect. It is his duty to order the straggler away from the door, to come on time, and to kneel in the pew where he may hear Mass devoutly. Kneel down at Mass, young man, every Sunday and holy day. Stand up for the Church and her doctrines, when she is attacked by those who know her not.