

Caesars, the Lord of Lords; and that neither counsel nor strength of man shall prevail against Him.

Something like this did Sebastian think, perhaps, as he gazed abstractedly on the expiring embers of the pompous and cruel Edict which they had torn down, not for a wanton frolic, but because it contained blasphemies against God and His holiest truths. They knew that if they should be discovered tenfold tortures would be their lot; but Christians in those days when they contemplated and prepared for martyrdom, made no calculation on that head. Death for Christ, whether quick and easy or lingering and painful, was the end for which they looked; and like brave soldiers going to battle they did not speculate where a shaft or a sword might strike them, whether a death-blow would at once stun them out of existence or they should have to writhe for hours upon the ground, mutilated or pierced, to die by inches among the heaps of unheeded slain.

Sebastian soon recovered, and had hardly the heart to reprove the perpetrators of this deed. In truth, it had its radiant side, and he was inclined to laugh at the morrow's dismay. This view he gladly took; for he saw Panceratius watched his looks with some trepidation, and his centurion looked a little disconcerted. So after a hearty laugh they sat down cheerily to their meal, for it was not midnight, and the hour for commencing the fast preparatory to receiving the Holy Eucharist was not arrived. Quadratus's object besides kindness in this arrangement was partly that it surprised a person for their being there might be apparent, partly to keep up the spirits of his younger companion and of Diogenes's household if alarmed at the bold deed just performed. But there was no appearance of any such feeling. The conversation soon turned upon recollections of Diogenes's youth and the good old fervent times, as Panceratius would persist in calling them. Sebastian saw his friend leave, and then took a round to avoid the Forum in seeking his own abode. If anyone had seen Panceratius that night when alone in his chamber preparing to retire to rest he would have seen him every now and then almost laughing at some strange but pleasant adventure.

(To be continued.)

THE PRIEST IN THE TRENCHES

(By J. HAYDING FISHER, S.J., in *America*.)

Those who have had the pleasure of reading such books as *Impressions de Guerre de Prêtres Soldats*, first published by Léonce de Grandmaison, S.J., in the *Etudes*, and later collected in two volumes under the same title, *Le Prêtre sur le Champ de Bataille*, by Joseph Papin Archambault, S.J., and other similar studies of the heroic part taken by the fighting French priests have doubtless felt a thrill of satisfaction and admiration at the lessons of patriotism and courage given by these calumniated and persecuted victims of anti-clericalism. A conservative estimate has put it on record that out of the 30,000 priests called to service in the French armies more than 3000 have been killed, an extremely large proportion in itself; but the more remarkable from the fact that many of the enlisted priests, being too old or ill for service on the fighting line, have not come within the range of fire at all. Out of the 750 French members of the Society of Jesus fighting for France more than 15 per cent. have lost their lives, and of those still alive nearly 93 per cent. have been decorated. It is the same with the other religious and the secular clergy. These facts should be remembered for future refutation of stock calumnies concerning the constantly exploited double allegiance of Catholics.

In every phase of military service the French priests have signalled themselves: as chaplains, as officers, as privates, in the air, at the guns, in the trenches, as stretcher-bearers, and attendants in hos-

pitals. Incapacitated by wounds for further service in one branch of the army, they have passed to another, so indomitable has been their passion of self-sacrifice for the welfare and honor of their country. Speaking in an article in a recent number of *Etudes*, called "*L'Idée de Patrie*," the editor makes the following comment:—

"The *Etudes* has already published, in its issue of December 20, 1915, an excellent article under the same title, written anonymously by Lieutenant J. Rullier, who was at that time convalescing from two severe wounds received in the war. Father Rullier found himself debarred from further service in the artillery; accordingly he entered the flying corps, and it was as a lieutenant in the aviation department that he met his glorious death for France on March 23, 1917."

It is notes like the above that sadden but glorify the pages of the literature of the war.

The priests have fallen in greater proportion to their numbers, perhaps, than any other class in France; and the reason is not far to seek. They have been eager to take on themselves the posts and the work most fraught with danger. A little incident, told without embellishment by Père Antonin Eymieu, S.J., in his brochure, "*Le Père de la Douleur*," is an apt and forceful illustration: "The captain said, 'Eight men are needed for a very perilous mission.' Eight men stepped out of the ranks. 'All priests!' was the comment of their comrades." "The spirit of self-sacrifice, of never counting the cost of duty, long since a habit, the desire to make reparation for the sins of their country, and a love of France not dampened but rather intensified by expatriation and persecution, nerved their priestly hearts, where others blanched with fear. So it has been with the clergy as a whole. The record of their deeds of valor is written in gold.

No one will deny that the example of their heroism, devotedness and purity of life has made them a spectacle to angels and to men. Their military service was a thing that should never have been forced on them, and yet God has known how to draw good out of evil. Through the unceasing workings of Divine Providence they have exercised a powerful influence on their countrymen by the very fact that they left smoking guns to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, and hid aside dripping bayonets to lift their hand in absolution. It was their soldier-garb and their soldier-deeds which first disarmed suspicion and gave the lie to calumny, and enabled them to win their way to soldier hearts.

Anti-clerical hatred, which expressed itself so bitterly in the law of 1880 and was completed in the law of 1905, and which trusted to prevent, or at least to spoil, vocations to the priesthood by drafting ecclesiastics into the army, has proved, as a writer in the *Civiltà Cattolica* remarks, a veritable vendetta. Contrary to sectarian expectations, religious oppression has diminished neither the number nor the zeal of the priests; rather it has filled the ranks of the French army with unsuspected chaplains, who have been recognised, officially and otherwise, as the highest type of military valor and patriotism. Thus it has come to pass that the very means chosen by the French Government to wreck Christianity in the land which at heart is so thoroughly Catholic, has become one of the most potent instruments for that country's religious resurrection. This fact is testified to by a military chaplain quoted in the *Dublin Review* for October, 1915:—

"How Providence loves to baffle all human calculations! The politicians never guessed that by the law of the *curés sur au dos* they were going to give to the ministry of the priests a new field of action and means hitherto unknown by which they might reach men's souls. And yet it is this which has happened; and the religious life now manifest in the French army is one of our firmest reasons for hoping that God will give us the victory and bring back the whole of France once more to the Christian traditions of its Catholic past."

The French priests are everywhere, and as a con-