

PRUSSIAN POLES AND FRANCE.

A conversation with a priest, who filled the delicate mission of chaplain to the wounded German soldiers, threw some curious sidelights on the latter's state of mind (says a Paris correspondent). Those who came to Paris, and with whom our friend had to deal, were chiefly Prussian Poles and good Catholics. Our Abbe was struck by their conviction that France being a thoroughly godless and persecuting country, it was a righteous act to exterminate her sons. He astonished them when he told them of the crowded churches, the prayerful soldiers, the strong current of faith which has existed for some years past, but to which the war has added force. To convince foreigners that the French Government does not represent the real soul of the nation is always a thankless task, and our Abbe, a distinguished Sulpician, had some difficulty in persuading these Poles that *all* Frenchmen are not atheists. The Emperor of Russia's liberation of Poland made no impression on them, and they were as incredulous regarding his promises to their country as they had been with regard to the religion of the French soldiers. The anti-clerical Government of France has much to answer for, not only within the country, but also beyond its frontiers. We know from a certain source that the sympathies of many Italian, Spanish, and American Catholics are withheld from the French people because of the attitude of their Government, even at the present time, when it refuses to associate itself with the public prayers that are being recited all over the country.

BELGIAN REFUGEES.

In an article on the Belgian refugees in the London *Evening News* of November 27, the Countess of Limerick writes:—Among the refugees a few days ago was a party of twelve or fourteen nuns, with their Mother Superior and an old gardener. Their hollow cheeks told a tale of starvation. They were of an Order which saw little of the outside world, and the shock when their convent was bombarded left the Mother Superior, a woman of sixty-five, paralysed. She could not move a muscle of her body, and had to be carried everywhere. We tried to get her into a private motor car, but she was terrified until the owner of the car ran it up and down the roadway adjoining the platform. Then she smiled, and said, 'Oh, dearie, dearie, it's a train without an engine.' By the way, one of those nuns asked me if I could telephone to her uncle to let him know that she was safe. Her uncle was Mr. John Redmond. I cannot speak too highly of the magnificent bravery of the poor human derelicts that I see nightly on the platform of Victoria Station. They have heroically sacrificed home and country in an effort to stem the tide of Germans running into France; by so doing they have played probably the greatest part in this horrible war: yet, though hungry, homeless, and penniless, they express fervent gratitude for the smallest kindness from the hands of those whom they have saved.

BRAVERY REWARDED.

In his latest despatch General French commends the Second Coldstreams and Irish Guards for their indomitable pluck in storming two sets of barricades, capturing three trenches, and killing and making prisoner many of the enemy on the 1st of February at Givenchy.

Among those whose names appear in the latest list of recipients of the Victoria Cross is that of Lance-Corporal Cleary, or O'Leary, of the Irish Guards, who, when leading a storming party, killed five Germans holding a barricade at Givenchy and then rushed on to the second barricade and took prisoners five Germans who were attempting to man a machine gun. He practically captured the position alone.

Another recipient of the Victoria Cross is a drummer of the Gordon Highlanders, who rejoices in the suggestive name of Kenny. He fearlessly rescued five wounded men on October 23 at Ypres, and had previously twice saved and carried machine guns out of action.

CATHOLIC SOLDIER HERO.

Probably the most important—certainly the most popular—personage in Oldham, Lancs, at the present time is Sergeant John Hogan, of the 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment, who was married in St. Mary's Church on January 2 (says the London *Universe*). A few days before his marriage, Sergeant Hogan, who had been invalided home, received an intimation that he had been awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery near Festubert on October 29. The announcement in the borough of Hogan's distinction led to a great public demonstration, including a civic reception, and the modest hero was feted in a way that would have delighted a king, but which was very embarrassing to the young soldier. On Saturday last, the occasion of his wedding, Sergeant Hogan, V.C., was again feted in the most striking fashion. The marriage took place in St. Mary's Church, and was celebrated by the rector, Father Godric Kean, in the presence of a crowded congregation.

How Hogan won the Victoria Cross is told in the following lines:—

From October 11 his regiment had had some severe fighting a few miles to the north-east of Bethune, and suffered heavy casualties. All day on the 28th German shells fell thick among the trenches, and continued all night, to be redoubled in intensity at dawn on the 29th. Then, about 7.15 a.m., about 250 Germans charged from their trenches fifty yards away. They carried one of the forward trenches and occupied it, driving out the defenders, and rushed on to the supporting trenches before they were stopped, with great loss. About 3 p.m. Sergeant Hogan volunteered to accompany Second Lieutenant Leach to regain the trench, and the two crept up to and into it. Then a desperate fight ensued inside the narrow trench, the lieutenant and sergeant fighting from traverse to traverse until the Germans were driven to one end. Here they threw up their arms, and sixteen surrendered. When the two emerged they were deaf from the close rifle fire, which was conducted at less than ten yards' range. Curiously, neither was wounded, although the lieutenant's cap was knocked to pieces by bullets and the scarf he had wound round his neck was torn to ribbons.

THE NEW ZEALAND TROOPS IN EGYPT

CATHOLIC CHURCH PARADE.

(By J.C.M.)

We have received the following letter from an ex-pupil of the Marist Brothers, Christchurch, who is a member of the First Canterbury Regiment, now in Egypt:—

Zeitoun (near Cairo),

Egypt, January 6.

The *N.Z. Tablet* is one of the comparatively few New Zealand weekly papers that finds its way into the camp of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces at present quartered at Zeitoun (near Cairo), Egypt, and the items of interest to Catholics are eagerly read. Fortunately, at Home we have friends or relations, who are doing their duty nobly and well in sending us good Catholic literature and other things that add to the comfort of a soldier's life. When in New Zealand, your paper was always in my own home, and to receive a couple of copies by the last mail seemed like getting back to old times. The number of Catholics with the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces is indeed large, and to see our church parade each Sunday would greatly please our Catholic friends in New Zealand. During our long sea voyage a number of the men were unfortunate in not having a Catholic chaplain aboard, but in such cases one of our officers usually conducted the services, when the Rosary was always said, and a quiet little chat afterwards gave us an excellent opportunity of getting to know our Catholic comrades more intimately. When we arrived in Egypt, however, the chaplains were able to take charge of their own flocks, and Father (Captain) McMenamin was soon very busy in making arrangements for us to attend Mass each