

## HEROINES OF WAR.

The task of caring for the sick and wounded in the great war that is now devastating Europe is a gigantic one, and as a result many ways and means are forthcoming to meet the pressing needs of the hour. The works of the great charities engaged in the war have been spread abroad through many reports. But the labors of the Catholic Sisterhoods are for the most part but little known, though perhaps they bring to their sphere of duties the greatest efficiency, devotedness and courage. To cite an example of their courage and devotedness. At Senlis the heads of the three principal hospitals with their communities remained at their posts during the siege and occupation by the Germans, where they were able by their courageous attitude to protect all under their authority and to care for the wounded German soldiers as well, and where at the peril of their lives they went about the streets seeking German military surgeons to attend the wounded and sick in their hospitals. The heads of these communities are Mme. Carpentier known as Sister Blanche of the Order of St. Joseph, Mme. De Saint Martin, a Sister of the same Order and Superioress at Auxiliary Hospital Number 11, and Mme. Octavie Malahieude, who is Sister Marguerite of the

Congregation of Saint Vincent de Paul. This is but one of the many instances of the courage and devotedness to duty on the part of the Sisters which are occurring almost daily. When it is remembered that the Sisters of Charity alone, to say nothing of the other Orders, have approximately 3000 Sisters engaged in caring for the sick and wounded in this great war, a fair notion can be had of the amount of labor that is being done by the various Sisterhoods engaged in that work.

If the soldier is moved first by love of country to volunteer his services in its defense, he is also moved by a desire for glory, for it is the ambition of every soldier to perform some heroic deed that he may have his name written in the pages of history. But the Sister while she wishes to do all in her power for the defense of country she can scarcely be said to hope for personal glory, and if she did the chances for satisfying such an ambition would be very very few. Perhaps she is moved to some degree at least, by the womanly instinct of pity and a desire to alleviate human suffering, but we hardly think that these motives in themselves would be sufficient to induce her to risk so many dangers and endure so many hardships. No human motives could inspire such devoted-

ness and self-sacrifices as are shown by these noble women. In their improvised hospitals they suffer many privations and inconveniences that they may the better administer to the wants of the suffering, tend the wounded in their agony, and breathe words of comfort into ears that are soon to be deafened by the cold hand of death. Their heroic labors extend not only to camp and hospital, but all forgetful of self, they enter even among the mangled bleeding forms as they lie stretched upon the field of battle. During our Civil War the Sisters on account of the service they rendered humanity were commonly styled "Angels of the Battlefield," and today upon the battle fields of Europe God alone knows how many poor sufferers are being nursed back to the life of both body and soul, and how many a soldier, and doctor, and civilian are learning to love the religion which gives so many and such shining examples of true Christian charity.

No tributes that have been paid to the Catholic Sisterhoods at work in the great European conflict have been louder in their praises than those coming from Non-Catholic sources. France could not have paid them a great-

er compliment than she has done by calling them back to nurse and console the sick and wounded of her courageous defenders, after she had, for motives as disgraceful as they were undeserving, expelled them from her boundaries. Let Portugal who has driven out her religious, and other countries which have placed every possible obstacle as a hinderance to the free exercise of their self-imposed duties, of laboring for the welfare of humanity, learn a lesson from France and recall their religious and instead of impeding them in their works of charity, give them the encouragement and assistance which is their due. But despite whatsoever influence the work of the Catholic Sisterhoods in the present European War may exercise over governments and those in power, it will certainly go far towards ridding public opinion of its Anti-Catholic prejudices, and will find enthusiastic admirers among all who are moved by noble and generous deeds. Their patriotic and humane work will be remembered the world over as long as love for loyalty, regard for duty, and admiration for self-sacrifice, exist in the hearts of men.

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