

CHAPLAIN JOHN IRELAND.

Reminiscences of One of the Heroes of the American War.

Correspondence of the Philadelphia Catholic Times.

In the year 1862 Father John Ireland, then a young priest, was appointed chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota Volunteers of Governor Ramsey. The average chaplain of the army in those days was little better than a nonentity. Very seldom were his services called into requisition. The incidents connected with those troublesome times were such as to place him almost "hors du combat" in the minds of the soldiers, who were always on the move or engaged in the noble and manly art of killing.

Occasionally a straggler on the road or resting after marching day and night would have wished for his blessing and his services, but generally there was very little attention paid to the spiritual comfort of the soldier. After the fatigue and exhaustion of the marching and the fighting the wearied soldier, officer and chaplain were glad to look into their haversacks and their canteens to find something in the shape of hardtack and muddy water to refresh the inner man and to take that rest that tired nature required. I do not mean to infer that there was wanting a desire on the part of soldiers or chaplains to engage in those exercises of devotion. On the contrary, whenever an opportunity was afforded it was utilized and the good and popular chaplain, Ireland, could always be found in the midst of battles, skirmishes, marches and retreats, relieving not only the spiritual but the temporal needs of his soldiers.

Father Ireland was one of the most popular officers in the regiment. He was always ready to drop a kind, encouraging word to this soldier, a smile and a nod of recognition to another, words of cheer to every one. He was of cheerful, happy disposition himself, and like the sun, he cast his rays of sunshine all around and won the hearts of all, officers and soldiers alike. It was cheering to the sad and homesick youth to see this good father gather around him the soldiers and seek to divert their thoughts from the thousand and one trials and hardships they had to encounter through their love for fatherland.

The Rev. father was a good chess-player, too, and always carried with him his little set of chessmen and board, and after camping for the night, first taking his supper of bacon and cracker, washed down by water or coffee, he was ready to give battle with his chessmen on his rubber blanket board to any of the men, no matter how rough or polished, ragged or otherwise.

After the siege of Corinth the Fifth Minnesota went into camp on the banks of a little river called Clear Creek. It certainly was not called by that name because of the clearness of the water, for it was the muddiest of streams. The soldiers were delighted, as they expected to remain in camp for some time, but their expectations were soon nipped in the bud by the stirring incidents of the war.

The troops passed one Sunday there and the day was made memorable, for it was on this day that Father Ireland gave the regiment his first sermon. The boys vied with each other in their efforts to construct a little rude altar and soon made a shelter for him from the burning heat of the sun by way of a canopy of branches of trees and green sapplings. I have never heard of a similar occurrence during the war. Very soon the voice of the father drew around him a large audience. Soldiers who were scattered over the place—under trees, loitering and playing cards and amusing themselves as soldiers usually do, were seen approaching from

all directions, and there, under the burning rays of the Mississippi sun, they listened to the eloquent and soul-stirring words of the young chaplain. The father handled his theme in a masterly manner, talked to the hearts of the boys, as he well knew how to do, and after he had finished he received such a cheer as would make the welkin ring. The veterans cheered and cheered as he came down from his brush pulpit.

On Monday morning all were again ready for the march. "Boots and saddles" sounded and the army moved on to begin anew the sanguinary strife. The 4th of October, 1862, will never be forgotten by the Fifth Minnesota Volunteers, for on that day one of the most desperate and bloody battles of the far West was fought between the Union and Confederate forces—the Union under the gallant Rosecrans and the Confederate under Price and Van Dorn—at Corinth, Miss. Thousands of brave men on both sides were killed in the battle, which is now memorable for the charge of the famous Texas Brigade, under Rogers, on the Union position. The charge was that of the bravest of the brave of the forces of the Confederacy, and Rodgers and hundreds of his men were left dying on the field.

The Union position was protected by Battery Bobinett, and after the smoke had cleared away the Confederates were seen retreating to their original position. It was in this ever memorable battle that Father Ireland covered himself with glory. The chaplain was on the right of the Union position in the afternoon and his modesty was such that he was unconscious of the victory that through his agency he was achieving.

General Hubbard, commander of the Fifth Minnesota, made the following report in connection with the circumstance to which I refer: "The determined assault of Van Dorn's army had been gallantly met and firmly withstood, except upon the right. There the rebels had succeeded in penetrating our lines and captured some of our batteries and were pouring into the streets of Corinth. The situation was critical. Unless the enemy was turned back and that gap closed it would admit a column of Van Dorn's army to the town and Rosecrans' lines would be taken in the rear, the consequences of which would not be otherwise than calamitous. The Fifth Minnesota Regiment closed the gap. It was like a whirlwind against the flank of that penetrating force. The enemy recoiled under the shock. The pent-up energies of the Fifth Regiment were released and it did the work of a brigade of men. Stunned by the terrible execution of volleys poured into it the confused mass of enemy halted and fell back, closely ressed by the Fifth Regiment. It took the batteries that had been lost and re-established the line at the point where it had been broken."

To enable the reader to understand the circumstances under which the enemy succeeded in penetrating the Union lines, it must be borne in mind that when the battle on the Union right raged the hottest, the cry for ammunition was yelled along the Union line, but the ammunition was exhausted and the soldiers were hunting for it among the cartridge-boxes of the dead and wounded. The Union soldiers were giving way, when lo! in the distance a man was seen hurrying forward with a barrel of cartridges on his shoulder, yelling at the top of his voice: "Here, boys; here are the cartridges!" A cheer went up from the soldiers, which resounded all along the Union line. This man rushed along the line, distributing the cartridges. Throughout the whole time the leaden hail thinned the ranks with death and destruction all around. This brave man, the bravest of the brave, repeated his visits with the

barrel of cartridges on his shoulder until he had provided the full forty rounds or until every soldier was supplied. Who was this wonderful non-combatant? None other than the chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota Regiment, the heroic Father Ireland! It is doubtful whether a similar instance of bravery is recorded of either army during the whole of the war.

The Fifth Regiment turned on the advancing column and the result was as stated in General Hubbard's report above quoted. When the battle was over search was made for the chaplain, but he was not to be found. Then it was that the soldier boys began to speak of the heroism of the good chaplain, and especially the last never-to-be-forgotten heroic deed. All became alarmed at his absence. The search was renewed and to the great joy of all he was found superintending a hospital hurriedly constructed for the wounded. There, succoring the distressed and wounded and ministering like an angel of gladness to the dying, was this brave priest found. The whole regiment gave one great cheer at the announcement that he was safe.

Years have passed since that historic battle, but its memory will remain green as long as a veteran of the Fifth Minnesota Regiment survives. Father John Ireland is now the great Archbishop Ireland, one of the most prominent prelates in Christendom. His name has been heard the world over. He has captivated the hearts of all who ever met him in Europe or in America. He is the pride of his people and the glory of his country, the highest representative of American genius and American institutions.

J. O. O'CONNELL, M.D.

The Best Restorative Against Debility.

There is nothing more precious, and particularly efficacious in restoring strength that has been lowered by disease or by difficult digestion, than Almoxia Wine. Gianelli & Co., 16 King street west, Toronto, sole agents for Canada. Sold by all druggists.

STOP Drugging



Do not dose your system with crude substances as you would a machine or railway engine. The true physician eschews poisonous drugs, enjoins obedience to natural laws, and prefers Nature's remedies to those of the chemical laboratory. If you are sick or your system disordered, ask a good physician for his opinion about

St. Leon Mineral Water

St. Leon Mineral Water Co., Ltd

Head Office, King street West, Toronto.

All Druggists, Grocers and Hotels.

GO TO DILL & O'HEARN,

FOR YOUR

House, Sign or Ornamental Painting, Plain or Decorative Paper Hanging.

212 QUEEN STREET WEST.

TELEPHONE 1820.

117

McCAUSLAND & SON, TORONTO ONT. MEDALISTS. CHURCH & SECULAR STAINED GLASS. LONDON ESTD 1854. DESIGNERS & CONTRACTORS



It's rather too much for you - the ordinary, bulky pill. Too big to take, and too much disturbance for your poor system. The smallest, easiest to take, and best, are Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. They leave out all the disturbance, but yet do you more good. Their help lasts.

Constipation, Indigestion, Bilious Attacks, Sick or Bilious Headaches, and all derangements of the liver, stomach, and bowels are prevented, relieved, and permanently cured. They're guaranteed to give satisfaction, or your money is returned.

A "COLD IN THE HEAD" is quickly cured by Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy. So is Catarrhal Headache, and every trouble that is caused by Catarrh. So is Catarrh itself. The proprietors offer \$500 in cash for any case which they cannot cure. Sold by all druggists.



COSGRAVE & CO.

MALTSTERS,

Brewers and Bottlers TORONTO.

Are supplying the Trade with their superior

ALES AND BROWN STOUTS,

Brewed from the finest Malt and best Bavarian brand of Hops. They are highly recommended by the Medical faculty for their purity and strengthening qualities.

Awarded the Highest Prizes at the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, for Purity of Flavor and General Excellence of Quality. Honorable Mention, Paris, 1875. Medal and Diploma, Antwerp, 1885.

Brewing Office, 295 Niagara St. TELEPHONE No. 264.

DUNN'S BAKING POWDER THE COOK'S BEST FRIEND LARGEST SALE IN CANADA.

LISTEN!

M. J. CROTTIE,

838 and 844 YONGE STREET, Can sell you

Staple and Fancy DRY GOODS, Men's Furnishings, Hats and Caps, Ties, Shirts, and Cuffs,

As cheap as any other store in the city. Call and be convinced. Our stock is always well assorted.

M. J. CROTTIE,

838 and 844 Yonge st.,

(The Beaver.) North Toronto.

TELEPHONE 8362.

AGENTS WANTED

To canvass for the

CATHOLIC REGISTER

Write for particulars,

Or apply at office

40 Lombard st., Toronto.