

SIDELIGHTS ON THE WAR

GENERAL.

It is estimated that the Irish Guards have lost more men *pro rata* in the present war than any British regiment has ever lost in any war before.

Of the Newfoundland soldiers recently quartered in Edinburgh Castle, three hundred were Catholics. Canon Stuart described them as amongst the finest type of men he has met in the British Army.

Three months ago it was on record that 87 Catholic priests and 127 nuns had been awarded the Legion of Honor by the French Government for services in the field. As many as 426 French Jesuits went to the front, and of these many are now no more.

Mr. Coningsby Dawson, a French correspondent of the daily press, has given currency to the statement that General Joffre gave the countersign Jeanne d'Arc to his troops on the critical day when, together with the British, they stopped the German advance to Paris, and adds, 'The use of the word Jeanne d'Arc for an Anglo-French Army is one of the miracles of history.'

Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, M.P., comments in a London weekly paper on the statement that the Connaught Rangers, in coming to the rescue of the Gordon Highlanders in a recent battle in France, sang 'God save Ireland' as they marched. He adds, 'I should like to know if "Dolly's Brae" has been heard in France or Flanders of late, and also how many of the Ulster Volunteers are at the front to-day?'

They have the name of Ypres in England—in that of the Ypres Tower at Rye, in Sussex, though local talk knows nothing of its proper pronunciation, and broadly calls it the 'Wipers Tower.' It is a twelfth-century building, the oldest secular building of all the Cinque Ports, and was at one time the only stronghold of the town, though later walls and gates were built. The reason for its name is to be found in the commonly-accepted statement that it was built by William des Ypres, Earl of Kent.

SAD CONDITION OF BELGIUM.

News which reaches England from all quarters of Belgium and France and neutral countries (says the *Universe*) proves without a shadow of doubt that Germany is stripping Belgium by confiscation, and is engaged in what can be designated by no other term than systematic plundering. Food is taken from non-combatants on the plea that it is needed for civilians in Germany, but all the evidence at hand distinctly shows that the goods are destined for German troops. The total value of raw materials taken from Belgium is, up to the present, over £15,000,000. The monetary exactions demanded from even small Belgian towns is without parallel in the history of the world. It amounts to nothing less than robbery. It is not to be wondered at that Mr. Robinson Smith, a member of the Committee for Relief in Belgium, in his latest report on the condition of the people still remaining in Belgium, states that the major portion of those remaining in their sorely afflicted country are on the verge of starvation.

THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

The spirit of the times was shown at a marriage celebrated by Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J., at St. Pancras' Church, Ipswich, on February 11. The contracting parties were Mr. Richard S. Weld-Blundell and Mrs. Mayne. Father Bernard Vaughan said in an address that he felt proud to think that, while the bridegroom held a commission in the Coldstream Guards, his brother, the best man, was a private in the ranks of a Liverpool regiment. The British Empire had rallied her sons by the million to her flag, and her daughters at home were as active as her sons at the front. Never were they so proud of their place in the sun as to-day, when there was a marvellous unity among them.

'THY WILL BE DONE.'

The *Ampleforth Journal* prints a pathetic letter written by Lieutenant A. M. A. T. de L. Teeling, an 'old boy,' who was killed in action at the Battle of the Aisne. It shows remarkable submission to the will of God. Writing to his father before going to the front Lieutenant Teeling said:

'I wonder if I'll ever return should I go out! I wonder still more if I'll ever go out. I daily pray that I may, but God knows what is good for us, so I always add, "Thy will, not mine, be done." If He sees fit for me to go and return safely He'll grant my prayer. Whereas if He sees it would be for my greater good that I never return I'll be shot. And again, if it is best for me not to go out at all He'll keep me here. Nevertheless, I can't help praying that I may be allowed to go.'

Lieutenant Teeling was the youngest son of Captain Bartle Teeling, Private Chamberlain to his Holiness.

THE CZAR HONORS CATHOLIC TROOPER.

Along with several officers and men of the Royal Scots Greys, Trooper Fred G. Higgins, who is a son of Mr. Matthew Higgins, Ringford, Kirkcudbright, has received a decoration from his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment. The decoration is a silver Maltese cross, bearing the Czar's monogram on the obverse and on the reverse St. George and the dragon is depicted. The ribbon to be worn with the decoration is composed of black and yellow perpendicular bars. Private Higgins, who is a Catholic, joined the Royal Scots Greys in January, 1911. His elder brother, Private Matthew Higgins, is at the front with the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders, and a younger brother, Private John Higgins, is in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Trooper Higgins formed one of a mounted escort at the marriage of Prince Arthur of Connaught, who is an officer in the Greys, and had also a similar honor when the King and Queen visited Glasgow. He went to the front with his regiment at the beginning of the war, and has seen all the fighting since the battle of Mons, taking part in the charges which his regiment made during the famous retreat.

GERMANY'S GIBRALTAR.

'Germany's Gibraltar' is the term applied to Heligoland, the triangular-shaped island which occupies so valuable a strategical position in the North Sea. Situated some twenty-eight miles from the mainland, this fortified island acts as an effective guardian of the mouths of the rivers Elbe and Weser, and the German coast-line generally.

This island has had a chequered career. At one time it was an amusement centre similar to the famous Coney Island of America. Cafes, dancing-halls, and a museum were erected there, but now these buildings have been replaced by grim fortresses and armoured gun-turrets. Since the Germans took over Heligoland in 1890 from the British in exchange for Zanzibar, they have spent millions in transforming the island into a fortified base, for their naval experts soon recognised its value as a factor of defence. During the last twenty years six millions have been expended in supplementing the natural fortifications of the isle. The cliffs have been strengthened by great walls of cement, and the harbor there, intended for a base for torpedo craft, is one of the most highly-fortified defences in the world.

The surrender of Heligoland to Germany by Lord Salisbury at the time of the famous bargain of the 'nineties' aroused much hostile comment amongst Britishers, and there is little doubt that this island has added a valuable link to the chain of fortresses which guard the Kaiser's dominions.

A new importance has recently been given Heligoland by the establishment there of a base for airships. It is possible to house five Zeppelins there and keep them well supplied with gas.

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