

'LA BONNE DAME.'

The marvellous courage of scores of Frenchwomen whose lot it has been for months past to be exposed to the full fury of the struggle along the line of the Aisne is strikingly illustrated in the case of an old lady, the mother of a Parisian journalist, whose house lay within the firing zone. The story is told by the special correspondent at Paris of the *Daily News*.

Madame C.'s little house, together with the village in which it is situate, was long since pounded to atoms by the German shells. The enemy's lines are within three-quarters of a mile of the village, and it is almost certain death to venture into the open. Mme. C., like the other inhabitants who refused to leave their homes, had taken to her cellar, which is so large and solidly constructed that fifty soldiers could be comfortably quartered there. Every morning the old lady—she had passed three score years and ten—ventured out to buy milk and bread, keeping close to the walls in obedience to military orders. Before returning to her cellar she would call on the officer in command to get her newspaper. All the soldiers knew the Bonne Dame, as she was called, for she never failed to give them a cheery "Bonjour, mes enfants!"

The old lady's son came to see her from time to time, and always urged her to quit the ruined village. She stolidly declined. "I am all right here," she would say; "I cannot leave my house and everything that is dear to me. Besides, what can happen to me? At the same time she gave her son no rest till he said good-bye—Go, go, my son, it is too dangerous here for you."

A few nights ago—it was February 13—a hundred shells fell on the village. In the morning the Bonne Dame for the first time for five months failed to fetch her milk and bread. A shell had entered the vent hole of the cellar so neatly that it hardly grazed the stonework of the ceiling, but fell and exploded plump on the floor, blowing to pieces the key-stone, and reducing to powder every article of furniture in the cellar.

The poor old lady's mutilated remains were found under the remains of her chimney—she was probably dozing at the time of the explosion—and her faithful dog lay flattened against the wall.

Her sorrowing friends made her a rough deal coffin, and opened the family vault, and at dusk, by the light of a tallow candle, with her son, the village mayor, the major, and other officers as bearers, they tenderly laid her to rest under the shadow of the ruined church, while a soldier-priest pronounced the "De Profundis," and shells screamed overhead, and bullets flattened against the tottering church walls.

A VICTORY OF MIRACLE.

The speech made by Mgr. Marbeau, Bishop of Meaux, in the Geographical Society's grand hall on February 14, concerning what occurred in the region of Meaux during and after the battle of the Marne, was so important and interesting that the orator was constrained by applause and entreaties to promise to repeat it on February 22 (writes a Paris correspondent). Supporting him on the platform were Mgr. Baudrilart, Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris, Mgr. Odélin, Vicar-General of the Paris diocese, two soldiers in uniform, one of whom is Aimé Longaye, of Saint-Nicolas of Meaux, who has been wounded eight times, and who, now being convalescent, is waiting with impatience to be able to return to the front, and the other, whose name was not given, is a seminarist of Meaux, proposed by his general for the distinction of the Legion of Honor, but who cannot yet receive that cross because he has not yet reached the minimum age imposed by the regulations of the Order—that is to say, nineteen years. His conduct under the colors was such as to excite the admiration of his comrades-in-arms and of all his superiors. It would be quite impossible to give a full report of the Bishop's address in the short space of this letter, but it is useful to point out that, even for free-thinkers, the victory of the Marne was, so to speak, a miracle. The conditions under which it was gained show clearly that the intercession of France's protecting

Saints aided powerfully in it. Incidentally Mgr. Marbeau showed that the invaders who were marching on Paris were stopped at Ligny les Meaux, where the German shells completely wrecked the parish church dedicated to Saint Genevieve, leaving nothing standing but the statue of the saint. All the public authorities had fled on the approach of the foe, but the Bishop remained. Meaux saw a few Uhlans, but it was never occupied by the enemy. It received a certain number of shells fired by the Germans, but in comparison to other towns it suffered very little. Mgr. Marbeau had, moreover, made the vow if his episcopal city were spared invasion, to, in the future, solemnise with special splendour the fete of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8), and to place in his cathedral the statues of Saints Michael and Joan of Arc. It is needless to say those promises will be kept. Though Meaux was, so to speak, miraculously spared, its inhabitants—or, rather, those who remained—know many days of cruel anguish, during which the clergy were, by the absence of the authorities, led to play an exceptional part. It was in the Bishop's palace that the committee, which Mgr. Marbeau had constituted to administer the town, met. It was to the Bishop's palace that the chief of police came to make his daily report. And it was a priest who, on the approach of the enemy, mounted on a bicycle, rode to Paris to fetch surgeons to attend the wounded.

IRISHMEN IN SCOTLAND AND THE WAR.

The speech of Mr. John E. Redmond in the House of Commons on September 15, 1914, won absolutely all the one hundred branches of the United Irish League in Caledonia to the side of the British democracy in the war against German aggression. In many quarters it has been denied that Irishmen were joining the fighting ranks in the proportion they ought. This contention caused Mr. J. O'D. Derriek, United Irish League Organizer, to make some inquiries. Recently he prepared a statement for the London and Irish newspapers providing figures of the number of Irishmen from certain districts in Scotland who were in the Navy, Army, or Territorial Force, irrespective of when they joined. He now supplies new and up-to-date statistics, and is careful to point out that the figures he now gives merely represent the total number from the district indicated that have entered the services since the start of the war. The figures have been obtained either from clergymen or officers-bearers of the United Irish League, as the result of a canvass of the Irish population. Newspapers in Coatbridge, Dundee, Dunfermline, Dumfries, Glasgow, Linlithgow, Paisley, Stirling, and other centres, have published the names of the men concerned in the figures attached, and in many cases even their local address, the force joined, and number of battalion and regiment, so that anyone out to doubt the figures supplied may have ample proof, proof that has been locally verified.

The districts covered embrace cities, towns, and villages in Scotland in which the Nationalist population is in the main of Irish birth and extraction. The statement shows that 25,747 Irishmen or sons of Irishmen have joined the various services since the start of the war, apart from the thousands of Scottish Catholics who have entered the fighting ranks.

The reports of the committees that worked in the various centres getting the names and other particulars that enable the above statement to be produced show that 25,000 of the Irish in Scotland have joined the Army since the commencement of the war, about 50 the Navy, and 690 the Territorial Force. Ten thousand Irishmen from Scotland were in the Army prior to the war, and in the various services there are at least 15,000 Scottish Catholics, in the main from Highland districts. In other words, it is maintained that 50,000 Gaels—Irish and Scottish—from Scotland are in the fighting ranks.

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