

## SIDELIGHTS ON THE WAR

### GENERAL.

It is estimated that each Catholic mission in the diocese of Southwark has given an average of 150 men to the Expeditionary Forces now serving in France.

The Geneva correspondent of the *Matin* states that the Austrian Government has decided to put into the melting-pot for munitions the great bell dome of St. Stephen at Vienna. The bell was cast in 1711 to the order of the Emperor Joseph out of the bronze of 180 cannon taken from the Turks. It weighs about 20 tons.

The Belgians in Belgium lost no time in learning the news of Italy's declaration of war. At dawn on the day Italy decided to enter the field airmen journeyed forth, and from a great height dropped thousands of cards on Brussels and many Belgian towns bearing the glad tidings in French on one side and in Flemish on the other.

What is believed to have been the biggest hole caused by a shell in the history of warfare was made by a German 'Jack Johnson' in soft ground near the entrance to Ypres Station. According to Corporal Hatcher, of the Military Mounted Police, who is visiting his home at Guildford on leave from the front, it was 66ft wide and 45ft deep.

The anniversary of the beginning of the war was observed in the Salford diocese on August 5, when the Bishop of Salford (Dr. Casartelli) pontificated at a Solemn Mass of Requiem for the repose of the souls of the men from the Salford diocese who have fallen in battle. Out of the 25,000 Catholics who have joined H.M. forces from the diocese it is estimated that about 1000 have either been killed in action or have died from wounds.

Mrs. Augustus de Trafford, of Haselour Hall, Tamworth, a well-known Catholic lady, is the mother of seven soldier sons, one of whom died for his country during the South African war and was rewarded with the D.S.O. Of the remaining six, who are all fighting at different points of the war area, one has been wounded but is now convalescent, and of another no news has been received for several months. One is a member of the Canadian contingent, being among the first to join.

A British Catholic soldier, in a recent letter from France, says that the General in his command is a Catholic, and that this General gave great edification to the French lately in being seen at Holy Communion in public at Sunday Mass. Before the war began it was as much as the position of a French General was worth to be seen in the act of practice of religion. Naturally the fearless piety of this British General made deep impression on the French soldiers who witnessed it.

### THE CONVENT BREAKERS.

Speaking at a Belgian fund meeting at Harrogate, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., said that the Germans had issued a defence of their conduct in Belgium. There were some defences which aggravated the crime, and this defence was one. He had read of many horrors of war, of the atrocities of the Balkan wars, but he had never read of Bulgar, Greek, or Serb ever entering the portion of a Mussulman dwelling where the women were secluded. It remained for German 'Kultur' to break open the door of Belgian convents and other places, where women, retired from the world, had given their souls and work to the service of God and man.

### A FRENCH OFFICER PROMOTED.

The following is an extract from the French Official Report on operations at the Dardanelles:—Inscribed on the official list of officers proposed to be promoted to a higher rank: Naval Lieutenant Blanc

(P.M.J.), of the mine-trawlers has been 13 years in that rank. He is an officer of rare ability and *sang froid*, and has given proof of the most brilliant qualities during the course of the mine sweepings effected night and day by the squadron under his command in the Dardanelles. Naval Lieutenant Blanc, mentioned in despatches, is a son of the late Admiral Blanc of the French Navy, and a brother of his Lordship Bishop Blanc, of Tonga.

### AN EXAMPLE TO THE ARMY.

Father Michael King, S.J.C.F., in a letter published in the *Mountaineer*, speaks of the Catholic soldiers as an example of devotion to the British Army. Writing from France, he says:—

'I have big church parades here every Sunday, and Communion for the men every day. I also say Mass at a hospital and look after five other hospitals—all camp affairs. The men are very good: many lead saintly lives and all are under the influence of religion. Officers and men are absolutely free from human respect, and go on their knees for confession at the station, in the streets, or anywhere. The Catholics are an example to the army. I am glad to say that in no hospital which I attend has any Catholic died without the last sacraments. The wounds are fearful, the effects of the gas awful, and I am simply astonished at the patience and endurance of the men. They die like saints.'

'War,' adds Father King, 'brings out the grand character of our men: they are simply splendid in their courage, cheerfulness, and determination. I would do anything for them. I only feel uncomfortable when I see the young chaps going so cheerfully to the front, knowing what is awaiting for them, and then have to return to my comfortable quarters.'

### MILITARY NECESSITY.

Here is a little story from the front (says *La Semaine Littéraire*) which is absolutely authentic:—The church tower of a certain village in the hands of the enemy proved very annoying to a particular portion of the French trenches. It was decided accordingly that it must be destroyed, and a good artilleryman was chosen for the purpose. He accordingly addressed himself to his task, and having taken careful aim, succeeded eventually in levelling the tower by a well-directed shot. Congratulations followed to which the gunner replied: 'You would felicitate me all the more perhaps, although there is little need for congratulation, if you knew what I am in civilian life.' 'How do you mean—what are you?' 'I am a priest.'

### AWARDS FOR BRAVERY.

Among the awards of the D.C.M. which have fallen to Scottish regiments are the following to Irishmen or men of Irish parentage:—

Private J. Devlin, of the Royal Highlanders, who, although wounded himself, at Rue du Bois, on May 9, dragged back to safety a wounded officer from within forty yards of the German trenches.

Sergeant W. Moloney, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, showed remarkable coolness and bravery at Festubert, on May 9. The machine-gun of which he had charge became clogged with mud when under fire of the enemy 200 yards away. He cleaned the gun and brought it into action, causing the enemy to retire.

Private A. McNulty, of the Gordon Highlanders, at Festubert, on June 18, carried messages under very dangerous circumstances. On the same day he cut an opening in the German wire entanglements and made a trench under heavy fire.

Lance-Corporal J. McNulty, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, at Festubert, on May 16-17, first took over the platoon duties of his sergeant and subsequently those of his platoon officer, who was wounded, and held his platoon together. He also went forward some 300 yards and attended to his wounded officer under a very severe fire.