

Sunday. We have two chances of attending to our duties every week-end. The first is to get up early and attend Mass in a tent in camp at 6.30 o'clock, but the grand parade takes place at about 9 o'clock, when the Catholic members of the whole force attend. Of course there are a number who find it absolutely impossible to get away on certain Sundays, owing to their duties, but the whole parade would make any Catholic feel proud. Headed by the First Battalion Band the huge procession marches to Heliopolis, a distance of about one mile, and only then does one realise the large number of Catholics that are here. The church at Heliopolis is one of the prettiest buildings I have seen here, and that is saying a great deal, for in Egypt there are some of the finest buildings in the world. There is not so much seating accommodation as perhaps in the Christchurch Cathedral, but it does not fall very far short, and, besides, there is extra accommodation in the gallery, and this has always to be utilised. The sight from upstairs is a grand one, for nothing but one mass of khaki presents itself to view. Father McMenamin always celebrates Mass, and gives the men a short sermon, after which they are marched back to camp again. Of course Heliopolis is practically a Belgian town, but large numbers of French and Greeks reside there. The residents have come to look upon the parade of the Catholic troops as something to be seen, and the people turn out in large numbers to see the procession. The percentage of Catholics in this force is not known to me at the present time, but if exact figures were available it would certainly make interesting reading. It is strange the number of old schoolmates that one meets. Many young fellows I knew in my boyhood days, and who attended the Marist Brothers' School in Christchurch, and whom perhaps I would never have met again but for this opportunity, are with us now. In fact, the old school is well represented, and of those who were there in my day, the following may be mentioned: P. O'Malley, L. Poff, T. Leathwick, McIntyre, T. Madden, C. J. Mather, H. Perkins, F. Cronin, W. Cronin, and O. Newnham. There are many others whose names I cannot call to mind at present. I noticed in the latest *Tablet* I received, a photograph of the school's crack football team, and it is very evident that the lads are making a bold bid for victory in the cricket competition. Such papers as the *Tablet* are only too welcome in a military camp of this description, and for the favors we have received, I am penning you this note.

A RELIGIOUS PROCESSION.

The following is an extract from a letter received by a Wellington official of the Catholic Federation from his son, who is a member of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, now stationed in Egypt:—

'We have a church parade every Sunday morning and march over to the Basilica at Heliopolis. I went to one of the ordinary services last Sunday. Nearly all men in Egypt wear the fez, with a Turkish turban. This is the national head-dress for police, postmen, railway men, and tram men: in fact I have seen only about a dozen men in hats. The other Sunday was the Feast of the Holy Family, and a procession in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary took place in the grounds where, it is said, the Holy Family lived when they were in Egypt. All the Catholic soldiers were invited, and a good number of us attended in the afternoon. Our own chaplains Fathers McMenamin and Dore accompanied us, and we were shown over the grounds by the French priests. There is a church in the grounds called 'The Chapel of the Holy Family,' and the paintings on the walls are really good, the subjects being the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' the 'Flight into Egypt,' and the 'Entry into Heliopolis.' Only at certain times of the year are people allowed to enter the grounds. The grounds are, so tradition says, where the Holy Family lived, and in a corner fenced off by a brick wall is the very tree under which our Blessed Lady rested with the Divine Infant, while St. Joseph went to the Nile for water. Of course no one believes it to be the actual

tree. The French priests do not say so, but they tell you it is grown from cuttings of the actual tree, and this one is hundreds of years old now. When this one is dying a sprig will be taken from it, and so on. Near the tree is the Blessed Virgin's well, which was used by the Holy Family when they lived here. It was said to have been salt water until the Holy Family drank out of it, when it was at once changed into clear, cool, fresh water. I had a drink out of it myself.

The procession in honor of our Blessed Lady was a very grand sight. People from Cairo, Sisters (of all Orders), soldiers, priests, and men marched and carried beautiful banners: they gave us banners to carry around the grounds. Everybody sang as they marched in procession, the hymns being in French. The hymns we knew we sang in English, much to the entertainment of the altar boys. The last of the procession was a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and when the procession was over a priest preached a sermon in French, but we could not understand him. When the discourse was finished the ceremonies ended with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Before leaving, we were given afternoon tea by the French priests.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE PROCESSION.

A South Canterbury reader sends us the following extract from a letter written by a member of the Expeditionary Force now in Egypt:

Zeitoun Camp, Egypt.

Well, I must tell you about the pilgrimage here, and the procession on December 9. It takes place once a year, and it was a sight which I will never forget. I only wish you could have seen it. There were about two thousand there, and of all nations. They made room for all the Catholic soldiers. The singing was wonderful, the hymns being in six languages. It lasted about two hours. It was held in the place where the Holy Family is said to have rested on their flight into Egypt. I saw the tree under which they rested, and I also had a drink out of the well, which sprang up while Joseph was at the Nile for water, which is a distance of about two hundred yards. Tradition says that there was no sign of water before he went, but during his absence the water had sprung up. There is salt water all around it. I also saw the cave in which the Holy Family lived, and the old church, which is hundreds of years old. There is another church there now, which is pretty old too, and which is most interesting. In the interior are pictures of the things that our Lord went through. To tell you the truth, it is so wonderful, I could not explain what it really is without sitting in the church and writing it down. I thought I knew a lot about the Catholic Church when I used to talk to you, but I have found out I knew nothing then to what I know now. I have learned more in a fortnight here than I did during the whole time I was in Canterbury, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to say I am proud of myself for becoming a member of the Catholic Church, and only wish I had done so years ago. I have got a piece of wood off the tree which is called the tree of the Blessed Virgin. I am sending it to you. I am going to receive the Sacraments, but I do not know exactly when, but the priest will let me know. There was Mass at the camp on Christmas morning, when a very impressive sermon was preached. We are only nine hours from the place where our Saviour was born. The preacher illustrated that very well. I was almost in a dream about it all. You might think I have exaggerated things, but I assure you it is all quite true.

ELECTRIC MASSAGE

in your own home by means of the Zodiac machine—a wonderful apparatus easily carried in the pocket. Never requires recharging. For all pains, rheumatism, neuralgia, etc., it is unequalled. Thirty shillings, post free, from WALTER BAXTER, Chemist, Timaru....

Langford and Rhind

Address—HERBERT LANGFORD, 19 London St., Richmond (Phone 689).

(Late W. & H. LANGFORD), FUNERAL FURNISHERS & EMBALMERS
LONDON STREET.

P.O. Box 523.

TOWN OFFICE—104 Cashel
Phone 812