

little picture of patrolling work at sea: 'Of course there have been various alarms, when we have had to rush to our stations. But they are generally caused by some ham-handed marine firing a gun by mistake, or by some swivel-eyed look-out seeing one of our own ships and thinking it the enemy, or mistaking a treacle-tin for the periscope of a submarine.' Or what could take us nearer to the heart of things than this description, in the earlier stages of the campaign, of the Irish Guards at Compiègne:—'The cavalry came along in a huge mass with the intention of riding down the Irish Guards who were nearest to them. When the shock came it seemed terrific to us in the distance, for the Irishmen did not recoil in the least, but flung themselves right across the path of the German horsemen. We could hear the crack of the rifles, and see the horses impaled on the bayonets of the front ranks of the Guardsmen. Then the whole force of infantry and cavalry were mixed up in one confused heap, like so many pieces from a jigsaw puzzle.'

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But the chief value of these letters from the trenches lies in the vision which they give of the spirit in which our soldiers are carrying on the fight, and of the way in which they are facing the dangers, sufferings, and discomforts of the struggle. So far as the Irish soldiers are concerned, the letters published in the Home papers go to show that the high religious and patriotic spirit with which the names of these regiments have been associated from the beginning is still being splendidly maintained. God and Ireland seem ever to occupy the foremost place in their thoughts. We reproduce one or two specimen letters as we find them in the columns of our contemporary, the *Irish Weekly*. 'When Monday evening comes,' writes Private Thomas Barrett, R.A.M.C., to the spiritual director of the Holy Family Confraternity at Youghal, 'I say my Rosary just about the same time you are reciting it at the Confraternity meeting.' The rest of Private Barrett's letter illustrates 'how highly the Irish soldier values the spiritual privileges which may come his way. "One Mass," he says, "we had the great privilege of attending in a farmer's hayloft, which the priest told us was of a venerable old age." This was on the scene of another Mass celebrated when the Knights Templars were doing battle for the elements of Christianity. Again, he says, "We had another Mass in a barn said, I am glad to say, by an Irish priest—the Rev. John Evans." Conversely, the Irish Catholic soldier is naturally filled with detestation of the havoc wrought by the enemy amongst churches and other sacred buildings. "This chapel-burning," writes a correspondent of an Irish priest (Father Kearney), "is all done by the express orders of the German generals or their officers."

Wherever you go, you see chapels, convents, schools burnt down. . . . Do the folk in Ireland realise what the Army and Navy are doing for them? As to how the Irish soldier faces the last call of all, let the following illustration from a letter from Father P. B. Bradley suffice: 'I don't think I told you of a brave Irish soldier I attended during the terrific battle around Ypres. His side was torn with shrapnel, and as he lay in a pool of blood and covered with blood he raised his hands upwards (after being attended to spiritually) and exclaimed, with his last breath, "My life for old Ireland." Should his fate be mine, I hope to say with my last breath, like the gallant soldier, "My soul to God; my life for dear old Ireland." Such examples cannot be without their effect; and the impression produced by the fine character of Father Bradley himself upon those with whom he came into contact is indicated in a letter from the Rev. Richard Hall, Methodist chaplain of the Expeditionary Force, who has written as follows to the *Methodist Times*:—"Father Bradley, the R.C. chaplain, and I were allotted the same tent. This was the commencement of a friendship that I am sure will be lifelong. I never met a more gentle and refined Christian character. His one thought was to serve others, and he cared nothing for his own discomfort as long as he was helping someone else. It was a grief to both of us when a little over a month ago I stood, in the middle of the night, at a railway station to

wish him good-bye. He was ordered to join a field ambulance in the fighting line (a command that came to me shortly after). His last words were: "Hall, don't forget to pray for me; underneath and round about both of us are the Everlasting Arms."

The Pope's Encyclical

We were very far from having exhausted the features of interest in the Pope's Encyclical in our editorial comments of a fortnight ago, and the document is one which will well bear reading and re-reading. There are two other points, at least, in that important pronouncement to which we wish to direct further attention. We referred briefly to the note of clearness and firmness which marks the utterance, but limitations of space prevented us from elaborating the point. The characteristic we have alluded to comes out strongly and strikingly in these crisp, clear-cut sentences: 'Therefore, whenever legitimate authority has once given a clear command, let no one transgress that command, because it does not happen to commend itself to him; but let each one subject his own opinion to the authority of him who is his superior, and obey him as a matter of conscience. Again, let no private individual, whether in books or in the press, or in public speeches, take upon himself the position of an authoritative teacher in the Church. All know to whom the teaching authority of the Church has been given by God: he, then, possesses a perfect right to speak as he wishes and when he thinks it opportune. The duty of others is to hearken to him reverently when he speaks and to carry out what he says.' This is significant on personal grounds, as indicating the strength and decision of character pertaining to the present Pontiff. It reveals in Benedict XV. the true Pastor, who will speak with clear voice to a world which has no other where to look for firm and sure guidance. It is significant, also, on general grounds, as a re-affirmation of the great Christian principle of authority, which the Catholic Church has always maintained, and which the other religious bodies have so completely lost. 'He that heareth you, heareth Me,' said our Lord, 'and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.' It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, said the early Church at Jerusalem, in deciding the first controverted question amongst Christians. 'All know to whom the teaching authority of the Church has been given by God,' says Benedict XV., 'and he possesses a perfect right to speak as he wishes and when he thinks it opportune.' In the Catholic Church, at least, it is the shepherd who guides the sheep, and not the sheep who lead the shepherd.

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The warning which we have quoted from the Encyclical is intended primarily for individuals—for the world be intellectuals puffed up with the idea of their own importance, and for the headstrong and rebellious ignoramuses who have a rooted objection to the bit and the rein. But the principle applies also to Catholic associations and organisations, such as the Catholic Federation, Knights of Columbus, etc., and to all religious societies under the aegis of the Church. This is expressly indicated in the Encyclical so that the position may be made perfectly clear. 'As men are generally stimulated, Venerable Brethren,' writes the Holy Father, 'openly to profess their Catholic faith, and to harmonise their lives with its teaching, by brotherly exhortation and by the good example of their fellow men, we greatly rejoice as more and more Catholic associations are formed. Not only do we hope that they will increase, but it is Our wish that under Our patronage and encouragement they may ever flourish; and they certainly will flourish, if steadfastly and faithfully they abide by the directions which this Apostolic See has given or will give. Let all the members of societies which further the interests of God and His Church ever remember the words of Divine Wisdom: "An obedient man shall speak of victory" (Prov. xxi. 8), for unless they obey God by showing deference to the Head of the Church, vainly will they look for divine assistance, vainly, too, will they labor.'