



'To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.'

LEO XIII. to the N.Z. TABLET.

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A GALLANT FEAT OF ARMS.



IN the normal condition of things there is little sympathy between the pastoral staff and the soldier's sword. But in the days of the crusades and long since then sword-hilt and guard formed a cross, and the bright keen blade was often blessed for brave knights to fight for God and Mother Church and human right. It is a far cry to the days when Archbishop ADEMARE—sung by TASSO—led his men from Poggio to free the Holy Places from the desecrating presence of the Saracen, and left his bones before the walls of Antioch. HENRY SPENCER, 'the fighting prelate' of Norwich, is said to have led an army into Flanders, and he used the sword of the flesh to rid the Merrie England of his day of WAT TYLER and WAT TYLER'S trusting dupes. The present year of grace is emphatically not the time to which one would look for the appearance of a militant bishop. Even that miracle of energy, Cardinal LAVIGERIE, never donned the mantle of the militant Order of White Monks whom he settled in the hinterlands of Tunis to tame the wild yellow desert with spade and plough and flowing water, to tickle and humor it into greenness and bloom, and to fight the slave-raiders round about with the harder weapons of carnal men. But the lines of our action are often shapen by 'the blows of circumstance.' Bishop FAVIER, Vicar-Apostolic of Peitang, is one of those men whose faces are a blessing and whose life an olive-branch. But the hemming in of the Pekin Legations and the Peitang Cathedral by the Boxers turned him for the nonce into a militant bishop, and his defence of his beleaguered flock was the most gallant feat of pluck and endurance in the whole story of the recent crisis in the Far East.

Dr. MORRISON in the *Times* and two returned Protestant missionaries in Victoria (British Columbia), have told how Bishop FAVIER, with five priests, and thirty French and ten Italian guards, kept the Boxer horde for two months outside the rambling and extensive area over which the stately Cathedral of Peitang and the surrounding mission buildings are scattered. The secular Press has retold to us Dr. MORRISON'S stirring tale of the patient heroism displayed by white men and women during the siege of the Pekin Legations. They give little or no account of his thrilling narrative of the defence of the Peitang Cathedral, which 'in many respects,' says the much-travelled Australian physician, 'surpasses in wonder even its sister story of the defence of the Legations.' Inside the Legations there were huddled together 3623 non-combatants. They were defended by an insignificant but gallant force of 532 men, who, with only four pieces of artillery, and an assortment of all kinds of smaller firearms, with carving knives for bayonets, kept the enemy at bay for eight weeks. Inside the flimsy lines of the Peitang Cathedral an almost equal number of non-combatants—twenty Sisters and over 3000 native converts—were crowded together. Their sole armed protection against the enemy's onslaughts was a gallant little knot of forty marines. Thirty of these were French, ten Italians. And the whole armament which the tiny garrison had to 'talk back' to the howling enemy outside consisted of forty-seven rifles and a scanty supply of ammunition.

The situation was, in all reason, sufficiently desperate. But the Vicar-Apostolic and the five priests within the enclosure rose to the level of the crisis. Some of them be-

came, for the time being, military engineers. Others, like good monk SCHWARTZ of old, busied themselves in manufacturing gunpowder. 'The priests,' says Dr. MORRISON—who includes the Vicar-Apostolic in this designation—'rose to the situation in heroic style, organised their converts, and set them to work to assist in the work of defence with the hod and spade, and by them the whole defensible area was quickly surrounded by trenches and brick barricades. Only 47 rifles in all were available, and the supply of ammunition was small. To procure more was a necessity, as time went on, and, necessity proving once more the mother of invention, the manufacture of ammunition was undertaken and successfully accomplished, several thousand rounds being eventually turned out. It was not very good ammunition. The bullets were made of pewter and the powder from what nitre and sulphur and charcoal could be got together by the priests. But it served its turn and saved the situation. In these two ways—by erecting and maintaining in good order the barricades and by manufacturing ammunition—the militant priests and their following of Christian converts made the defence of the place just possible by the tiny garrison.'

'The work of digging trenches,' says Dr. MORRISON, 'became doubly important when the attacking force resorted to undermining.' According to the American narrative before us, five mines were exploded during the siege of the Peitang mission. 'One huge mine,' says the *Times* narrative, 'the Boxers successfully made and exploded, blowing up several buildings and killing a great number of children, who mostly occupied the houses in this particular part. Four tons of gunpowder were said to have been used. Where the house stood under which this mine was exploded there is a huge round hole, like the crater of a small volcano, measuring in diameter from bank to bank fully thirty yards.' Some eighty persons were killed when another of those underground masses of gunpowder burst through its upper crust of earth and ground and pounded other houses into heaps of rubbish within the closely-packed enclosure of the mission. The remainder of the siege was filled in with the rattle of rifle-fire above and with the ceaseless digging of trenches and cross-trenches underground to prevent the Boxers from mining inwards. The little garrison was harassed and overworked beyond endurance. Of the white fighting force two officers and eleven men were killed. The rifles of the fallen marines were placed in the hands of the pluckiest converts and again spat pewter and lead into the thick ranks of the Boxer besiegers. 'A strange picture truly,' says the noted Eastern correspondent: 'soldier, priest, and convert fighting together side by side for dear life. Latterly,' he adds, 'the worst danger was from starvation. Food grew so scarce that the ration of rice served out to the Chinese converts had to be reduced two days before the relief from 4oz. a head to 2oz.!' [The fighting men received, in addition, a small ration of horse-meat.] Most of the native defenders were by this time so weak that they could scarcely drag themselves to their duties.' It evidently does, after all, make a difference whose ox is goaded: the gallant little garrison of Peitang were coolly left to fight and starve for a whole day after the arrival of the foreign troops, without the smallest effort being made to relieve them; 'and one old Italian priest, Pere D'ADDOSSIO—who had been all the time of the siege in the British Legation—was so filled with shame and sorrow at the idea that he mounted a donkey and rode sadly out by himself to try and reach Peitang. He was killed on the way, as he must have known he would be. It was an eloquent protest.'

The Jesuits in the disturbed far interior of China train their converts to the use of arms, form separate Christian villages, fortify them, and thus provide a ready defence against the marauding bands that infest those parts of the Flowery Kingdom. It is not the first time that the training of their converts to the use of arms was forced upon the sons of St. IGNATIUS by the hard pressure of circumstances. Time and again, in the seventeenth century, their happy 'reductions' or missions of civilised and Christian Indians were swept, plundered, fired, blood-stained, and destroyed by swift *razzie*s of wild Indians and those still more dangerous enemies of the Red Man, the Mamelucos, or slave-raiders of Uruguay and Paraguay. Peace and security came only when Father MONTOYA secured from

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