

CATHOLIC NUNS IN THE CRIMEAN WAR

Mother M. Anastasia Kelly, who died recently in the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy at St. John's Wood, London, in her 86th year, was one of the few survivors of those brave Sisters who went out to Scutari in 1854 to help Miss Florence Nightingale in the work of caring for the sick and wounded English soldiers during the Crimean War. She returned to England in 1856, and was decorated with the Order of the Royal Red Cross by Queen Victoria in 1887. One of her companions, Mother Stanislaus, 89 years old, who went with her to the Crimea, and who was also decorated with the Royal Red Cross, is still living at the hospital; and Mother St. George, of the Nuns of the Faithful Virgin, Norwood, England, shares the same distinction.

In Madame Belloc's interesting book, *Historic Nuns*, we (*Sacred Heart Review*) learn that it was a certain very gifted Mother Clare who headed the little troop whom the well known Bishop Grant of Southwark sent off to look after the sick and wounded soldiers of their own Faith.

Bishop Grant had travelled with his father's regiment when a boy. Sergeant Grant and his wife were Catholics from the North of Ireland. Bermondsey Convent was in his diocese . . . and thither he came on October 13, 1854, and told Mother Clare that she must send out nuns to the Crimea. She knew nothing whatever about war and wounded soldiers, and thought the Bishop was jesting; but when he explained the horrors of the Eastern hospitals, she immediately offered to go herself. At first he thought it impossible to spare her from London, but two days later he wrote to her to pick out four other nuns and 'start for Turkey to-morrow.' And start they did on the 17th. An elderly friend, Bishop Morris (a Bishop in *partibus*), came to the convent, with his eyes full of tears, and asked, 'Who is to take care of you from here to Turkey?' 'Our angel guardians,' was the reply. He could do nothing for the pilgrims, but went every day to Bermondsey during their absence to look after those who were left behind.

Off to the Front.

To Paris the five set off. . . They spent a week in the French metropolis, and every possible courtesy was shown to them in the great hospitals. They bought cases of surgical instruments and other stores, and the French nuns at St. Roch taught them as much as they could. The Bishop wrote to them every day, and so did the flock in Bermondsey, to whom Mother Clare replied with astonishing pluck, and told them that the Government had consented to employ them, and to recognise them as nuns; she added: 'Now pray that we may do everything very well and give great satisfaction. Try to keep everybody in Bermondsey well and happy—Sisters, children, and all. I have you all within my heart, and say an *Ave* for you all three times a day besides the accustomed devotions.'

They finally traversed the Mediterranean in a violent storm, and reached Constantinople on November 4, thousands of spectators coming to see them land and climb up the steep hill from the landing place to the barracks. There the Sisters were put into a large room, which was absolutely unfurnished, except for one old chair, which, being without a back, served also for a table. The windows were broken, and there was no fire. An energetic soldier set to work to make some tea; alas, it was made in a can, and was of the weakest description. But the nuns ever after regarded him most gratefully.

The Nuns at the Seat of War.

Then Mother Clare fell to work. The other four spent their time dressing wounds, and two of them caught the hospital fever and nearly died. But they pulled through, and refused to be sent home. Mother Clare was forced to remain daily for hours serving out stores to the medical officers and nurses. . . No nurse was allowed in this department. She had to receive, prepare, and give out, aided by a contingent of Greeks, Italians, Turks, French, and soldiers em-

ployed as orderlies, whom the nurses called Alderneys! This motley throng was ruled by the nun so efficiently that, in the graver cases, if anything went wrong, it sufficed to uplift a finger. 'The Greeks and Turks obeyed her as exactly as if they understood every word she uttered.'

Jeers Change to Cheers.

Many more Sisters went out, collected from convents of the Order in England and Ireland; Liverpool, Dublin, Chelsea, Kinsale, Charleville, Carlow, and Cork contributed their quota. . . The Sisters risked their lives (Mother Clare nearly died). And when, at the end of the war, the Guards returned in the same ship with a last detachment, the commanding officer asked them to share the triumph of the landing by walking at the head of the regiment from the ship to the neighboring barracks. On the way, the people who had assembled to cheer the soldiers began to groan at the religious, whereupon one of the men became so exasperated that he sprang from the ranks and called upon his comrades to defend the ladies who had stood so faithfully by their dying brethren-in-arms. The regiment to a man placed themselves in a threatening attitude, with their rifles levelled at the crowd—a serious position, as all were supplied with ball cartridges. The commander stepped between the regiment and the people, and in a few well-chosen words explained the relation in which the nuns stood to them, the labors, fatigues, and indescribable sufferings they had endured for love of humanity. The hooting then turned to cheering; and the nuns, as they marched on, became the unwilling objects of an ovation. From that day, Sisters of Mercy can walk through London, not only unmolested, but respected.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

January 6.

Rev. Brother Justin, Superior of the Marist Brothers in Wellington, left last week for Sydney on a holiday visit.

The annual retreat of the clergy of the archdiocese of Wellington will commence on February 5, at St. Patrick's College.

Bro. Ferguson, District President of the Victorian District of the H.A.C.B. Society, is at present in Wellington on a holiday visit. The local Hibernians will formally welcome him to-morrow afternoon.

Last Sunday special devotions were held at the confraternity church (St. Anne's). Rev. Father Joseph Herring, S.M., one of the recently ordained priests, preached, and new members were enrolled.

The monthly meetings of the ladies' branches of the Sacred Heart Society were held at St. Joseph's, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, and St. Anne's last evening, and were largely attended. Rev. Father C. J. Venning, S.M., addressed the meeting at St. Joseph's, whilst Rev. Father Segrief addressed that at St. Anne's.

Thursday was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Corrigan. Though the occasion was not marked by any special function, the staff of the D.I.C. in Wellington, of which Mr. Corrigan is the general manager, did not allow the event to pass unnoticed. When Mr. Corrigan arrived home that evening, he was surprised to receive a very handsome silver rose-bowl and a pair of silver vases from the staff over which he has presided as manager for so many years. It was a thoughtful and grateful act, which shows the excellent feeling which exists between Mr. Corrigan and those under him.

Bro. J. W. Callaghan, District Deputy of the H.A.C.B. Society, opened a branch of the society at Levin last month. Sixteen members were initiated at the opening ceremony, including Rev. Father Cognet, who has given every encouragement to the movement. What struck Bro. Callaghan was the eagerness of the