

the Lamb' . . . 'Who eats My flesh has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.'

II.—THE DEATH OF YOUP.

In this story I was neither actor nor witness. But Jean, who related it to me, is worthy of credence. Jean is a corporal and one of the best of my friends. His girlish moustache suggests some fifteen years; and hence he assumes in all seriousness a paternal air towards the long-beards of his squad.

Among his 'youngsters,' as he calls them, was the famous Youp, whose real name I have never known—a poor Jew, recognisable as far as you could distinguish his profile, a pitiable spectacle under his muddy tunic (the horizon blue of it turning to a German green), always seeming to beg pardon of the passer-by, so much had he become accustomed to blows.

In virtue of his duties as 'father,' Corporal Jean had made himself the defender of the oppressed. Every day he used his authority to put a stop to rough jesting and horse-play.

Youp was not of a rich tribe: no comforts for him. And the comrades, without meaning to be cruel, in their unreflecting way, scarcely thought that the zone of friendship in the army, wide though it be, should be stretched to embrace a son of Israel. Jean made up for this by giving him, if not the better, at least the larger half of the bulky hampers which the 'mama' made up for her son every fortnight.

Like a great dog Youp hardly moved a yard away from him, a fact that irritated somewhat at times the proud little corporal, but in reality flattered him still more. And quite naturally, as a consequence of the protection and the shared hampers, Jean ended by getting quite fond of Youp.

'You ought to try and convert him,' I said to Jean one day. He exploded with laughter. 'Convert him! Why, he does not believe in God or devil. He's no more a Jew than a Christian or a Turk. When at times the question of religion crops up, he commences to giggle. Do you wish him to have a faith? Why, he has not even a soul.' It was vain for me to chide or reason on the point. 'I tell you again he has no soul.'

Well, the other day Jean came to me greatly moved, and here is the story he told:

'I was out on patrol last night with Youp and three others. We met a German patrol; we fired, and I'm sure we stretched out two or three of them. But they did for Youp. The poor beggar got a bullet in his stomach. He groaned so that I could not get him silenced. I told the two others to clear away, and Marcel and I picked him up. Only, lo and behold! a German machine gun noticed us. With his groans it was to be expected. Luckily there was a shell hole near at hand and we sank into it, all three.'

'Then poor Youp took hold of me and drew me towards him. "Jean," said he, "tell me the truth. Is it serious this thing I've got?" "Oh, yes and no," I answered. "How long have I still to live?" Seeing he was getting anxious, I replied: "Thirty years, unless you catch cold in your head"—though of course I did not know whether he was going to live or die.'

'Then he drew me close to him. "Jean, no humbug! I feel my number's up. Listen! I can't die like this. You must hear my confession." Then I said: "It's you who are humbugging now. This is not the time for it—and least of all on that point; you know right well I don't like it."

'But not at all, he was not humbugging. "Jean," said he, "I have thought it over well; it's only the true religion could make you so good to me. I want to die in that religion; you must hear my confession."

'What a fix I was in! What was I to do? Refuse? It would have made him worse. Hear his confession? But I'm not a priest. In truth, I'd have preferred if the captain had sent me to capture the machine gun which was raking us. Suddenly an idea came to me. I said: "You can't confess. You're not baptised; it would not count." "Well, then," he answered on the spot, "baptise me."

'This was better. I think I had the power to do that, had I not? Then I took some of the water which was there in our shell hole. I'm not sure if it was clean, seeing it was night-time; but as it was for Youp the cleanness makes little matter. He was not over particular on that point, and I baptised him. Oh! yes, don't be uneasy. I knew the words. I learned my catechism well formerly.'

'But this was not enough for him, my poor Youp. He wanted right or wrong that I should hear his confession. I was in a queer fix. At last I thought it better not to cross him, but pretend to hear him and talk to you about it afterwards.'

'I told Marcel to stop his ears, as he could not move away on account of the machine gun, and then I said to Youp: "Go ahead! Now that you're a Christian, it can be done."

'Then he came out with all his load. I can well understand it weighed heavily upon him, the poor beggar! As for me, I did not know what to say to him afterwards. I recited an Our Father, and told him to have trust in the Bon Dieu, Who is all that there is of goodness.'

'How happy he was, poor Youp! He kissed me on the two cheeks, and indeed I believe he cried. And I—I had to do all I knew to keep from imitating him.'

'We waited for a time to deceive the machine gun, and we could then, Marcel and I, have crept back to the trench, dragging Youp. But, alas, when we looked at him again, he was dead. That was a shock for me. Even still I feel as if it was my own brother who had gone. But pray, Father, what am I to do with his sins?'

SWISS BISHOPS AND MODERN FASHIONS

The Catholic hierarchy of Switzerland have just taken the opportunity afforded by the Federal Fete of Thanksgiving to address a joint pastoral letter of serious admonition and advice to their flock.

Speaking of the command of God, which enjoins for the body the reasonable care demanded by the exigencies of life, they say: 'It is not the body, but the soul which runs the risk of being neglected these days. The average home is spacious, full of air and light, gracefully decorated, but no religious picture, no crucifix or book is there to give light and air to the soul; no Catholic paper is found upon the table. The nourishment of the body is carefully chosen, weighed and calculated to support its vigor. But if the Word of God is not heard in sermon or catechism, if the Holy Table is not approached even once a year, how can the soul retain its vigor?'

'Unhappily, not content with taking reasonable care of the body, not only children, but grown persons of both sexes now expose their bodies as much as possible, even in public places. We protest against these intolerable abuses, which are the shame of our time. This is not the spirit of Jesus Christ or His Apostles, who have told us to renounce ourselves and to crucify the flesh.'

'We must say a word, too, on the feminine fashions. Women do not dress now to conceal themselves, but on the contrary to excite evil passions. Most sad of all is it to see persons having pretensions to be virtuous and pious degrading themselves in this manner by following indecent modes. When such persons enter our churches and approach the Holy Table it becomes necessary for us to raise our voices with energy, and we enjoy that the Holy Communion should be refused to persons approaching the altar indecently attired.'

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