

# CANONS AND CANNON

By  
GORDON MIRAMS



*I've got bayonet practice and Scripture for homework to-night.*

**M**R. PETER PACKS was going to church.

He was an ordinary little man who always wanted to do the right thing quite as desperately as he wanted Old Boys to wipe the field with Marists next Saturday. He was going to church partly because he had always gone to church, and partly because he really enjoyed going and got something out of it.

But lately it had been different—ever since Christianity had been taken over by Fighting Parsons in the interests of Defence.

It dated from that famous speech made by the Rev. Canon A. H. Norris to the Veterans' Association in Christchurch on May 28, 1938, when the venerable gentleman had said: "To-day is the day of the Army, Navy, and Air Force," and had apparently forgotten to mention anything about God.

That, of course, had happened some time before the Canon had had his range increased by an appointment as Big Gun of the Drillshed Church—the most militant and most popular church in all the South.

Mr. Packs told into rank with the rest of the congregation outside. A trumpeter was doing the work the bells had done in the old days. Then the congregation formed fours with great precision and marched inside.

**YES**, there had been a lot of changes in church, sighed Mr. Packs. There was a defensive machine-gun on the altar, a defensive old trench-mortar that had been converted into a font. There were stacked rifles in the porch where once you had put your umbrella, decontaminators at the head of each aisle, combination gasmask hassocks in each pew, and battle flags and recruiting posters on the walls.

They had taken the Bible away from the lectern, because it was so difficult for anyone

**T**HIS story of how Mr. Peter Packs went to church is a fantasy, but there may still be those who will see in it an argument that all the expediency in the world cannot answer.

a few contradictory passages from the New Testament and the more wrathful passages from the Old.

Far more prominently displayed on the lectern were the Manual of Arms and the Regulations for Air Raid Precautions.

The military band in the old organ loft struck up a stirring march and the congregation stood smartly at the salute while the Chaplain-General attended by several cannon and prominent members of the Navy League, Defence League and Veterans' Association, deployed from the vestry.

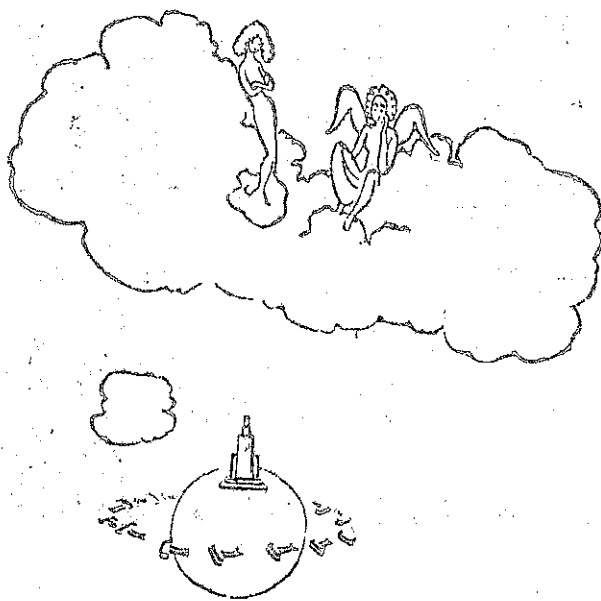
**TO-DAY**, somehow, Mr. Packs found his attention kept wandering from the service. He kept thinking about old times, and, as his eye roved round the church, he noticed something he had never noticed before. Apparently the redecorators of the church had also overlooked it.

It was a picture of Christ, and it hung between two battle flags in a dim angle of the walls. Mr. Packs wouldn't have noticed it, it was so much in the shadow, but for a beam of sunlight that struck through a high window on the opposite wall and lighted it up. It seemed to Mr. Packs that the face of the Master was very sad.

**WITH** an effort, the little man brought his attention back to the service. Great bombing planes! (thought Mr. Packs). How time has passed! The sermon is just beginning!

For his text, the Chaplain-General chose the beautiful words of Canon Norris's Christchurch speech:

"Brethren, he said, 'To-day is the day of the' (Continued on page 36.)



*CLEVER, AREN'T THEY?"*

(Drawing by Arthur Wragg, from "Peace News")