

## New Faces

There is a distinct feeling of regret because so many of our brother gunners have left us to join other units and we are sometimes apt to try and compare our new friends with the old. This is not fair, these new chaps have come among us, perhaps against their inclinations, with the intention of making a go of things. Theirs is a hard task, they have been imbued with the traditions of their old unit and wouldn't be worth their salt if they were not proud of their old unit and consider it the best ever. It depends on us whether they settle down quickly and appreciate the fact that we are genuinely pleased to welcome them, and as the C.O. said the other night, realise that they will carry on the traditions of this Regiment that we are so proud of.

They have faults—so have we! Remember the Biblical quotation, "First pluck the beam from thine own eye." These chaps have proved that they are keen and in many cases know as much, if not more, than we do.

On Wednesday night at the Boxing Tournament they proved that they know their stuff and are not afraid to "mix it." The new men will be a distinct asset to us in action and we will be well advised to learn all we can from them, the knowledge we gain may save us from a Jap bayonet just where it would hurt the most.

So—a hearty, sincere welcome.

## The Cowardly Hero

(By "The Gaddy.")

Reg Williams, of the Star-Tribune was in an ugly mood. He was fed up to the back teeth. He seemed to be getting all the rotten assignments. A little while ago he had had to spend three days covering a Methodist conference, while Griggs had the Thornton murder trial without a break. Now he had been shoved on to the Appeal Boards. It sickened him, for he hated the whole atmosphere of the proceedings. Having somewhat of a taint of the "Red" in him, he couldn't help having an almost lively sympathy with the poor helpless beggars who appeared before the tribunal, for after all they were just about helpless, with their half-baked religious theories, in the hands of the wide-awake and fully capable fellows who ran the show.

He didn't doubt the sincerity of their beliefs, but few there were who had the brains or the wit to present their cases in a manner that stood the least chance of convincing the board, and for the most part, they said their little say, in a half frightened, or semi-defiant way, expressing themselves in a welter of religious jargon, for which reasonable, every-day sort of men could hardly refrain from showing amused contempt.

It was well into the third year of the first world war, and the number of cases that were coming forward for hearing was increasing and it had been his rotten luck, at this session, to have to cover the proceedings, and so he was far from happy.

## TAMALAIN VETROUVIOUS

He entered the building, and took place at the reporters' table, gave a curt nod to Chyde of the Press, and leant back, gazing out of the window, and wishing that he had the power to give an extra spin to the wheels of the clock. It was beautifully sunny outside, and he knew from experience that it would not be long before it was pretty stuffy within, for, over the whole of his years of reporting, he had never known a courthouse, wherein the officials appeared to know the reason for the building having windows built into it.

Within a short while, the various officials wandered in, and stood around in groups, waiting for the "old boy" to put in an appearance.

Under half-closed eyes Reg watched the Army rep., a fellow named Tynkle. Spick and span, full of self-confidence, he dominated the whole circle. Fairly tall, and straight as a poker, with sharp, fine-cut features and flashing eyes, and somewhat of a domineering manner, he had few illusions about his job. It was his business to ferret out the shirker who was using religion as a cloak for cowardice, or to show that the views of an appellant did not come within the scope of the clauses which allowed exemption. In his own heart he had quite a sympathy for an old one here and there, but in brain, he was inclined to be a trifle harsh in his own judgment of other men's consciences, because, for the life of him, he could not understand any man having claim to a faith which asked him to be a human football, to be kicked all over the show by any bully powerful enough to do it.

In due time, proceedings commenced and Reg noted down a striking point here and there, but in the main confined himself to the appellant's name, his plea for exemption, and the result, the latter generally being written into his copy well ahead of the board's ruling. They were all so hopeless. And so the morning wore on, and Tynkle was looking a little satisfied, for, so far there had been no "admonished sine die" to stand against his score.

A further case was called, and because of the peculiarity of the name Reg evinced a trifle more interest. The orderly stood up, and raising his voice so that it was heard all over the room,

announced, "Tamalaine Vetrovious Snubbins," at the same time making a poor attempt to hide a broad grin . . . and that broad grin became reflected on every other face in the room. The only solemn looking person present was Tamalaine Vetrovious Snubbins himself, and if any man looked a martyr nobly bearing his cross along the stony path of virtue, it was he.

He put his case, pleading that he was opposed to all forms of warfare and would rather die than take up arms. Make no mistake about it, this fellow was nobody's fool, for he knew his Bible almost from cover to cover, and quoted it at great length, and it must be said, that on quite a number of occasions he had Tynkle "stymied." In fact, to a few of Tynkle's "stand-bys" he had given a quiet but effective answer, and Tynkle was something annoyed about it, and so at last he came to light with his specialty . . . "What would you do if you saw your sister being violated by a German soldier?" T. V. S. looked upon him with his mild blue eyes, and gravely said: "While thanking God that I, unlike the German, was not a soldier, I would call upon the Lord that my sister's soul should be preserved from evil, for whatever happened to her body, that would be of no consequence, because her will had not acquiesced to the act."

"But would you not interfere?" queried Tynkle.

"It would be useless," replied T. V. S., "for the German had already lusted in his heart."

After that there was a great deal of cross questioning, during which Reg's pencil travelled fast, and there were some breezy passages between T. V. S. and Tynkle, but it all finished with the appeal being dismissed. In handing down the decision, the Board's president declared that he found it very difficult indeed to discern any difference between straight-forward cowardice and the views expressed by appellant. He hoped that there were few who shared T. V. S.'s religious views, or convictions, if they could be called such, and so T. V. S. left the room.

Later he did a stretch in jail, being specially castigated by the magistrate when he received his sentence.

Some years later, on a wet Sunday night, Reg strode along the dimly lit street, immersed in thought, paying little heed to his surroundings, for he was on his way to a friend's house, to spend a pleasant evening, discussing books and authors.

Suddenly, he was aware of a patch of light falling across the footpath some distance ahead, and when he came to it, he found that it was coming from an open door of a dingy hall, a mission hall, run by one of these newer fangled religious bodies.

## BROTHER IGNATIUS.

He paused, and looked at a poster, stuck up in the porch . . . "Brother Ignatius Leaves To-night for Service with the Lepers."

That seemed interesting, and, on the impulse, Reg went in. The place was full, and a queer benevolent old guy was speaking, telling, of the many virtues of Brother Ignatius, of his love of the work in the Lord's vineyard, and of his response to the call for workers among the lepers.

He called on Ignatius to say a few words. Reg looked with interest on this fellow. He was unassuming, with long hair that fell over his shoulders, and with a beard that swept his breast, but the most striking feature was his mild blue eyes. He spoke simply, and asked for the prayers and the love of his fellow servants of the Lord.

After the meeting, Reg went forward, and breasting up to the leader of the

## The Padre's Column

## The Bombing of Towns

The following extract from a British publication called "The Christian News-Letter" concerns a very important subject—whether anything, no matter how ruthless is permissible in war, or whether the line between clean and dirty fighting must be drawn. Dr. J. H. Oldham, the writer of this article says:—

"The challenge is one which Christians are bound to face, for the simple reason that we cannot take for granted that what the national cause demands, or seems to demand, is something to which the Christian conscience can consent. Christians owe allegiance to a higher authority than the nation. All our actions, individual and national have to be brought to the bar of an impartial and searching divine judgment. Unless we are prepared, even in wartime, to examine our conduct in the light of the laws of God, we may as well let Christianity go and swallow at a gulp the Nazi creed."

"Professor Macgregor reminds me that it was said in the News-Letter that the deliberate killing of non-combatants is murder, and argues that 'if what happened in Lubeck and Cologne is not the deliberate killing of non-combatants, then words have no meaning.'"

"The problem is a real one, but it does not seem to me to have been rightly formulated. We cannot consider Lubeck and Cologne in isolation from the total context of the war. We cannot leave out of the picture the unimaginable horrors on an unimaginable scale which the Axis Powers have perpetrated. Lubeck and Rostock are ports vital to the enemy for the supply of his armies in Russia, Finland and Norway. What they have suffered is immeasurably less than the devastation and suffering which the Germans have caused in Russia. If the bombing of their ports and industries is the necessary, or most effective, means of putting an end to the greater cruelty, it may be, among the choices that are actually upon us in the waging of war, the one to be preferred on grounds of humanity. The Pacifist has no convincing answer to the question by what practical means the unspeakable cruelties of lawless and brutal men may be restrained, and the enslavement of the peoples of Europe prevented, except by force of arms."

"Sir Archibald Sinclair, in reply to a recent question in the House of Commons, stated that the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to bombing is unchanged. It is to destroy the enemy's capacity to make war by bombing his war factories, means of transport and military stores, wherever they may be found. If the intention is to destroy the enemy's capacity for making war, the incidental and undesired killing of non-combatants, even if it be on a large scale, cannot rightly be described as deliberate. The real line is between action directed to a genuine military objective and action which goes beyond it and is merely wanton destruction. It is a line that is by no means easy to maintain and much is at stake in holding to it."

"It will make the whole difference to the future whether we control war and make it the instrument of a genuinely human purpose or whether we surrender to its blind fury so that war controls us. No one who has delighted in human skill and craftsmanship can feel anything but regret at the destruction of the architectural glories of Lubeck. Works of art are not a national but a universal possession. Not the Germans only, but the world is poorer for their destruction; the loss is ours as well as theirs. The Nazis boast that our own historic monuments will soon become only historic memories. Let them be vandals, if they will. Let us remain, if we can, civilised and sane, loathing the insanity of ruthless destruction and retaining our reverence for the monuments of human labour and skill."

"When we pass from the sphere of civilisation to the deeper level of religion, the problem becomes far more acute. It is the question of the infliction of torture and death on the relatively innocent. I take the case of children because their case is so unanswerably clear. As with works of art, there is something universal in the innocence of children. When Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst, no one can suppose that it would have made the smallest difference to His action if it had been a German or a Japanese child, the Germans and Japanese being what they are to-day. We have to recall these things even in

meeting, asked about this Brother Ignatius.

With the easy technique of the reporter, he gained a lot of information, and he concluded his questioning with one query:

"What was Bro. Ignatius's name in private life?" he asked.

"Well," replied the old man, "it was a name that the Brother seldom used in full, and you may appreciate it when I tell you that it was Tamalaine Vetrovious Snubbins."

Reg went away, thinking hard. Hero, or coward?

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wartime—most of all in wartime—because they enshrine values with which the whole future of mankind is bound up. To cast them from us is to be utterly damned.

"To rain bombs from the air that will destroy, maim and torture children is an act of which the consequences are devilish. I do not deny that it may be a necessary act, in order that the children of the world may be saved in the future from still greater sufferings and yet more deadly injuries to their souls. But it is an act which only that motive can keep from searing our souls."

"How far the laying waste of towns is inseparable from attacks on military targets, either because these targets are mixed up with dwelling-houses, or because the intensification of ground defences makes precision of aim impracticable, is a question requiring for its answer a knowledge of strategy and military technique possessed only by those responsible for the conduct of the war. What is demanded by the moral issues involved is that the necessity should be scrutinised with especial care."

"These are not sentimental questions out of tune with the realism of war. There is a real danger that, unless we are all the time alive to them, we may succumb to the drag of the evil we are opposing and become increasingly dehumanised and brutalised and, therefore, less capable of creating a true civilisation."

## READ

## "THE TIMES"

On MONDAY  
— TUESDAY  
— WEDNESDAY  
— THURSDAY  
\* — SATURDAY

\*READ

THE OBSERVATION POST

It's Printed by "THE TIMES."

The Editor,  
The Observation Post,  
Palmerston North.

Dear Sir,—

Having read with interest the article "A Fool There Was," in your issue of the 11th instant, I am forced to exclaim on the pity the story was not completed. The story, as printed, reminds me of the bright young thing who once, in rather peculiar circumstances, said, "Just so far, but no farther."

Yes, I was the chief bowman for that worthy master, Mahmoud McGregor. I recall this incident well, in fact, it was on this very occasion that the saying "You're telling me," was born.

When Murdoch McHorsepistol stopped and exclaimed, "Hey, you silly old blighter, you left me the wrong key," Mahmoud replied with "You're telling me." And so a saying was born.

Sincerely yours,

ANGUS MacSLINGSHOT.

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