

She would have been grieved to the heart, however, so greatly had she come to like the genial young American, could she have known his real indifference to "confession and all that sort of thing," as he put it. He would tell you he was a Catholic perhaps, with the negligent addendum that he knew he wasn't a very good one, "though I used to be an altar-boy," he might tell with a comical smile. "Picture me as an altar boy, if you can!"

"I not only can, but I will!" had been Father Rainer's cool response to this remark, made the day of their first meeting at the Field. "You will please assist Lieutenant Moore to serve my Mass in the morning."

"Oh, but Father—" protested Paul quickly. "I've forgotten, you know—I don't think I—"

"Oh, it will come back to you." Then as the boy still looked flushed and doubtful, the priest added quietly: "I'm sure you want to help me. I don't believe there's any one else I could call on."

"Of course, Father," hastily, "I want to help. Only—"

"Then that's all right. Now we'll have to see about a place for Mass," and somewhat to his own surprise Paul Baker became Father Rainer's chief factotum in arranging for the services and fixing up the building assigned for their use.

It was a curious experience to the young man, who, though he had been raised a Catholic, in the last few years had grown careless in his religion and lax in the observance of its laws. This, however, was the not unnatural outcome of his education and environment and had come about so gradually that he himself was almost unaware of the change. His mother was a convert, his father, who died when he was a child, had been a Methodist; hence, all his relatives were non-Catholics, and all the friends among whom he grew up. For a while he had been sent to a Catholic school—these were the days of his altar-boy experience—but later his mother was prevailed upon to let him go where his cousins and friends were going. After all, it was just as well, she thought. She could train him herself in his religion. With all his glib and light-hearted carelessness, he was naturally of a religious turn of mind and it would be easy to keep him in the right path. Thus she reasoned, and thus for a long time it seemed to be. But the mother had not counted on the influence of his companions, most of them unreligious when they were not actually irreligious; on the deadening effect of that peculiar atmosphere of the secular university which looks upon any suggestion of immortality with a doubtful eye, the same eye which turned a contemptuous stare upon anything approaching Catholic teaching; she had not counted on

her own weakness in dealing with her son when she found him growing careless. They were such chums, such companions, she could not bear to endanger this dear unity by fault-finding, by quarrelling. So she let matters drift, praying, weeping in secret, and wrestling with this trouble, which alas, she began to realize was of her own building. Then came the War and Paul's departure for France.

"Paul," she had whispered to him at the last moment, "you will say your prayers, won't you? And go to church? It would make me so happy if I knew—if I thought—" she stopped, her lips quivering despite her determination not to break down to show a brave face. The boy, a little pale in the stress of parting, held her hands tightly.

"I will, mother," he promised earnestly. "Don't worry—I'll be all right. I'll say my prayers every night, and if you pray for me—"

They smiled at each other tremulously, and he was gone. That he found himself praying often and earnestly was, he thought, the result of this promise; but it was not long before he began vaguely to realize a difference in those about him. Everybody prayed, and mostly they were not ashamed of their prayers. Indeed, it was not unusual to hear one say that this was a hazardous life and you might as well be prepared, you know, in case.

Withal, they did not take either their prayers or hazards with any degree of gloom, but were the cheerfullest and most carefree lot in the world. There was nothing they would not dare, and accidents, and even deaths, in their midst made no difference in the eagerness with which they offered themselves for difficult and dangerous flights. So when Father Rainer, sent down from Paris to look after the Catholics of this corps, arrived one bright autumn day, Paul was not surprised to see the welcome which he received on all sides. Non-Catholics as well as Catholics took to him warmly, begging him earnestly for medals and crosses like those his own men exhibited with no little pride. And the reverence with which they regarded these Catholic emblems was somewhat of a staggering revelation to Paul, so used to taking them as a matter of course, and latterly, if the truth were known as properly belonging to women's devotions anyhow. But here were the bukiest, the most manly, and to his mounting surprise those whom he had considered the least mindful of religion, coming openly to Father Rainer for a crucifix, or a medal; even the little prayer-books in French, with which he had supplied himself, disappeared like dew before the sun. Paris was requisitioned for a second supply, and meanwhile the men engaged Paul, as being so much

with the priest, to see that they were not overlooked in the next distribution. All this was not without its effect on Baker. But though he served Mass daily for ten days he did not go to confession. Father Rainer waited, biding his time, expecting every day that the boy would come around, but here now was the last day. He knew the type and had not wished to force his hand, but dalliance was no longer the word.

This was the priest's thought as with Paul he went about the town rounding up those of the Catholic boys in on leave, and he had not yet decided what method he would take when the stuttering motor bus discharged its load at the aviation camp. The boys were all a little sober. They were sincerely grieved that Father Rainer must go—he had seemed like a link with home, somehow, and the alacrity with which they had relinquished the remainder of their leave that day proved the reality of their regret. They were all gathered about the priest, making their way slowly down the Long Walk, when Pierce of the Headquarters Staff turned the corner by the Major's hut. He stopped when he saw the crowd.

"Hello!" he said. "What's up. I thought all you fellows were on leave and me in a deuce of a hurry for an extra man."

Father Rainer explained. "It's providential, Father," Pierce said gravely. "All the men are out and the local scout has sighted some enemy planes in a new direction. The Major wants half a dozen volunteers, and one man for quick contact duty. Who will go?" Paul had stepped forward even before Pierce had stopped speaking.

"I will," he said eagerly, and in an instant was off for his quarters, the six volunteers following Pierce to the Major's quarters for special instructions. In the distance the hangars were humming with activity, and the air was palpitant with preparations. Walking up and down outside Baker's quarters, Father Rainer was sunk in thought, but he looked up with a smile as the boy came out accounted for his flight.

"Quick work, Father," he said, laughing, but I'll be back in double quick time, too!"

"Better go to confession before you go up, Paul," the priest said quietly. "Scout duty is treacherous work."

Paul glanced at him quickly. "Oh, but I wouldn't have time, Father," was his protest. "But I will go when I come down—I had made up my mind."

Father Rainer took his stole out of his coat pocket and slipped it around his neck. "In that case," as though it were the most natural thing in the world, "you can go right now, while I walk with you to the hangar."

Paul started, flushed, and opened his lips perhaps for another protest, but at the grave, recollected look on the priest's face he drew himself together and began, as humbly as a little boy: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."

Those who saw them walking there in the reluctant November sunshine never forgot the scene, nor the impressive moment when at the machine's side the young man knelt and the priest raised his hand in absolution. Both looked around a moment later to smile at one of the boys who snatched them as they stood.

"Mother will like to see that!" Paul shouted over the hum of the motor. They watched him soar up until they lost the faint whirring sound and his plane was but a faint speck against the blue.

"His orders are to be back in an hour," Pierce told Father Rainer as they turned away. But the hour passed, two hours, and the afternoon rolled away, while anxious eyes momentarily scanned the unrevealing blue. It was late that night when he was brought back from the front, twelve miles away, where he had fallen in a daring fight with the intruding planes. They laid him to rest where the hum of the motors that he loved would sing his requiem and not far from the gravelled path his active feet had pressed so often.

"A clean oblation," Father Rainer murmured, as he went to take leave of the little mound before his departure for Paris not without a pain at his heart, for he had come to love the young man. "Thank God, it was a white soul that you took with you. May this comfort your stricken mother!"

THE NEW JOAN OF ARC
PROPHECIES MADE BY CLAIRE FERCHAUD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN REAL

Has France, for the second time in her history, been saved by God, through visions granted to a peasant maiden in time of war? Catholics nowhere have the least doubt that this was the case when Joan of Arc led the national army to victory against the English after having been commanded to do so by heavenly visions. But another Jeanne d'Arc seemingly arose in the world war—Claire Ferchaud, whose prophecy about the ultimate victory of her country through consecration of the army to the Sacred Heart has proved true. The Catholic Press association says:

"France is taking of nothing else but the Sacred Heart and the Victory; and some significant facts have just become public property. It is remembered that on June 9th,

solemnity of the Sacred Heart, when a new attack menaced tragically the Compiegne front, General Mangin threw back the enemy by a marvelous counter offensive, which signified that he might not pass henceforth. Then followed the great sacerdotal application of June 29th, the national prayer of August 4th, and above all, the memorable and mysterious date of July 18th.

"For some time it had been known amongst Catholics that a great religious event took place on this last date, but only a few knew what that event was. Today the secret is disclosed. It was told by Pere Perroy, preaching the other day in the Cathedral of Chalons, for on that day the Generalissimo of the Allied Armies, Foch, consecrated those Armies to the Sacred Heart in the little church at General Headquarters. On his knees before the altar, Marshal Foch demanded from the Sacred Heart, in consecrating to Him the Armies of which he had charge, a prompt and definite victory and a peace glorious for France.

"It seemed as if only this act was awaited by Our Blessed Lord, for it was precisely from this date, July 18th, that the tide turned. Three days before all had seemed favorable for the rush of the enemy to Paris, but on the dawn of July 18th General Mangin broke through the enemy lines with a bound, since when there have but been the glorious halting periods of a triumphal march; and the hand of God has visibly appeared.

"The heroic soldiers of France were no less sure than their Generalissimo. At dawn on July 23rd the French armored cars, tanks, sprang forward to the assault but were stopped by heavy barrage fire. One car alone resisted, and dashing through the barrage, reached and crushed the German gun posts, and opened thus a passage for the infantry. On that car, fastened beside the cannon, fluttered a flag of the Sacred Heart, torn and pierced, like the car itself; and the gallant crew, returning and finding themselves surrounded by admiring comrades, turning without a word, pointed to the flag which had led them to victory."

The case of Claire Ferchaud has been written up a great deal and a lot of nonsense has been told about her, both in secular and Catholic papers. Some reports said, for instance, that she had been ordered to place herself at the head of the French army. The word the writer has from French Catholic sources does not indicate this. In an official communication issued by the Bishop of Poitiers, France, under date of September 2, 1918, he declared that an ecclesiastical commission appointed to consider the case of Claire Ferchaud had com-

pleted its work and that the Holy See had received to itself the examination and solution of the matter. The Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux assisted in conducting this inquiry. The young girl has been leading a saintly life, having founded a religious order at Loublande, her native place, with girls of her own age. She has conducted herself with reserve and has shown beyond any doubt that she is thoroughly sincere in her belief that she was given visions.

She is now twenty-two years old. She was introduced to President Poincare and told him that France would gain victory when it again became religious and the Sacred Heart was carried on the tricolor. Cardinal Amette, Archbishop of Paris, believing the girl, solemnly placed the Sacred Heart picture on the national tricolor of St. Mary's, and thousands of French soldiers pinned the Sacred Heart badge on their uniforms. Claire called on Premier Clemenceau a Vendean like herself, being promised five minutes for the interview, but he kept her an hour. It was she who decided him to transfer General Mangin, the hero of the Marne, who had been a victim of political intrigues, which she, although a simple peasant girl who could not know this naturally, divulged. At the end of 1916, she announced that powerful politicians and members of the government were plotting against France. This was before the Bolo Paasha, Malvy and Callicux scandals became known, and long before the mutinies of 1917. Not much was written about these mutinies at the time, but they happened all the same. She foretold the piercing of the German lines and the speedy passing from despair to victory.

Now, finally, it comes to light that the girl's full prophecy regarding the Sacred Heart has been fulfilled. Catholics all over the world will await the official Roman report on this case with the greatest interest. —Denver Register.

CATHEDRAL OF THANN

The Cathedral of Thann in Alsace is once more in French possession, after forty years of German domination. The entry of the French troops into the town was celebrated with great joy by the people of Thann, and on the uninjured steeple of the Cathedral the tricolor floated gaily. Three Chasseurs Alpin had succeeded in making the perilous climb, and as the flag of France broke out over the highest edifice of the reconquered territory the great crowd knelt in fervent thanksgiving. The more boisterous element was outside celebrating victory, but all the old people for miles around had gathered to pray and to listen to the Cure who

speaking now in patois, told how the God of battles had blessed the arms of France and of her allies because their cause was the cause of justice and liberty. The service ended with the sermon, for the Cure was unable to make his way back to the altar, so dense was the crowd of officers and peasants and American soldiers who thronged the nave and transept and packed themselves in the choir and where the stalls had stood.

"A VICTORY, HOWEVER EASY COSTS THE LIVES OF MEN"

Treves, January 18.—It is the conviction of Marshal Foch that the Rhine must be made the barrier between Germany and France. He expressed this clearly when he received American newspaper correspondents. The Marshal is here in connection with the meeting concerning the extension of the German armistice.

Marshal Foch was asked by the correspondents: "But was not the armistice concluded too soon?" "It was not possible to do otherwise," answered the Marshal, "because the Germans gave up everything that we asked for at once. They satisfied all of our conditions. It was difficult to ask more."

"Doubtless the Generals would have preferred to have continued the struggle and to have battle when the battle which offered itself was so promising, but a father of a family could not help think of the blood that would be shed. A victory, however easy, costs the lives of men. We held victory in our grasp without any further sacrifice. We took it as it came."

"The German High Command was not ignorant of the fact that it faced a colossal disaster. When it surrendered, everything was prepared for an offensive in which it would infallibly have succumbed. On the fourteenth we were to attack in Lorraine with twenty French divisions and six American divisions. This attack would have been supported by other movements in Flanders and in the centre."

"The Germans were lost. They capitulated. There is the whole story. "It is on the Rhine that we must hold the Germans. It is by using the Rhine that we must make it impossible for them to recommence the coup of 1914. The Rhine is the common barrier of all the Allies."

"England has the Channel to cross. America is far away. France must always be in a position to safeguard the general interests of mankind. Those interests are at stake on the Rhine. It is there that we must prepare to guard against the painful surprises of the future."

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1916	\$125,538.46	\$94,136.96	\$179,998.00	\$338,428.42
1918	\$173,566.56	\$141,392.02	\$337,222.00	\$487,448.26

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