

ably cause as great a scare as 20,000 fanatics and do a vast deal more execution on their way. Such, in effect, would seem to be the opinion of Captain Otto Berndt—an Austrian staff-officer—in his recent work, *Figures and War*. He is not over-thusiastic as to the value of those stupendously vast agglomerates of armed men. 'Perhaps,' he says, 'some Alexander or Buonaparte may arise who, at the head of a small army of picked men, may fall upon that heavy and unwelcome mass, and may disperse them in all directions. Then nations may perhaps revert to the system of armies small in number but composed of trained men, and perhaps they will let those men have the exclusive privilege of a trade which, after all, is not congenial to peaceful citizens.' A consummation devoutly to be wished for!

CATHOLIC ARMY CHAPLAINS.

THE duties of a priest, especially in large centres of population and in periods of deadly epidemics, constitute an apprenticeship to courage which is likely to serve him for the term of his natural life. Men with such a schooling ought—other things being equal—to make ideal military chaplains, gifted with a valuable stock of pluck that would stand them and their charges in good stead amidst the thousand chances and perils of the camp and the battle-field. The Dublin Fusiliers seem to have such a man in Father Matthews. His portrait tells nothing of his story, but a glance at the merry round face and twinkling eye reminds you of Alfred Percival Graves' lines on 'Father O'Flynn':—

And though quite avoidin' all foolish frivolity,
Still, at all seasons of innocent jollity,
Where was the play-boy could claim an equality
At comicality, Father, wid you?

We should be surprised if Father Matthews has not 'a wonderful way' with him in dealing with the 'boys.' 'Mr. Dooley' maintains that bravery depends altogether on how a man's blood is pumped. Lavater and the physiognomists and the phrenologists and the novelists as well have a theory of quite a different kind. And if they are not very much at sea, the square, firm chin and the massive maxillaries which adorn the counterfeit presentment of the Irish chaplain ought to indicate the possession of a good supply of strong determination and of the courage which looks without winking into the barrel of a levelled hostile Mauser at point-blank range. At any rate, we were not surprised to know that the chaplain of the 'old Dubs' was out at the front with his men on that wild and blundering night when the boulders came thundering down the slopes of Nicholson's Nek and set the baggage mules all crazy. The *Daily Chronicle* has the following remarks in point:—

If a Roman Catholic chaplain, and not a Protestant chaplain was included in the Boers' great take of prisoners this week, the easy contrast need imply no disparagement of the absentee. The special desire entertained by Roman Catholics for 'benefit of clergy' at the hour of death renders superfluous any other consideration as to the forwardness or backwardness of the army chaplains of the two creeds. All the same, the pluck of the Roman Catholic chaplains has become a serviceable tradition among the troops; and Father Matthews, when we went out with the capitulated battalions, was only following the example set by Bishop Brindle, D.S.O., by Father Bellord, who was wounded at Tel-el-Kebir, and by Father Collins, who, when found in the front rank at the same fight, had to plead that his horse had bolted and borne him there.

'My horse brought me here,' said Father Collins when a superior officer demanded what brought him to the firing-line at Tel-el-Kebir. But Tel-el-Kebir, Athara, Omdurman, El Caney, Gravelotte, or Fredericksburg—it is all the same: the Catholic chaplain generally contrives to find himself where the bullets sing and the stricken men go down.

In the United States, as in Great Britain, the record of the Catholic army chaplain has been a glorious one. Just now some American papers have been making 'odorous comparisons' between the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the Catholic chaplains and the selfishness of a number of their non-Catholic *confrères* who, when ordered to the Philippines, have resigned or applied for and secured their retirement, or otherwise pleaded excuses for staying near their ain fireside. One can well understand and excuse all this in a married clergy, who are held to home by ties that are or ought to be stronger and more intimate than those that bind them to country. Catholic chaplains have nothing to stand between them and the highest and noblest deeds of self-immolation. They can afford to be less squeamish than the married clergy about the earthquakes and the fever-jungles of the Philippines and the bullets of Aguinaldo and Aguinaldo's men. An American contemporary of November 25 says: 'Rev. W. D. McKinnon, the Catholic priest who served in the Philippines with the California Volunteers, and who is now a chaplain in the army, has offered a contrast to the action of these clergymen by applying for duty in the islands again, but he is the only chaplain now in this country who has done so.' The *Daily Chronicle* has guessed aright the chief reason why the Catholic 'boys' like to have their chaplain near at hand when

the bullets sing and the jagged fragments of shell dance and scream about them. Never, perhaps, was the value of the Catholic chaplain more enthusiastically appreciated by the military authorities than during the great American Civil War of the sixties. 'The war,' says an American author, 'had in it nothing more remarkable than the religious devotion of the Irish Catholic soldier whenever he was within reach of a chaplain. The practice of their faith, whether before battle or in retreat, in camp or in bivouac, exalted them into heroes. The regiment that, in some hollow of the field, knelt down to receive, bare-headed, the benediction of their priest, next moment rushed into the fray with a wilder cheer and a more impetuous rush. That benediction nerved, not unmanned, those gallant men, as the enemy discovered to their cost.' In the face of death a clear conscience often creates a hero where a bad one 'makes cowards of us all.'

A clear conscience undoubtedly contributed to make such splendid heroes of the pious but ill-armed band of Zouaves who fought for Pope Pius IX. under Major O'Reilly at Spoleto and under General Lamoricière at Castelfidardo. And apart from the national love of 'a rale purty bit of a fight,' the presence of their priests upon the field played a great part in producing the wonderful *élan* and magnificent dash which characterised the Old Irish Volunteers and Meagher's Irish Brigade and the Ninth Connecticut and the famous Sixty-ninth New York and 'Billy Wilson's Zouaves' and the other Irish regiments on both sides during the course of the great American struggle of the sixties. The sabre-cuts of General Rosecrans and his men were none the lighter nor their charge less gallant because they made the sign of the cross and invoked the blessing of heaven before setting foot in stirrup. When a battle was impending the Irish-Catholic soldiers prepared for eventualities by approaching the Sacraments, and their chaplains were kept busy day and night. Here is what an American officer had to say of one of the Irish regiments:— 'Their chaplain—a plucky fellow, sir, I can tell you—had extraordinary influence over them; indeed he was better, sir, I do believe, than any provost-marshal. They would go to Mass regularly, and frequently to confession. 'Tis rather a curious thing I'm going to tell you; but it's true, sir. When I saw those Irishmen going to confession, and kneeling down to receive the priest's blessing, I used to laugh in my sleeve at the whole thing. The fact is—you will pardon me?—I thought it all so much damned tomfoolery and humbug. That was at first, sir. But I found the most pious of them the very bravest—and that astonished me more than anything. Sir, I saw these men tried in every way that men could be tried, and I never saw anything superior to them. Why, sir, if I wanted to storm the gates of hell, I didn't want any finer or braver fellows than those Irishmen. I tell you, sir, I hated the "blarney" before the war; but now I feel like meeting a brother when I meet an Irishman. I saw them in battle, sir; but I also saw them sick and dying in the hospital, and how their religion gave them courage to meet death with cheerful resignation. Well, sir,—and the great grim war-beaten soldier softly laughed as he added—'I am a Catholic now, and I no longer scoff at a priest's blessing, or consider confession a humbug. I can understand the difference now, I assure you.'

PLAGUE AND TOBACCO SMOKE.

It is just a matter of association of ideas. And Pick's and Feinaigle's and Grey's and Otto's and Loissette's memory systems have accustomed people to find strange and sometimes incongruous associations between ideas that have apparently no possible memorial link between them. We are reminded of this by a double announcement that appeared in a Dunedin daily a few days ago to the effect that the plague had reached Melbourne and Sydney, and that the Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia had become an honorary member of the French Anti-tobacco Society. The association of plague and tobacco may be sufficiently evident to the non-smoker. To the smoker they are poles asunder. And yet there is not a mere imaginary or sentimental, but a historic link connecting the two at one part of their history. We learn of it from the garrulous pages of good old Sam Pepys' *Diary*. He tells us how the 'almighty weed' was used as a preventive against the infection of the great plague which swept down upon London in May, 1665, and in six months of terror carried off 100,000 people. Under date of June 7 of that year we find the following entry in the famous *Diary*:—

The hottest day that ever I felt in my life. This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us!' writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw. It put me into an ill conception of myself and my smell, so that I was forced to buy some roll tobacco and chew, which took away the apprehension.

It was the old idea that tobacco was a valuable medicine—before the weed became better known. So during the continuance of the plague, nurses, dead-cart men, frightened citizens of every class, and physicians loaded the pestilent