

CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS.

The London correspondent of the *Dublin Independent* says that about 145 Catholic chaplains have so far been appointed to the British Army and Navy, this figure representing priests who are devoting their whole time to the service. In addition there are close on twenty other priests giving part time service, and beyond that there is a large number of official chaplains attending to fixed military camps and depots in various parts of the country. About 3 per cent. of the whole Catholic clergy of Great Britain are thus engaged in attending to the spiritual necessities of Catholics defending the Empire. Cardinal Bourne, it is said, needs still more, and is appealing to the bishops of the country to send in the names of suitable priests who can be spared. It is necessary that all candidates should be recommended by their own bishops.

BELGIAN SOLDIER PRIESTS ORDAINED.

The Right Rev. Mgr. Dewachter, Auxiliary Bishop of Malines, has been on a mission to the brave Belgian troops in Flanders, and has now returned to Bishop's House, Southwark, where he has been staying since soon after the outbreak of war. His Lordship granted an interview to a representative of the *Universe*, to whom he gave many interesting particulars regarding his brief, but important, mission to the Belgian Army. It may be mentioned that before leaving for the front Bishop Dewachter completed arrangements for holding an ordination at Furnes, and he also gave Holy Orders to many of the scattered seminarists of the various dioceses of Belgium who have been former students either in France or England.

'It has afforded me great consolation to pay a visit to the Catholic soldiers fighting in the trenches,' remarked his Lordship to our representative. 'I went amongst them in the hospitals and various institutions, which I am happy to place on record are doing an immense amount of good in the direction of securing for them complete restoration to health. The devoted English and French nurses are giving themselves untiringly and generously to the nursing of the brave wounded Allied troops.'

'Your visit was chiefly concerned with the Belgian soldiers,' remarked the representative.

'Yes,' replied his Lordship. 'I went along the firing-line and into every institution where a word of hope and encouragement would be accepted by the noble wounded soldiers. Many of them were sorely wounded, but they bore their injuries with wonderful courage. I was consoled by the remarkable spirit of devotion displayed by the Catholic men. Amongst other places I visited was La Paille; it was my happiness to confer the Order of Priesthood upon twenty-five Belgian students.'

'Did you visit his Majesty the King of Belgium?' inquired our representative.

'That was one of the privileges of my brief visit,' enthusiastically remarked his Lordship. 'I had the pleasure of laying before him a full statement regarding the position of the refugees in every part of England. I was able to supply him with this because I receive detailed statements daily from every town and village in which the Belgians are now settled in this hospitable land. His Majesty was impressed by the statement I laid before him, and gave expression to the satisfaction which he felt with the steps that are taken to preserve the faith of his exiled people. He followed with interest each detail as I laid it before him, and he expressed his happiness when he learned that they were being well cared for.'

Bishop Dewachter mentioned an incident to illustrate the brutality of the German soldiers. 'I visited a Catholic institution,' he said, 'which was in charge of a community of devoted nuns who were engaged in nursing old and infirm people. A few hours later the guns of the enemy were turned on the institution, and, as a result of the bombardment, four nuns, eleven sick and infirm old men and women were killed, and twenty-two were wounded. It is all a terrible business,' commented his Lordship.

'Naturally your visit to the trenches afforded considerable gratification to the Belgian soldiers?'

'Yes, indeed,' replied his Lordship. 'To each man in the trenches I presented a medal of our Lady, which they received with much eagerness. Their first questions related to their wives or mothers or sisters now living in this country, and I am now their ambassador in distributing their messages of tender solicitude.'

Asked as to his opinion generally regarding the morale of the Belgian soldiers now engaged in this bitter struggle, his Lordship with considerable vigor exclaimed: 'They are ready to fight to the end, and they will never rest until they sweep away the enemy.'



THE LATE PRIVATE DENNIS O'DONNELL,
Thornbury

(particulars of whose death appeared in our issue of June 24).

GENERAL ABSOLUTION AT THE FRONT.

'I am very busy with my big parish,' says a Jesuit Father who is serving as an Army chaplain at the front.

'I am at present lodged next a big church—larger than Farn street. In the cure's house,' he writes to a friend in London.

'I have two ambulances, i.e., hospitals, belonging to my division quite close at hand.'

'My regiment, -- Brigade, are in this town, and the two other brigades are about four miles away. Though my regiment have been in and out of the trenches several times, we've not yet had a single casualty, and the hospitals mostly contain sick cases.'

'I feel as if I have been out here for months, and I've forgotten most of the events of last week already!'

The Soldiers' Mass at 11.30 on Sunday brought me a congregation of about 300-350. I prepared these men for a General Absolution, and at the *Domine non sum dignus* all received Holy Communion—though they had breakfasted *à la Viaticum*; for they would be in danger in the trenches that night. In the afternoon I cycled off four or five miles, and after Benediction other soldiers were given the same privilege. Some I missed, so I returned on Monday afternoon for the stragglers. On Monday morning I did a big round on my cycle to find out the regiments of the division scattered in other parts, returning for dinner with the cure at midday. After dinner, off again, and I managed to get 50 for Absolution and Holy Communion before 4 o'clock. I had to do my journey all over again after tea, as I had an appointment with a doctor, whom I received into the Church before night. Once again the bicycle is a treasure! I should have needed three or four horses to get over the ground I covered during the day.'