

## SIDELIGHTS ON THE WAR

## A SCOTCH REGIMENT.

A Catholic chaplain, an old Beaumont boy, has written as follows to his school magazine:—

"One day last week I spent practically the whole day searching for a certain Scotch regiment and then arranging for confession for them. . . . One company I heard in a very odoriferous stable. Still the inconvenience and trouble were amply repaid when on the following morning (on a week day mark you!) nearly 90 arrived at church for Holy Communion. The cure could not find words to express his admiration at their devout behaviour in church. Although an Englishman I must confess that the two Scotch regiments I have are the best in my brigade."

## HOW THE IRISH GUARDS FOUGHT AND DIED.

All the correspondents have been paying a tribute of admiration to the way in which the whole Brigade of Guards, during the critical days after the line of the Portuguese had been broken, fought on the Lys. There seems to have been nothing to choose between them—Grenadier, Irish, and Coldstream. But at this moment of political tension it is pleasant to be able to give preference to what Mr. Philip Gibbs has to tell of the Irish battalion:—

"The Irish Guards, who had come up to support the Grenadiers and Coldstreamers, tried to make a defensive flank, but the enemy worked past their right and attacked them on two sides. The Irish Guards were gaining time. They knew that was all they could do—just drag out the hours by buying each minute with their blood. One man fell, and then another, but minutes were gained, and quarter hours, and hours. Small parties of them lowered their bayonets and went out among the grey wolves swarming round them, and killed a number of them until they also fell. First one party and then another of these Irish Guards made those bayonet charges against men with machine guns and volleys of rifle fire. They bought time at a high price, but they did not stint themselves nor stop their bidding because of its costliness. The Brigade of Guards here near Vieux Berquin held out for those 48 hours, and some of them were fighting still when the Australians arrived according to the time-table." Well may the correspondent describe it as a noble and tragic episode.—*London Tablet*.

## THE ABBESS AND THE KAISER.

Gallant and brave as are the military chaplains, the religious women are no less noble and fearless. The German Kommandantur at Brussels sent one of his soldiers to the Lady Abbess of the French Norbertines at Grimbergen, with orders that she and her religious should present themselves before the German official at once. The reply of the Lady Abbess was sharp and to the point. "Go tell your commandant," she said to the soldier, "that we shall not move a step to give him our names. If he wants them he must come here for them." The soldier returned with his answer, and about an hour later two automobiles drove up with officers who took the names of the nuns. There is also a story told of the Abbess of the Benedictine nuns of Maredet, near the great Abbey of Maredsous, the monks of which are now in exile in Ireland. The Abbess of this house is a sister of the late Abbot-Primate of the Benedictine Order, Dom Hildebrand de Hemptinne, and her mother, Madame de Hemptinne, had been condemned to death by the Germans, but was reprieved at the intercession of the Nuncio, Mgr. Tacci. The Kaiser had been paying a visit to the Abbey of Maredsous, where he received a somewhat chilly welcome, and on his return he called at the Abbey of the nuns, where he conversed with the Lady Abbess. "I hope that you pray for me," said his Imperial Majesty. "We pray for our neighbor," replied the Abbess, "and especially for our King and country."

## READING MATTER FOR OUR SOLDIERS.

Writing to us under date May 29, from 113 Great Portland Street, Oxford Circus, London, Mr. J. C. Lyell, says: "I should again like to thank your many readers for their generous response to my appeal for Australian and New Zealand papers for the Anzac soldiers in England and on the Western Front. Owing to the curtailment of shipping the supply of these papers has greatly diminished and the demand has steadily increased. Thanks to the assistance of many generous volunteer helpers the papers I receive are sent not only to the hospitals and training grounds in Great Britain, but also to France, and are given to the troops at the base depots when they start off for their long and weary journey to the Front. I am sure no one can realise how much these papers are appreciated, or what pleasure they afford. All papers from every colony are welcome, both daily and weekly; but naturally the latter when illustrated are preferred. I sincerely trust that every reader will remember the urgent demand there is for such reading matter, and will do their best to send me all the papers they can. I assure them that not a single one will be wasted. At the present time I am only receiving two or three hundred a week, but could easily place as many thousand—and more—to the very best advantage. Knowing the great generosity of your readers I am sure I shall not ask in vain. Will the senders please write their name and address inside the papers, so that the recipients may know to whom they are indebted."

## FATHER GLEESON AND HIS ALTAR BOY.

Captain D. D. Sheehan, M.P. (Mid-Cork), writing for the Press Association, says: I know it is sometimes said that the religious man does not make the best fighter, and fine theories are stated in support of this view; but I have my own observation of how the Catholic Irishmen can fight; and in face of positive knowledge psychological theories, no matter how eruditely they may be constructed, are only so much rubbish. Let us see what happened at the Rue de Bois, close to Neuve Chapelle, on May 9, 1915, when the 3rd Infantry Brigade, to which belonged the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers, were ordered to attack the German trenches, and we shall get some understanding of how the Irish soldier is sustained by the practice of his religion. The officer in charge of the Munsters at the time was Colonel Victor Rickard. His widow has written a brochure entitled, *The Story of the Munsters*, which is a splendid memorial to the devotion of the Munsters and the heroism of officers and men alike. Sergeant-Major T. J. Leahy, of Monkstown, County Cork, also gave a most interesting account of the work of the Munsters on this occasion, and the way they carried all before them. This sergeant-major had been what is known in Ireland as an "altar boy" in his youth, and he used to serve Mass for Father Gleeson out at the Front. Here is what this zealous and faithful non-commissioned officer had to say of the value of prayer: "Prayers," he wrote, "more than anything else, console me. And every fellow is the same. So the war has been the cause of making us all an army of saints."

In describing the battle Sergeant-Major Leahy states that on the preceding day (May 8), close on 800 men received Holy Communion from Father Gleeson, and wrote their names and home addresses in their hymn books. When evening came the regiment moved up to take its place in the trenches in front of Rue de Bois.

"At the entrance to the Rue de Bois," writes Mrs. Rickard, "there stands a broken shrine, and within the shrine a Crucifix. When the Munsters came up the road Major Rickard halted the battalion. The men were ranged on three sides of a square, their green flags—a gift from Lady Gordon—placed before each company. Father Gleeson mounted, Colonel Rickard, and Captain Filgare, the Adjutant, on their chargers, were in the centre, and in that wonderful twilight Father Gleeson gave a general absolution."