



As We See It

By DAN PATRICK

At this time of year we turn to those "crosses, row on row" in prayerful tribute to the memories of those heroes who have fallen in battle.

You can almost trace the forward march of our armies all over the world by following the white-crossed graveyards where Americans sleep. Such crosses are the inevitable price of victory.

May the boys who lie beneath them find the peace that the world denied them. That should be our constant prayer.

There is another Legion of Forgotten Men still with us. We do not see too many now. They are in our military hospitals where medical skill is mending their war-torn bodies and minds.

It won't be long before these men will return to their homes. We must learn to accept them as fellow human-beings and not as animated war relics.

On the surface, that might sound like a hard statement but it is lamentable to see how the average civilian stares at the average wounded soldier on our city streets. In that stare there is an odd mixture of curiosity and pity. The wounded vet wants neither. In fact, he detests both.

It is high time that we give the returning veteran due credit for courage and a sense of humor. He needed both to win that war in Europe. He'll need them more as he faces the difficult task of readjustment to civilian life and it is up to us to give him every possible break.

We've got to acclimate ourselves to missing arms and legs. We've got to learn to help the blinded veteran help himself without going into a deluge of tears, well-intentioned as they might be. In the final analysis the question bothering the disabled veteran is not whether he can take it but whether we can take it.

When the war in Europe was flaming at its peak, those messages simply read "wounded in action" or "seriously wounded in action." The extent of the wounds was a matter of military secrecy.

Now the shroud is being lifted and the full story is being told. It is not a pretty story. It is almost pathetic as these young men tell in their own straightforward and courageous manner the price they paid to bring about victory in Europe.

A letter is going the rounds now which is being hailed as a most courageous document. It was written by a Brooklyn lad to his dad. Perhaps you would like to read it:

"Dear Dad,
 "When I was a patient in an evacuation hospital in France, regulations prevented me from writing of the wounds I had suffered. I asked a chaplain to write you of my injuries and I have been waiting for an acknowledgment from you of that letter. Not having received such an acknowledgment, I hesitate to write this letter in the fear that this may be the first news you have had of my injury.

"You will remember we promised each other to pull no punches about how conditions were with us. Bearing that in mind, I will give you the straight dope on what goes with me. Here goes: I have lost my sight beyond the hope of ever recovering it. The wounds to my eyes were severe enough to cause a removal. I also suffered two other wounds—one in the leg and one in my right hand. These, however, were superficial and they are already almost completely healed.

"You are no doubt wondering what effect my loss has had on me. Believe me, Dad, I am in excellent spirits and I feel not at all morose. Frankly, I am more concerned about the effect this will have on you and the family. I have been truly lucky. Oddly enough, my face almost entirely escaped injury. My features, including my eyelids, are entirely intact. There are a few scars about my nose which will be fixed by plastic surgery. My hearing is entirely unaffected. This is almost amazing considering the fact that the shell which hit me exploded less than a foot from me. I have temporarily lost my sense of smell. But the doctors assure me it will return. That about sums up my physical condition.

"I think you would be amazed at the progress I have already made. I wash myself and walk about the ward unassisted. I eat without help. Shaving still presents a problem, however, it will not be long before I master that.

"You are probably wondering what lies ahead for me. I will be returned to the States and I will have a period of rehabilitation which will include learning Braille, typing and the use of a seeing-eye dog. Frankly, I do not know how Mom will react to having a German Shepherd around the house. That is a thing we must get used to. Incidentally, the rehabilitation course includes an item called "Mental Conditioning." This I can honestly say I definitely have no need of.

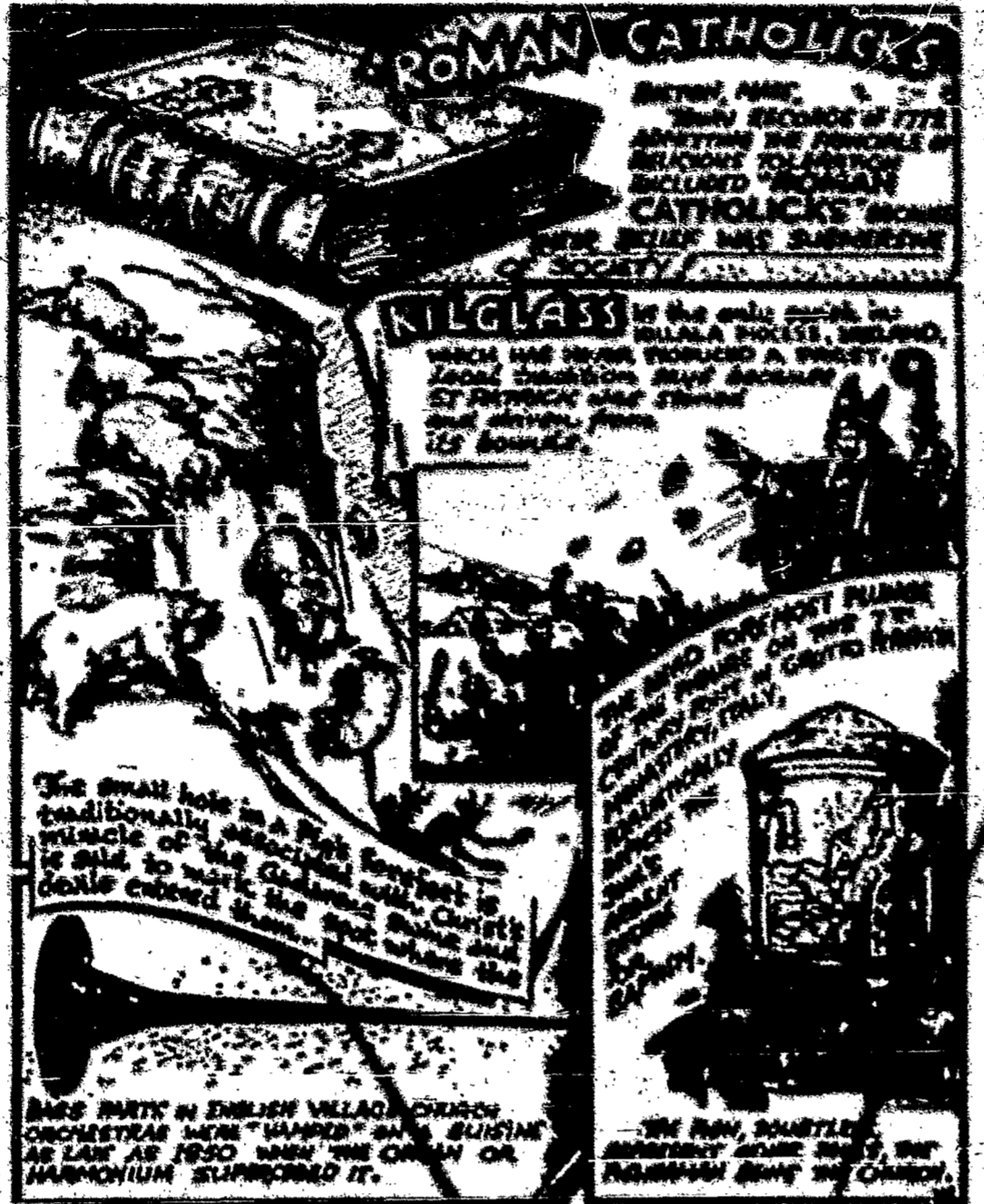
"That about covers everything. I leave it to you whether you wish to show the contents of this letter to Mom or not.

Love, J.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY



The Literary Cavalcade

Nine Years Ago

By John O'Connor

The huge man stirred restlessly on his bed. He had been half-conscious for some time. He seemed to lapse into a reverie for a while and then he awakened. He looked about him. At his doctor, the priest, his wife. At length he spoke: "The issue is now quite clear. It is between light and darkness and everyone must choose his own side."

The Monsignor moved forward to anoint him. A Dominican Friar who had been in the next room came in and began to sing, very softly, the "Salve Regina." "Surely fitting for the biographer of St. Thomas and the ardent suppliant of Our Lady."

That was nine years ago on next Friday, June 14. The most discussed and noted convert of our day, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, was dead. The tremendous body was too much of a strain on his heart — to say nothing of the strain that his great brain and spirit must have been to his body and heart together.

He was but a few days past sixty-two, a young age as British authors go. Few giants of the past have left the mass of common sense and observation that flowed from his untiring pen . . . or rather the pen that never tired but failed to work when its holder could no longer stand the pace.

Chesterton's battles were many and difficult, yet it is doubtful that he left any enemies behind him. Paradoxically — he was most at home here — he never lost a battle nor earned a foe. If he did not win you, he at least won your humor and your appreciation.

After years of writing and lecturing, editing and travel and controversy, he began to fall ever so slightly. By 1934 the handwriting was on the wall. It was Holy Year and after an attack of jaundice, he and his devoted wife and their secretary went on one of those trips which gave him so much pleasure. He failed to reach the goal of their trip, Palestine, when inflammation of the nerves turned him back home at St. Ivel. He managed to get through France and Italy the following years, but came back to England only to find the staff of his weekly completely split on matters of politics and personalities. He had poured thousands into the paper

and immediately started to smooth things out. But the toll on his strength was great, for it must be remembered that he also continued to turn out several thousands words a week for his regular columns.

By 1936 the strain was patent. He was working so much and fighting fatigue with all his spirit. A trip to London and Lisieux proved negative, and it was becoming plain that his recovery would be slight. When he returned home he was far from himself. His acute mental grasp of issue was no longer there. He would be found asleep at his desk, a pile of work untouched before him.

Chesterton could hardly be called a mystic. Yet in his last months he was frequently seen making a mysterious sign in the air as he lit his cigar. It was the sign of the Cross. "Long ago," says Mrs. Sheed, "he had written of human life as something not grey and drab but shot through with strong and even violent colours that took the pattern of the Cross. He saw the Cross signed by God on the trees as their branches sprang from right to left; he saw it signed by man as he shaped a pelling or a door post. The habit grew upon him of making it constantly: in the air with his match, as he lit his cigar, over a cup of coffee. As he entered a room he would make on the door the sign of our Redemption."

His biographer concludes: "No, we must never pity him even when his life was pressed upon by that sign which stands for joy through pain."

He died on the Feast of Corpus Christi. He had been received into the Catholic Church on that identical day fourteen years before. The Pope had awarded him the title of "Defender of the Faith" — although the English secular press never mentioned this because the phrase, once awarded to the famous Henry VIII, is still part of the title of the King.

On the little prayer cards printed after his death, Walter de la Mare put it best: "Knight of the Holy Ghost, he goes his way; Wisdom his motley, Truth his loving jest; The mills of Satan keep his lance in play; Pity and innocence his heart at rest."

BOOKS FOR THE JUNE CALENDAR

June 1: St. Boniface, Apostle of Germany.

A standard biography is Geoffrey Kurth's St. Boniface. There is also a good chapter by Fr. Adric Manson, O.P., in Mr. Sheed's *The English Way*, p. 24. (It should inspire us to thought and prayer, that the apostle to Germany was an Englishman.) But best of all reading on St. Boniface is the admirable of Missal texts for his feast. Whoever assembled these lessons and prayers had a heroic concept of Germany's Christian destiny. Only when this concept is again restored in place of the devilish concept of the super-race of Herrenvolk can the society of nations hope to welcome the prodigal Germany back into the fold. This will also call for some soul-searching on the part of the other members of the family.

June 10: St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland.

Fr. Selden P. Delany's *Married Saints*, p. 76, has a chapter on this lovely patroness of Scotland, who was the wife of that King Malcolm whose father, Duncan, had been slain by the infamous Macbeth. There is another saint, too, who figures on the margin of the incidents which Shakespeare used for one of his greatest plays; this is St. Edward the Confessor, King of England, to whose court Malcolm fled after the murder of his father.

June 13: St. Anthony of Padua.

There are two biographies at the Catholic Evidence Library, both under the Saint's name, one by Lepitre, the other by Vian.

June 14: St. Basil.

These two Eastern Doctors of the early church have chapters in Fr. Paul's *The Doctors of the Church* — St. Basil on page 14, and St. Ephraem on page 2. Besides that, there is excellent material in Raymond Larson's unusual book *Saints as Prayers*, pages 25 to 37, where you will find wonderfully chiseled biographical sketches and very appealing selections from their writings.

June 21: St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

Far and away the best English treatment of this remarkable young Saint is Fr. Martindale's *The Vocation of Aloysius Gonzaga*. Next to it is excellence in the chapter on his life in Margaret Moore's *A Book of Unholy Saints*. For those who want something shorter, there is a sketch, also by Fr. Martindale, in his collection called *In God's Army; The Orders of Christ*. Refer also to pages 244-246 in Larson's *Saints as Prayers*.

June 24: St. Paulinus of Nola.

Most charming thing that I know of in English on this winsome convert to the Church during the autumn years of the Roman Empire is to be found in Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*, pages 2 to 13. This is not available at the C. E. Library, but may be obtained at the Runder Memorial Library. . . . Besides this, there is also a chapter in Fr. Selden P. Delany's *Married Saints*, p. 57.

For us of the Rochester diocese, June 27's primary feast is that of St. John Fisher, McCann's A Valiant Bishop against a Ruthless King and the chapter by David Mathew beginning on page 156 of Mr. Sheed's *The English Way* offer good material on the heroic prelate whom we should all know about as the patron of our diocese.

June 28: St. Irenaeus.

There is scant material in English on this great champion of orthodoxy in the early Church. Fr. Paul's *The Doctors of the Church* gives a brief chapter, starting page 156.

June 29: St. Peter.

The most practical books on these princes of the apostolic band are the three by the Abbe Fould: *St. Peter*, *St. Paul* and *St. Matthias*; and *Last Years of St. Paul*. Helen Walker Hobman's *By Foot to the Apostles* has some good reflections in brief upon the significance of each of the Apostles.

The feast of St. Columba, on June 9, is secondary in rank, in the sense that it is not universally observed with a Mass and Office. Yet it merits attention, because Columba is one of the national apostles, having brought the good news of the faith to Scotland. One of those remarkable Gaelic saints around whose lives cluster as many legends as facts, his deeds lend themselves well to epic narrative. And they have been so treated, with amazing power and skill, by the Irish poet, Robert Farren, in the book called *This Man Was Ireland*, which is in my estimation one of the really great poetic accomplishments of our time. Hugh de Blacam also tells about this rugged Saint in appealing fashion.

Through an oversight last week, the title, author's and publisher's names, were not printed at the head of Fr. McNamara's review in this column. For the sake of the record, they should be noted, as follows:

Too Small a World: A Life of Mother Cabrini, by Theodore Maynard, Bruce \$2.50.