

A PILGRIMAGE IN THE WAR ZONE.

At this time of national stress, a religious pilgrimage must of necessity bear a singular import.

In this little village in France, in the Argonne district, the annual pilgrimage to M—, a distance of four kilometres, took place as usual on September 8th, the special intention, quite naturally, being the cause of the Allies and the recovery of our wounded.

Several of the night Sisters from this hospital in A— started off at 9 a.m. to take part in this great war intercession.

Our route carried us through exquisite scenery, along a winding path, a gradual ascent, and surrounded by densely wooded sweeping slopes, a great arc of blue sky above, and all lighted by brilliant sunshine.

On and on and up and up the path wound, until we suddenly entered a beautiful copse, in the midst of which was the "Chapelle de Notre Dame," and the shrine and spring in which these people have such strong faith. The chapel is bounded on three sides by lighted candles, the offering of the people.

There must have been between three and four hundred pilgrims, most of whom had come fasting from food, and on all faces there was visible the evidence of a fixed and serious purpose. No holiday outing was this, but a journey to gain great things for their brave men and their beloved country. Surely great things must be effected through the medium of their strong faith.

Within the grotto erected to "Our Lady" is the well, the water of which is said to possess miraculous powers. Here many were filling bottles to take away. One of our hospital Sisters doing the same, remarked to an old lady that "it was for the 'blessés' (wounded)." To the embarrassment of the Sister, she was immediately the subject of a tearful but grateful embrace.

The confidence in and devotion for the English Sisters is beyond words, as was again evidenced

by the pleasure with which our presence amongst them at M— was received.

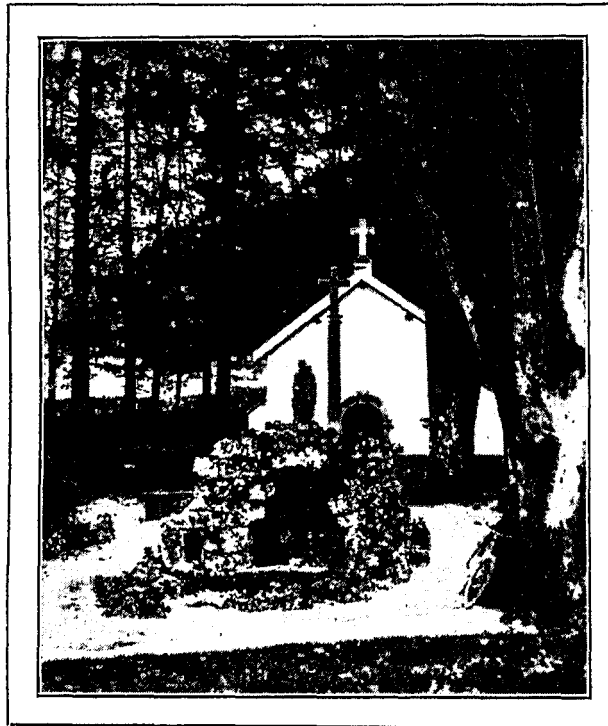
We went in to see the beautiful little chapel, which is scarcely more than 1,500 or 1,600 cubic feet in size.

Suddenly the bell rang. The great intercession was about to commence.

The priest said Mass in the chapel, the congregation took part immediately outside the door. There was no crush, everyone stood or knelt quietly. The "Gloria in Excelsis" is simply but impressively rendered; the bell from the chapel rings; with one accord the people silently kneel, and then ascends to the God upon the altar and in heaven the tense supplicating cry "Agnus Dei, Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis."

We are roused at this point by a booming in the distance, a horrible reminder of the reason of our presence in France. Some hear, evidently, but the sound only appears to add intensity to the "O Salutaris" which follows. The "Ave Maria" is rendered, the people kneel to receive the blessing. One is almost loth to move from that scene of sure faith and hope. One tiny child watches anxiously to see whether the Sisters' white aprons are soiled by the grass.

And now the material side comes to the fore. The people sit on the grass in groups under the canopy of trees in the glorious sunshine



NOTRE DAME DE MONTROT, CHAPELLE ET GROSSE,

and open packets of luncheon.

Unfortunately we had to come away at this juncture to get rest for our night's work, although we were loth to leave.

The whole scene must long remain in our memory, and also the realisation of the comfort these brave women of France derive from their holy faith. Well may we also share in their prayer "Dieu protège la France." A. P.

Mrs. Laurie, hon. treasurer, Scottish Women's Hospital, has received a further instalment of £500 from the golfers of Great Britain and the colonies to the "Madge Neill-Fraser" Hospital at Mladanovatz, Serbia. The total now amounts to £2,500.

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