

LOOK OUT BELOW!

By REV. (LT. COL.) FRANCIS L. SAMPSON

To bring you up to date — Father Sampson, chaplain of the 11th Division, U.S. Army paratrooper corps, chuted into Normandy on D-Day and later into Holland and after the War's end and a year in an Iowa parish he returned to Chaplain's duty with the Paratroopers for service in Korea.

CHAPTER 25

Back In Germany

The various sections of Germany differ in temperament, dialect, customs, and traditions to an even greater degree than the various sections in America.

Bavaria is by far the most friendly, fun-loving, and musical part of Germany. The quiet pastoral beauty of its hills, the breathtaking splendor of the Bavarian Alps and its natural Catholic optimism all go to make Bavaria a tourist's paradise and its amiable people perfect hosts.

The closest German friends I made were the Schmid and the Halbeck families and a young tennis opponent, Vernon Rutland. I met all these people at the Augsburg Tennis Club where I enjoyed many evenings of good sport.

Since there are not more than a dozen golf courses in all of Germany (other than those the Americans have built), tennis is practically the only sport in which the business man and his family may indulge.

After an evening workout of doubles we would often go to a good German restaurant for dinner and then, either to my apartment or to the home of one of these friends. It was from the discussions with these intelligent and honest people that I came to appreciate the dilemma that had been before me, during, and after the war.

Herz Schmid had lost his large cement-mixer factory that Hitler's war needs had taken back. He had spent four years on the Russian front; Rutland had been too young to see service but had known the hunger and cold of the first years following the war. All were now prospering under the Adenauer government.

They pleaded no case for Germany's part in the war, nor did they exonerate their own responsibilities for what had happened.

They clarified many questions in my own mind and I would like to share what the average American has done in exactly the same situation? What would I have done?

May I say in summing up my ideas on this subject that I am convinced that Germany is eager to be a good and strong ally of the United States and that the people of both countries could learn much from each other to their mutual advantage. The peace of the world could well depend upon the strength of this bond of friendship. This is a practical fact, no matter how pedantic it may sound.

The five priests in the 11th Airborne Division lived together in two apartments, an ideal situation for Catholic chaplains: Fathers Cowhig (a former quarterback for Boston College's Sugar Bowl champions), Natalie, (Father Joseph Natalie of the Rochester Diocese), Gronin, and Egan were among the most congenial priests I have ever known, and the constant banter and kidding kept life in Augsburg from ever becoming dull.

The fine example and complete dedication of these younger priests was a source of inspiration to the troopers, to the officers and their families, and to myself.

With this full quota of priests in the division it was possible now and then for each of us to get away on a short leave to see Rome, Venice, Paris, Vienna, or some other interesting place. On my first leave in Germany I chose to revisit Holland and Bastogne.

I drove directly to Nijmegen, walked around the area in which we had fought some twelve

clear, slightly accented English.

"Why yes! How in the world could you know?"

"Very simple," she replied, amused. "Leo has been waiting twelve years for this call. Come right on out to the house, Father!"

Two very pleasant days were spent with my friend and his wonderful family. Then I headed south for Bastogne. I wanted to see again the seminary that had been our regimental headquarters.

I went a little out of my way to visit the American cemetery at Margraud. This was a far more difficult experience than I had expected, and after visiting the graves of the men from the 501st, I left the place saddened beyond words.

I arrived at Bastogne in the evening, and the seminary looked the same as it had during the war, except that one could see the repaired sections that filled in the former shell holes in the building. I arrived just in time for supper in the large new dining hall.

The priest who had asked me what to do with the remaining thirty boys during the battle twelve years before was now the rector. He recognized me immediately.

After supper, while we were enjoying a smoke and a glass of wine in his room, I asked him how the thirty seminarians had made out. The poor priest told me how he had allowed the janitor of the place to take the boys away from the city by the one road that they thought was still not cut off. The boys had been picked up by an SS group and each of them was shot in the head and dumped into the basement of a burned-out house.

One boy, seeing what was happening to his companions, made a run for it, and although wounded, made good his escape. After the German army had been repulsed the young man brought the local authorities to the scene of the atrocity.

The bodies are buried in the courtyard of the seminary, and each evening after supper the seminarians stop by and say a prayer for their comrades. The priest was so overcome in telling the story, since he (unjustly) blamed himself for allowing them to leave the city, that I tried to change the subject.

I drove from Bastogne to the place where I had been captured and then along the route of our march as prisoners to the city of Limburg, where we had been subjected on January 3, 1945, to the bombing of our own planes. It seemed that every foot of the road was familiar, for the experience had imbedded itself in my memory.

At the village of Box I stopped by the rectory to thank the priest who had asked his parishioners to feed prisoners going through. I was told that the old priest was now dead, so I requested his successor to thank his people at next Sunday's Mass for the kindness they had shown a group of American prisoners during the war.

NEXT WEEK—Father Natalie's reputation.



Refugees' Romanian Liturgy

Cleveland — (RNS) — Five of these eight concelebrants of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy are refugee priests from the Romanian Church now stationed in this country. The Mass was held in connection with the 11th national convention in Cleveland of the Association of Romanian Catholics of America. In 1948 a decree by the Romanian Communist government officially dissolved the Byzantine Church in that country. The Church lost three of its six bishops in death and the remaining prelates are reported to be "semi-prisoners."

Book Shelf

French Canada

By SISTER MARGARET TERESA, Nazareth College, The Emily Shrine, by William Barrett, Doubleday '58, 322 pp., \$3.95.

In this story about present-day French Canadians, William Barrett lives up to himself. He makes up his own plot, which moves fast and goes places.

He has a clear vision of his characters, choosing the normal, unpretentious folk we meet with all day long and enthusiastically studying the rich complexities of just such people, without benefit of contrasting exotics or criminals.

He has a theme of big value, life as it is lived in a milieu where the soul counts; and he has a catalyst for precipitating this value, a worthy young man whose religion who comes with a chip on his shoulder to hunt religious fraud.

Into the Left Hand of God Mr. Barrett packed a solid amount of Catholic dogma, illumined rather than over-

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Charity Nuns To Mark 150 Anniversary

Emmitsburg — (NC) — A two-day commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Sisters of Charity founded by Mother Elizabeth Bayley Seton will be climaxed here in this picturesque mountain town on July 31.

THE CEREMONIES will recall that Mother Seton came to this town by horse-drawn carriage from Baltimore in June, 1809. The journey took her four days. A farm had been given to her by a benefactor and the now famous Stone House where she lived was roofless and under repair.

Mother Seton and her companions accepted a cabin offered by Father John Dubois, founder of nearby Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary here, as their first home.

Mother Seton and her companions lived in the cabin for six weeks, until the "Stone House" was made ready for occupancy. Mother Seton and her companions took up residence in the Stone House on July 31, 1809, the date which is considered as the foundation day by all branches of the Mother Seton nuns.

Humor, too: the irreligious hero has happened to promise to pray for someone:

"He fixed his eyes on the tabernacle. 'I think that I have been trapped,' he said silently.

"I haven't any right to ask favors," he prayed. "If You ever asked me for any, I didn't hear You, or I didn't pay attention. But I promised this old man that I would ask You to leave his wife with him for a little while. It would be a kindness if they could go out of life together and what difference would it make to You?"

"You know my difficulty," he said desperately, "and you know this. I don't know how to pray; but help this old man and his wife, please."

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The Weekly Note From Mr. Pepsi

This weekend thousands of white or khaki colored uniforms will be seen all over Rochester. The occasion, of course, is the visit of part of the U.S. Navy fleet with a complement of over 5,000 sailors and marines.

We hope everyone will take the opportunity to be sociable with all of the young men with whom they come in contact. They're all just "kids next door," regardless of which part of the country they come from. They'll appreciate your hospitality, and they'll carry away with them warm memories of the fine people they met when they were in Rochester.

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