

The Observation Post

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1942.

Regimental Ball

The long-awaited and much-looked-forward-to Regimental Ball is scheduled to take place a week to-night in the A.N.A. Ballroom, George Street, Palmerston North.

This Ball is run for the benefit of the Regiment as a whole, not for one or two or any particular set of people, it is run for everybody, and it is up to everyone of us to take a keen interest in it. There is plenty to be done both before and after the event and help will be very much appreciated by the Committee.

Mrs. D. Honore (Mother of the Regiment) is Hostess again, and anything she has anything at all to do with is always a success.

The Ball the Regiment organised in July was a grand success because every man in the Regiment took a hand in it. Many non-dancers volunteered for fatigues and guard duty that night. The fatigues who arranged the hall, washed up, waited at table, door keepers, in fact all the helpers were volunteers.

The Committee is assured that a similar happy state of affairs will exist this time.

Dancers — it is YOUR Dance. The Orchestra is a combined one—and a good one too—so roll along and bring your girl friend in perfect safety. Ladies are coming as partners for those who have not yet found a friend in the district.

You are assured of a good time!!

Some Bits and Pieces

By "The Gaddy."

I have often declared that the on-looker sees much more of the fun than do those who take part in the so-called festivities. In fact, I agree with the sage who said that Life is a tragedy to those who feel, and a comedy to those who think. In that case, Life must be a tragedy to so many people, for it would appear that there are so few who do the thinking. I was travelling in a train a few days ago, and there was a large number of soldiers in the carriage. They all appeared to be talking, and none of them seemed to be listening. For the most part their conversation centred around the amount of beer that they declared they had drunk, or would drink, given the opportunity. Some, as a side-line brought women into the general discussion, and of course, races, and racehorses weren't far behind, in the hub-bub.

One little khaki clad figure, sat opposite me, and surveyed the crowd with a mischievous gleam in his eye. I leant across and asked him what he thought of all the uproar. "Aw, it's great," he said. "These chaps are protecting Christian culture and civilisation."

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

It is wonderful in what queer places wit and wisdom may be found. Some find them in the writings of the sages, and look for them only there. Yet there are many gems to be seen where least expected, if one only keeps the eyes skinned. The other day, I had occasion to go to one of those places, which are provided, especially for the convenience of men, and I duly parted with the necessary penny. Wit was written on the wall, but not all of it was printable. One little piece caught my eye. Somebody, with a grouch had scrawled the following:—

"This bally convenience is no good at all, The seat is too high, and the hole is too small."

This had earned the reply, written in a different hand:—
"Your silly complaint deserves this retort, Your rump is too fat, and your legs are too short."

Now, say what you will, there WAS wit and wisdom in that neat reply.

SO POSITIVE

I think it was Josh Billings who once declared that half the trouble in the world was caused by people being so positively certain about things that really weren't so. I believe that to be so, too. Just how certain some folk can be about things that aren't so was well exemplified a few days ago. My business took me to the railway station. A troop train had just pulled in, and a large number of soldiers flocked into the refreshment room. I breasted up to the counter, and procured a cup of coffee, and then quietly strolled over to one of the wall-counters. A little further along were two khaki clad fellows, one of whom had a grouch. He was declaiming against a certain Cabinet Minister. I picked up my ears... and later I gasped, for I heard him tell the other that this Minister was once one of the poorest men in New Zealand, and to-day he received some thousands a year, and the informant ended up by declaring that the same honourable gentleman could knock back the whisky by the gallon. I did a big grin, and finished my coffee. I have known that Minister over many years, and I knew that he was never poor, in

the generally accepted sense of the word; that his salary was but a fraction of the figure mentioned by the positive person; and that the Minister had been a total abstainer throughout his life. Still, the positive person will remain positive, come what may, Josh Billings or no Josh Billings.

PARADOX

The following lines were found inscribed on the wall of a shelled house in a devastated French village during the First Great War
War provokes pillage,
Pillage brings ruin,
Ruin brings patience,
Patience produces peace;
Thus does war produce peace.

Peace provokes abundance,
Abundance brings arrogance,
Arrogance brings war;
Thus does peace produce war.

"ALLITERATION'S ARTFUL AID"

An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
Bolted by battery besieged Belgrade.
Cossack commanders cannonading came,
Dealing destruction's devastating doom;
Every endeavour engineers essay,
For fame, for fortune fighting-furious fray!
Generals 'gainst generals grapple, gracious God!
How honours heaven's heroic hardi-hood!
Infuriate—indiscriminate in ill—
Kinsmen kill kindred—kindred kinsmen kill;
Labour low levels loftiest, longest lines,
Men march 'midst mounds, 'mid moles, 'mid murderous mines,
Now noisy noxious numbers notice nought,—
Of outward obstacles opposing ought,—
Poor patriots! — partly purchased, partly pressed,
Quite quaking, quickly "Quarter! quarter! quarter!" quest;
Reason returns, religious right redounds,
Swarrow stops such sanquinary sounds.
Truce to thee, Turkey, triumph to thy train,
Unwise, unjust unmerciful Ukraine!
Vanish, vain victory! vanish victory vain!
Why wish we warfare? Wherefore welcome were
Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xaviere.
Yield, yield, ye youths, ye yeomen yield your yells
Zeno's, Zampatee's Zoroaster's zeal,
Attracting all, arms against acts appeal.

THE HIRE SYSTEM.

There was an old man of Tarentum,
Who gnashed his false teeth 'til he bent 'em,
When asked what the cost,
And how much he had lost,
He said, "I don't know. I just rent 'em."
Ed. Note.—Many thanks "Gaddy." Big Brains Beget Better Brighter Batteries.

The Padre's Column

WHAT ABOUT OURSELVES?

This week I want to pass on to you some thoughts about man. By "man" I mean you, and of course, all other human beings as well.

How often have you thought to yourself "I wonder what all this life is about?" When life is working out the way we want it to, and when we are getting more than a little happiness out of living we are not so likely to ask that question. We go on from day to day content to take things as they come. But this existence of ours is not always a bed of roses, and when some really hard blow connects we begin to wonder if life is worth the living. What is it about anyway? We are born, we live for a little while, and we die. At least we can expect only a short time in this world (even 70 years is only a passing moment when we think of the millions of years since the world began) and often that time is well nigh filled with suffering and trouble. . . . Then is it worth it? And what is its real purpose, if it has one?

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Again I am going to take you back to the first chapter of the Bible, because there we are given a clue to the answer. We are told that when the world was made and the trees and animals were established on the earth, "God created man in His own image." That does not mean as so many people think that God is just like us in all things, because obviously He is not. What it does mean is that we are made in such a way that we can enter into a very close relationship with Him. Last week I said that God was the Father who sought the highest good for each one of us personally. And when the Bible declares that we are made in the image of God it means that we are capable of responding to His love and are able to know Him intimately and personally.

Not only are we capable of knowing Him, each one of us has also the urge to know Him, to reach out to some higher being than ourselves. That is true alike for civilised people and for those we call savages. I think everyone has that desire at some time or another (although, of course it can be, and often is stifled in various ways). If this is so it is reasonable to believe that this urge is bound up with the purpose of our living. Don't make any mistake about it — there is a purpose behind your life. Just as God had a plan in His mind when He established the earth, and everything was created to advance that plan, so each of us was given life by God, because He had a purpose for us. What that purpose is in detail, is for each one to discover for himself; not always the easiest thing to do. But remember what I've said about knowing God personally.

Strange as it may seem to some, it is a fact born out in the experience of countless people, that the Father does guide and direct their lives, when they are willing to seek His guidance and direction and when they are prepared to follow His leading. If we sincerely wish to know God's plan for us, never doubt that He will show it!

FREEDOM.

Although God had a purpose when He gave us life, He does not compel us to fulfil it. There is nothing to stop us from ignoring Him if we want to. We can even set ourselves to wreck His plan for us and our fellows if we want to. We won't succeed, but there is nothing to prevent the attempt. Strange as it may seem, this is one of the marks of man's greatness. If we were compelled to live in a certain way, and to fulfil the highest plan God has for us because we could do no other, then we would not be human persons. We would be much the same as cogs in a machine, moving and acting because some force made us move in exactly that way. Great as is God's plan for us He will not compel us to do the things He wishes. We are free to serve Him, and to love Him — or to do exactly the opposite.

So then we are made in such a way that we can respond to the Fatherly care which God has for each of us; we are "made in the image of God." He has a purpose for each. We are free to fulfil that purpose or not.

There is just one other thing I want to say. If we want to find the real meaning of life we can do so only as we set ourselves to know and to fulfil God's plan. Each of us has the urge within him to reach out beyond himself to God, and until we allow that urge full play we cannot experience the richness and the thrill of living to the full. God's purpose is our highest good and deepest joy.

A Welshman who was very proud of his bass voice was describing a wonderful dream he'd had.

"I was in a mighty choir," he said. "5000 sopranos, 5000 altos, 5000 tenors — all singing together double forte."
"It must have been wonderful," said the listener. "But what about the basses?"

"That was it!" said the dreamer. "Suddenly the conductor stopped the choir and, turning to me, said: 'Not quite so loud in the bass, please, Mr. Jones!'"

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RISE AND SHINE

A soft answer may turn away wrath, but it takes the hard word to get a tired Digger to turn away from the warm blankets in the early hours of the winter morn.

The "Show a leg!" of the sergeant usually produces louder snores and blankets pulled off are easily retrieved.

I heard the story on Salisbury Plain of one Australian sergeant who put in the necessary hard word and got the desired results. The newcomer's first "Show a leg!" produced nothing better than the usual sonorous echo from the occupants of the hut. Then the storm broke.

"I suppose you ruddy blokes call yourselves Diggers! Why, yer no more true to label than water in a whiskey bottle. If you don't want to disgrace the badge of the Rising Sun that you wear—Rise and shine, yer buzzards!"
The hut rose as one man—and cheered.

FALSE PRETENCE

Natural inclination to stutter and an inability to carry the extra amount of rum pinched by the platoon "serounger" brought an unexpected holiday to a member of an infantry battalion just before the capture of Tobruk, last January.

The stuttering Digger, known to his mates as "Minnie-ha-ha," advanced under the barrage, and, as the rum took effect, stumbled into a newly made shell hole and went to sleep.

He woke in an ambulance labelled as a shell-shock case, and when he attempted to get out and explain, his stutter only convinced the ambulance driver that he was a dinkum case. On the principle that silence is golden he kept his mouth shut, and had a month's holiday in a hospital near Cairo, before rejoining his unit.

STONE CRAZY

Some of these snappy blondes from King's Cross seem to suffer from a

LOST

OR

STRAYED.

One Pair White M/C Gloves.

Finder please chase home to 2nd. Lieut. H. Keenan.

BLISSFUL IGNORANCE

We were in action outside a small town the other day, and "Spider," my offside, went away to get water. On his way back he came across an unexploded 6in. naval shell. Of course, he gave it a reasonably wide berth.

After covering about another 30 yards, "Spider" happened to glance round, and there was a Wog about a yard behind him with the shell on his shoulder.

With much cursing, Spider told the Wog to go places in a hurry. Much to his disgust the Wog just heaved the shell away there and then. Spider dived for a shell-hole and when he eventually looked up there was the Worthy Oriental Gentleman sitting on the shell wearing a wide grin.

SELECT YOUR XMAS

GIFTS EARLY THIS YEAR.

Xmas is but only a short distance away, and of course it calls for gifts for the folks at home. Manhattan have a full variety.

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