

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IN THE WAR AND AFTER

CASEY

“High be the mission and honored the name of her,
Wherever her course o’er the waters may be,
Brave the behavior and glowing the fame of her
Worthy to carry the emblem—K. C.
Safe be each journey and swift each return of her,
Smooth be the seas she is destined to plow,
With the Red, White and Blue streaming out from the stern of her,
And her good Irish name on her bluff, honest bow.”

Thus versified the popular poet, James J. Montague in the columns of the *New York World* when the United States Shipping Board was about to launch a great vessel named “Casey” in honor of the splendid war welfare service of the Knights of Columbus.

*Qu’est — ce que C’est*¹ tells how the Knights of Columbus acquired the name of “Casey.”

“It was in the Argonne drive that some one dubbed them ‘Casey’—those chaps who wore the K. of C. brassard; and because they were generally around when one was ‘smoke hungry’—the call was taken up by all ranks, ‘Keep coming, Casey,’ and if we remember rightly—and we do—they did keep coming.”

Yes, K. C. was in evidence and he kept coming. There were over 100,000 of him in the actual service, on land, on water and in the air.² In the ranks of the officers he gave an excellent account of himself and amongst the privates his services were unsurpassed. More than twenty-five thousand young fellows who associated with K. C., in the service or contemplated his creditable conduct have since fraternized with him through membership in the same Order.³

This is not the place, however, to detail the war record of Knights of Columbus. Not sufficient space is here available.⁴ A brief reference to the welfare work of the Knights of Columbus may, however, be made.

¹ A paper published by the American students in the University of Toulouse.

² *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, Egan and Kennedy, lists 87,300 names of Knights of Columbus in the service from 1,645 Councils, 396 Councils are not included in this list.

³ Since the demobilization of the forces 250,000 men have joined the Knights of Columbus, two-thirds of whom are estimated to have been former servicemen.

⁴ An official work of two substantial volumes entitled *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, edited by the able Catholic author, Maurice Francis Egan, and

TIMELY MOVEMENT

Timeliness is frequently the best quality of action. There is really more merit in the familiar expression "the psychical moment" than is sometimes supposed. Promptitude has in a sense at least been a virtue of the Knights of Columbus. Glancing back a few years it is easy to recall the distress of the residents of San Francisco as the result of the calamitous earthquake. Ere the echoes of that catastrophe had died away, telegraph wires were vibrating with messages of succor and condolence from the Knights of Columbus, and almost before any other outside aid reached San Francisco \$100,000 was placed at the disposal of the earthquake sufferers.

In like manner, flood sufferers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kansas, the storm-wrecked in Illinois and sufferers from an explosion in Halifax, Nova Scotia were promptly aided.⁵

INTRODUCTION TO WAR WORK

The Knights of Columbus have apparently felt it a duty incumbent upon them to follow the fortunes of their countrymen into war. Although little necessity existed, the Order nevertheless offered and indeed furnished some help at the time of the Spanish-American War.⁶ When there was a prospect of disturbance with Mexico, and our boys were stationed along the border, the Order entered wholeheartedly into the work of making the service less distasteful and of carrying a ray of cheer and comfort to the men on duty.⁷ Knights of Columbus were not therefore, strangers to the character of effort that would be helpful in the contingency of a serious war such as appalled the world in 1914, and involved the United States in 1917.

EXPEDITION THE WATCHWORD

Scarcely had congress, at the call of the President, declared a state of war to exist between Germany and the United States, and

Mr. John B. Kennedy, the able Director of Publicity for the Knights of Columbus during the war, has been published, which tells the war story in general terms, and lists in Volume II a large number of the members that were in the service. A *History of the Knights of Columbus in Illinois* is in preparation, in which the record for Illinois Knights of Columbus will be given in greater detail.

⁵ *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, Egan and Kennedy, ch. XII.

⁶ An appropriation was made to aid returning soldiers at Montauk Point.

⁷ A chain of recreation buildings were erected along the border in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas similar to the welfare buildings at the cantonments in the late war. See for full account of Mexican border work, *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, Egan and Kennedy, ch. XV.

war preparations begun, than the Supreme Officers tendered the services of the Order to assist at home and abroad, in camp and field, and wherever American men went, or wherever faithful service was needed. The generous offer was accepted, and without losing a moment the great camp program of the Knights of Columbus was begun. As fast as mobilization camps were located in this country the Knights of Columbus began and completed buildings at such camps, until a total of 461 buildings were erected at the camps, and in addition 32 great tents were brought into service. There were also eleven buildings constructed at permanent army posts.⁸

These Knights of Columbus buildings were the clubs of the army men. Within their walls was brought to the service man as much of home as it was possible to translate. The rigid discipline of the service was here relaxed, and the naturally lonesome boy was provided with comforts and conveniences, including books, periodicals, writing paper and other adjuncts of convenience.⁹ In these buildings also were the recreational facilities and the entertainments which helped to make this new strange life, away from home and friends, tolerable.¹⁰ And,

⁸ *Report of the Supreme Board of Directors, Knights of Columbus, for Fiscal Year ending Jan. 30, 1919, summary p. 24.*

⁹ The following description of the Knights of Columbus buildings at the camps is taken from the *Literary Digest*:

"At one end of the building there is an alcove in which the altar is placed. After Mass is celebrated, the alcove is closed, shutting off the altar from view. There is also a small room used as a sacristy. Two small rooms are in the rear. One is used by those in charge, the other for a library. Around the inside of the building desks are made fast to the walls for the men to write on. The room also contains a piano, billiard table and other means of amusement."

¹⁰ The following communication from a very competent Knights of Columbus Secretary, Mr. T. J. Leanord, gives a very good idea of the welfare work in the camps. In speaking of the completion of the three Knights of Columbus buildings at Camp Grant Mr. Leanord says:

"The halls are now fully equipped, being replete with player-pianos, victrolas, and games of all kinds. They are regular hives of activity in the evenings when the boys are dismissed from their arduous duties of the day. The supply of magazines is plentiful, but there is an insistent demand for 'up-to-date stuff.' Many of the good people of Rockford have been kind enough to donate some splendid framed pictures which give the place a homelike atmosphere, besides being very ornamental. There are now four secretaries on the ground, and by close coöperation they are accomplishing wonderful results. Every other evening an entertainment is provided in all of the halls and the boys 'pack the house.' Friends at home have noticed that stationery bearing the emblem has been provided and is being used extensively. Cards of invitation have been received from the various Catholic societies in Rockford, inviting the boys to their doings, and they have been distributed to the boys. Three Masses are celebrated on Sunday

true to its purpose and mission, in these same buildings were, on the proper occasions, Sundays and Holy days, held the consoling and inspirational divine services that brought so much comfort into the very shadow of war.¹¹

"EVERYBODY WELCOME AND EVERYTHING FREE"

In these Knights of Columbus buildings as well as in all the huts and dugouts abroad, the policy which crystallized into a slogan was "everybody welcome and everything free." It is one of the glories of the Knights of Columbus welfare work that from the beginning to the end absolutely no distinction was ever made or recognized on account of race or creed. The one badge to full recognition and fellowship in the Knights of Columbus welfare work and its benefits and advantages was the colors of the United States.¹²

morning in each hall, at 6:30, 8:30 and 9:30 a. m., the halls being taxed to their capacity. A most gratifying feature of the work is the large and increasing number of communionists. Confessions are heard every Saturday at all the halls in the afternoon and evening."

¹¹ How universally these agencies were employed is well illustrated by an extract from the *Monitor*, quoted in the *Literary Digest* of January 19, 1918:

"Ten Masses are said every Sunday in the Y. M. C. A. and K. of C. buildings (the Y. M. C. A. permit the use of their building). The buildings are over-filled at each Mass. The men kneel in the aisle, on the doorsteps and even outside on the grounds. Protestants marvel at this. They can't understand it. A lasting impression is being made on them. One of the chaplains told us of a wealthy man who gave up his business in order to take up the Y. M. C. A. work in the camp. For several Sundays he had watched these great gatherings of Catholics at the Masses. One Sunday he came to the priest and said: 'Father, every Sunday you have thousands at the Mass, while we get only a handful at our services. Every Sunday you have the same thing; you never change, and the buildings won't hold the men. We change, we bring in new speakers, men of national reputation; we do everything to attract the men without avail. Father, how do you do it? Why do they come to the Mass?' "

¹² "They do not ask the faith or creed
Of him that comes into their hut;
True Knighthood's door is never shut
Against a pilgrim warrior's need.
They question only: 'Would you rest
And are you weary and oppressed?
Then, brother, lay aside your care,
And come, this sheltering roof to share.' "

EDWARD A. GUEST, *Detroit Free Press*.

"CREATURE COMFORTS"

The Sun of Baltimore has given us the most expressive statement of this comparatively new term for a really ancient desire:

"'Creature Comforts!' What a phrase to conjure with. Like the doughnuts and flapjacks of the Salvation Army lassies, 'creature comforts' will stick in the memory of the average soldier when many other things have been forgotten. 'Creature comforts' is what we are all after, and the boys in the army, cut off from home and friends, prized them probably as never before. Not so elevating or idealistic, perhaps, as sermons or tracts, but these 'creature comforts' went straight to the right spot.

"We congratulate the Knights of Columbus on the sagacity of their human psychology. Man does not live by 'creature comforts' alone, but he cannot live happily without them if he has once enjoyed them. The wisdom of the Knights of Columbus, as of the Salvation Army, was shown in dealing with these soldier boys as a mother would in remembering their bodies and their stomachs, as well as their minds and souls.

"'Creature comforts' are two great words. May they never be forgot."

For "Creature Comforts" thus so highly commended \$7,000,000 of the funds secured and expended by the Knights of Columbus were used, and the Brooklyn Eagle said:

"The amount expended on free creature comforts for the soldiers was larger than that spent for a similar purpose by all of the other organizations participating in the United States War Drive Fund combined."

"Creature Comforts," to be explicit, included cigarettes, tobacco, chewing gum, chocolate, candy, soap, handkerchiefs and similar articles.¹³

¹³ A letter written by Lieutenant John E. O'Brien of the 147th Infantry to the State Deputy of Illinois, Edward Houlihan, furnishes some evidence on this point. From the battle front Mr. O'Brien wrote:

"I do not know whether this letter is going to interest you or not—you are doubtless flooded with notes of a like nature,—but I cannot forbear adding my little testimonial of appreciation of the work the Knights are doing for the fellows in the line. To the man back home it seems a little, trivial thing—a piece of chocolate, a newspaper, a magazine, a cigarette. You could stop any man and ask for those things and he would accommodate you—unthinkingly. But up here in the first of the front lines, with every meal the same—canned Willie and alfalfa soup—those little things assume a magnitude, an importance, in our minds, that is almost unbelievable. To come in at two or three in the morning after working all night on the wire, and in it; your nerves taut and barbed; your eyes strained and weary; tired to the very soul of you, to come in and close your dugout door and take a long deep drag of a cigarette—well, he who has not done it does not know what a boon tobacco is. And you are hungry, too; but there is a small bit of chocolate to stay your pangs till daylight comes, and you may have a fire and cook your breakfast—your delicate breakfast of Willie and soup. And

Besides these various items other articles were supplied free, such as writing materials, musical instruments and athletic supplies and equipment.

FOLLOWING THE FLAG

As soon as leave could be obtained to do so, the Knights of Columbus set out to follow the flag across the sea, and very soon after the first soldiers landed in France they found K. C. there ready to serve them. The first care of the Order was to get supplies across the ocean, and from established supply stations goods were sent out to the servicemen, at first by any possible means that could be secured, and later by automobile trucks.¹⁴ During the engagement at Mihiel 20,000

then in the afternoon, after you get up, and sit around waiting the order, knowing that when it comes you must go out and throw the dice with death again, and your nerves get run and you get restless and uneasy—there is a newspaper or a magazine to take your mind off your beastly task, to remind you of the living, breathing world across the sea; to tell again that the millions back there are with you—well, it helps, Mister, it helps.

“Little things like, trivial, inconsequential things, plenty of them in France. Back of the lines you can buy them—*buy* them—*buy* them at retail prices; back of the lines—where you don’t really need them. But on the front you get them and you get them *free*. I have a detail of men whose task is repairing the front line wire. While the division is in, we never get back of the first line of defense. Every night we spend in No Man’s Land, and it is not pleasant. But when we get in, it is waiting for us—our candy, cigarettes and papers—awaiting us with the K. of C. stamp on it all. Doesn’t matter if Jerry is shelling the roads; doesn’t matter if it’s raining, that dirty, beastly French rain; doesn’t matter if it’s dark and gruesome and weird up here—always we can look for and expect that old one-lunged motorcycle of Brother Thomas—and we never yet waited in vain.”

“The story told by Father Thomas F. Coakley, chaplain of the 147th Infantry, A. P. O. 746, indicates some of the difficulties connected with this part of the Knights of Columbus program. In writing to Mr. Lawrence O. Murray, in charge of the Knights of Columbus Headquarters in Paris, Father Coakley said:

“My Dear Mr. Murray:

“I wish to thank you most heartily in my own name, and in the name of the officers and men of this Forty-Seventh Regiment of Infantry, for the large supply of candy, chocolate, cigarettes, smoking and chewing tobacco, cigars, chewing gum, writing paper, envelopes and postcards that reached me today from Paris by truck in spite of the roads that could not in the wildest flight of fancy be imagined worse than they are.

“After strenuous efforts we managed to transport these K. of C. supplies by auto truck—which soon stuck in the mud; then by ambulances, which stuck in turn; then in machine gun limbers; then on stretchers and on the backs of the grateful and appreciative men, clean up to the front line trenches and dugouts, right under German fire; and there was plenty for each man, distributed free,

packages of cigarettes were delivered to the boys at the front by the K. of C. Secretary by means of an aeroplane. In the most active stage of American participation the Knights of Columbus Secretary was about as well known by his overworked wheezy automobile as by the uniform in which the government permitted him to be clothed. K. C.'s place was with the servicemen, and wherever the servicemen went he followed, consequently his place of abode was temporary, but when the battalion or division settled down, K. C. settled down with him, and constructed a hut from any refuse obtainable; and if nothing better could be devised he dug a hole in the ground and established himself in this dugout. Here he brought up the "creature comforts" especially, and here the weary serviceman found an opportunity to while away a pleasant hour in the midst of his discomforts and desolation.

ENTERTAINING THE SERVICEMEN

K. C. will perhaps be best remembered by the servicemen on account of the altogether pleasing manner in which these "creature comforts" were distributed, but next after this feature of the work came the really meritorious entertainment program. The big features of K. C. entertainment abroad were "The A. E. F. Circus," the "Wild West Show," several Minstrel Shows, and the Motion Pictures. Numerous entertainments were staged and almost an army of bands and orchestras equipped, there being more than 50,000 musical instruments supplied. Several hundred motion picture machines were placed in clubhouses and huts. It is estimated that more than half a million of servicemen were entertained each night during the active period of the war by the Knights of Columbus moving picture service alone. Besides this, 5,000 games of baseball were daily played by servicemen, outfits for which were supplied by the Knights of Columbus.

The great marathon race from Chateau Thierry to Paris that

and the praise and appreciation for the K. of C. initiative and anxiety for the welfare of the fighting men are on every lip.

"Rarely, even in the commissary, has such a quantity of good things been given to the men who are bearing the real burden of the war in this inclement weather, and I am sending you this word of gratitude so that you may convey it to the K. of C. officials back home as an evidence of my being alive to their efforts to handle their immense and complicated problem in a big and generous way, without thought of themselves."

attracted so much attention the world over was entirely under the auspices of the Knights of Columbus.¹⁵

The ingenuity of the best managers available was drawn upon for these entertainments, and much of the entertainment was of a character equal to the best that has been produced in the amusement and theatrical world.

THE FRIEND IN NEED

It should not be supposed, however, that the activities of the Knights of Columbus were limited to furnishing "creature comforts" and entertainment—indeed they engaged in much more serious, if not more helpful work. The heralds of the Knights of Columbus were the Knights of Columbus Chaplains¹⁶ and the Knights of Columbus Secretaries. It was desirable to make provision for these functionaries to live in some comfort amongst the soldiers, but they were not of a character to wait until comforts had been provided.

"Often the only shelter a chaplain or secretary had was the hat on his head. . . . Before huts could be erected men had to be served, and the Knights of

¹⁵ *Report of the Supreme Board of Directors, Knights of Columbus, Jan. 30, 1919, p. 50.*

¹⁶ The popularity of the chaplains is illustrated by a communication of Charles N. Wheeler, the noted war correspondent, in the *Chicago Tribune* of Sunday, December 15, 1918. Mr. Wheeler, in speaking about the assignment of chaplains upon reports from the different regiments and divisions, says:

"In this work there developed the need of a sort of religious census of the units in order to determine what sort of a chaplain would be sent to the respective unit, always having in mind the advisability of sending a Protestant to a Protestant regiment and a Catholic to a regiment in which the Catholics predominate.

"The reports came in from several regiments the other day and the senior chaplain of the division read one over very carefully, a couple of times. Then he wondered if a mistake had been made, for this regiment was listed as 100 per cent Catholic. He thought a new record had been made and that if such a regiment was serving it was worth while to emphasize the point. He ordered an investigation made to be sure that no mistake had been committed. When the second report came in it was disclosed that the regiment was only 50 per cent, or a little less, perhaps, Catholic. Then the real story was divulged. The report had been circulated among the boys that their chaplain, who was a Catholic, might be assigned to another regiment, where there was a greater percentage of Catholics. This particular chaplain was a great favorite in the regiment, with the Protestant boys as with the Catholics. Soon after this report was started the census was taken—and the regiment to a man went down on the record as a Catholic 'for the duration of the war.'

"It is needless to state that this chaplain is still on active service with this regiment."

Columbus worker with his motorcycle, or his car, or on foot, went through the camps as his co-workers were going to the front, their bags on their backs, just as the fighting man carried his, and distributed the little things that help to make life comfortable."

These secretaries, of whom there were over one thousand in the service abroad before the conclusion of the war, were veritably all things to all men. They knelt by the side of the wounded soldier, and took his dying message to the loved ones at home. They were at once the counsellor and guide to the wavering and lonesome soldier boy, and his messenger and servant. With equal propriety they could, if occasion demanded, admonish the wayward youngster, or, when necessity pressed upon them, become the camp barbers. The secretary or chaplain was the intermediary between the sometimes derelict serviceman and his sometimes too exacting superior officer. No intercession was more potent in obtaining desired advantages so valuable to the serviceman than that of a K. C. Secretary or Chaplain, and by all accounts the especially luminous service of K. C. was rendered in the hospitals and hospital ships. Back of the lines in all the hospitals the Knights of Columbus Secretaries and Chaplains were always to be found, and no part of the K. C. work has been more feelingly described than that which had to do with the sick and wounded and dying.¹⁷ On the hospital ships generous supplies were provided for

¹⁷ The noted war correspondent, Floyd Gibbons, relates a touching incident of the hospital where he was himself confined after he had lost an eye and almost his life on No Man's Land, in his determination to be with the men nearest the front. When convalescing in the hospital, Gibbons said:

"Two beds on my right was a young American soldier. A German high explosive shell had shattered his leg at the battle of Cantigny and it had been necessary to amputate the limb. The amputation had been made above the knee. Without introducing himself—without saying a word—Pallen (a K. of C. Secretary) proceeded to this man's bedside and began to walk up and down nervously in front of it. He soon attracted the attention of the sufferer, whose curiosity was aroused immediately by Pallen's peculiar actions.

" 'How does that look?' Pallen stopped in his floor pacing and directed the question to the man on the bed. 'Do I walk all right?' 'Looks all right to me,' replied the man on the bed. Then Pallen hopped across the ward on one foot and hopped back to the bed on the other foot. Then he jumped and skipped at the bedside and danced an impromptu jig. He turned again to the man on the bed.

" 'Do you see anything the matter with me?' he demanded in almost a challenging tone.

" 'I don't see anything the matter with you, Mister,' replied the man on the bed; and then he added, 'unless it is they've got you in the wrong ward.'

"Pallen walked close to the bedside and took a position where the man in the bed could closely watch him. Pallen took his cane and brought it down with

000 men in service enjoyed its hospitality during the war, and its success was in a large measure due, as was the success of all other Knights of Columbus service stations, to the noble and indefatigable coöperation of Catholic women of the neighborhood.¹⁹

It is worth while repeating that the Knights of Columbus had to fight to provide these services and most of their "creature comforts" free. The reasons need not here be stated. It is sufficient to say that pressure enough had been brought to bear upon the War Department to induce that agency of the government to forbid this free service and distribution, but after a firm contest on the part of the Knights of Columbus they were permitted to pursue their liberal policy.²⁰

WELFARE WORK DEFINED

Chaplain McCarthy, so well known to the Knights of Columbus, in his charming book, "The Greater Love," just issued by Extension Press, thus speaks of the war welfare work:

"A distinct contribution to modern civilization, and a form of national and international altruism making for the betterment, not only of him who receives, but as well of him who gives, was organized welfare work. The need of such work always existed; and the organization of trained and equipped auxiliary forces intelligently to perform it must have ever been apparent. It remained for the World War, conceived, at least in the American mind in unselfish motive, to create and give flesh and blood expression to so Divine a vocation; and assign it honored rank among National institutions eminently to be desired, and, without invidious comparison, devotedly to be maintained."

GETTING THE MONEY

Needless to say it required a large amount of funds to conduct the work carried on by the Knights of Columbus. At the outset a modest fund of \$1,000,000 was asked for by the Supreme Officers, and when the Supreme Council met in August a call for a voluntary contribution of \$3,000,000 was sent out. The story of the splendid success of these appeals, in which every jurisdiction of the Order far exceeded its quota is a most interesting one. The independent campaign of the Knights of Columbus, later joined in by the National Catholic War Council, resulted in raising a fund of \$14,000,000, thus more than quadrupling the modest sum for which the Order had asked. It is true that the great needs were not fully appreciated in advance, and it has been seen that even a much larger sum than that actually

¹⁹ *Ib.* pp. 275-6.

²⁰ See *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, *op. cit.* Ch. XXVII.

the wounded. It was found that cold drinks were more appreciated than any other thing by the wounded and seasick soldier, and accordingly tons of fruit syrups were distributed by the Knights of Columbus amongst both the hospitals and troop ships for the benefit of the men on board. Delicacies, like jam and crackers, were also provided in abundance.¹⁸

THE SERVICE HOUSES

One of the special lines of service that proved of great value was rendered in the service houses which the Knights operated entirely free of charge in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit and other cities. The handsome house on Berkeley Street, Boston, was typical. Here the Knights provided nightly over 700 free beds for men of the Army and Navy, with free baths, free breakfasts, consisting of doughnuts and coffee, free barber service, free laundry and free tailoring. It was altogether the most popular hotel on the Atlantic seaboard, for not a night passed without its being packed to the doors. Its spacious dormitories were always lined with cots, while, when necessary, the billiard and other rooms were made to accommodate the overflow. The reputation of this hotel, which had provided everything from shower baths to shoe shining, and all free of cost, became established in the navy from ocean to ocean. Upwards of 250,-

a sharp rap against his leg. The sound was unmistakably wooden. Everyone in the ward knew that Pallen's leg was artificial.

"This was the keen, big meaning thing that had been done for that American soldier who lay there with one leg off. Many black misgivings for the future had been removed from his mind. He now knew that he could go through life with an artificial leg almost as conveniently as he had before the amputation. This was one thing, bigger than anything that money could buy, that McDougal Pallen performed in our ward in the name of the Knights of Columbus."

Incidentally, Gibbons tells us who Pallen was:

"When I had known him," says Gibbons, "he had been a fellow-student at Georgetown University. Our football team never had a faster end than Pallen. He was a vigorous, hard-fighting, sport-loving student. As he stood there that day by my bed, I saw on the sleeve of his service uniform the red shield of the Knights of Columbus. Knowing Pallen as I did, I wondered why he was engaged in this work. He must have noticed my silence, for he said: 'Gig, do you remember that Thanksgiving game with the Indians?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'your leg was hurt pretty badly that day.' 'Well,' said Pallen, 'I lost that same leg three years afterwards.' Then I knew why Pallen was engaged in the noble work of the Knights of Columbus in France, and I wondered what it was that he could do in our ward that might possibly be different from the letter writing and distribution of tobacco and chocolate usually expected. I soon found out."

¹⁸ *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, Vol. I, p. 275.

realized was needed, and, when the time came, it was provided. From the joint drive in which the Knights of Columbus participated with the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army and some other welfare organizations, some \$20,000,000 more was realized. The public treated the Knights of Columbus generously, and supplied them with an abundance of funds. It is to the everlasting credit of the Knights of Columbus that they proved faithful to their trust. Although the peculiar circumstances tended to increase the cost of administration, as well as of supplies, the Knights of Columbus made an enviable record by holding administration costs down to the insignificant figure of 2.68 per cent, and by prompt payment of bills saved in cash discounts more than the operating cost.²¹

THE PART OF RELIGION

In no single instance has the Knights of Columbus been charged with a neglect of religion in connection with its war service, nor to date has there been any single complaint that the Order or any of its representatives unduly urged religion upon anyone. Quoting from "*Qu' est-ce que C'est*" again:

"They have never crowded religion down our throats—though religious consolation was theirs to give for the asking."

There were scenes and events that will live long in the minds of servicemen, some of which involved hours of waiting in long lines for an opportunity to kneel in the mud and go to confession. There were like scenes on disagreeable mornings when thousands knelt before the temporary altar constructed by the K. C. Chaplain to receive Holy Communion.²² There were great gatherings in the community build-

²¹ *Report of Supreme Board, op. cit.* p. 23.

²² Lieutenant Leo D. Sheridan, Company E, 327th Infantry, in a letter to his brother of Macon, Ga., helps us to realize what the religious consolations which the secretaries were so efficient in arranging, meant to the boys entering upon battle:

"I want to tell you what happened the day before we went into the front lines," says Lieutenant Sheridan. "Our battalion was located in a dense woods and we were living in shelter tents; the officers had little shacks with hardly room to turn around in. The K. of C. Secretary also had a small shack about as big as your bathroom, and in this he had a victrola, cigarettes, candy, etc.; needless to say, this was the most popular place in the woods. No doubt you know that the K. of C.'s give away everything and won't take money for anything."

"The morning of the same night we went to the first line the K. of C. Secretary sent down word that Mass would be celebrated at the K. of C. shack at 9:30. I immediately formed our company, and read this notice and gave all permission to attend. This was also done in the three companies."

ing when thousands reverently knelt during the Sunday Masses, and above all there were the dying consolations behind the battle lines. Yet no non-Catholic serviceman retired to private life with the feeling that his conscience had been outraged by Catholic proselytism. The Knights of Columbus must be given credit for a very reasonable and sensible administration of the religious features of the welfare work.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

When the actual war welfare work was over, the Knights of Columbus found themselves with an available balance of more than \$10,000,000. The record of the use of this balance is a most interesting one.

That there would be considerable difficulty in readjusting the employment situation was early anticipated by the Knights of Columbus, and, accordingly, as soon as the men began to return after the armistice, steps were taken to assist the servicemen and employers. To begin with, every Council of the Order was transformed into an employment agency and, as circumstances required, employment quarters were opened in the principal cities. The Knights of Columbus Employment Service has become familiar, located as it quite generally is in the most prominent square or thoroughfare in the various cities, with its flaming posters announcing "A Free Employment Service for Soldiers, Sailors and Marines."²³ The details of this employment service are of extreme interest, and the story told in the records of the various offices is startling. In general it has been stated that 55 per cent of the men who applied for employment at the free Knights

"There is another lieutenant in my company named Nickelson, who is also a Catholic; he is from New York and is a mighty fine fellow; has been with our company about one month. We at once decided to attend Mass, and beat it through the woods to the K. of C. hut. Upon arriving there we found about 300 or more soldiers gathered around. It was raining, but this did not keep the men from kneeling in the mud. Finally, the priest arrived and the men began going to confession. After hearing confessions, Mass began, and I honestly believe every soldier, including myself, went to communion.

"I never will forget this sight as long as I live, and am sorry I can't give a better description. There we were in the thick woods, with rain falling, and men on their knees in mud. Overhead and sometimes striking near, were artillery shells. Overhead aeroplanes would buzz and we could hear them signaling to each other; you could hear shells whistling by, bound for the German trenches, and I am sure God was looking down on these devout soldiers. I would have given anything in the world to have had a camera and to have taken a picture of this wonderful assembly, but, anyhow, it is imprinted indelibly on my mind and I never will forget the scene."

²³ *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, op. cit. Ch. XXIX.

of Columbus employment offices have been satisfactorily placed.²⁴ Figures have been published illustrating the work of the Eastern offices. Those for the Chicago office are of extreme interest. In Chicago the general employment service was opened on January 5, 1920. Up to and including November 22, 1920, 55,138 men made application for employment. During the same period the employment service had found 45,867 opportunities, that is, places in which men were wanted. The office actually placed 32,571 men. During the same period the service sent 38,026 men out to take places that were available, but with which the applicants were not quite satisfied. Some of these of course tried again and secured places more to their liking. It is to be remembered that this service was furnished absolutely free, neither applicant nor employer being required to pay any fee. Casting up the total expenditures of the Chicago office, it appears that it cost the Order—the expenses being paid out of the war welfare fund—in the neighborhood of \$2.00 per man placed in employment. Thus has been used a portion of the balance remaining of the welfare fund.²⁵

EDUCATION FOR SERVICEMEN

Even during the war the Knights of Columbus established, wherever they could obtain permission, in the camps and cantonments, free schools for servicemen. Several of those reached a high state of efficiency before the close of the conflict.²⁶ Immediately after the war the Order offered one hundred scholarships in the leading technical and academic institutions of the country to former servicemen, with free scholarships and tuition, books and maintenance. The applicants were so numerous that the offer was afterwards extended to include such number of applicants as might, upon examination, prove to be qualified. These scholarships were awarded independent of race or religion, and were secured by the Order in various colleges without respect to religious affiliations. That no favoritism was shown is evidenced by the fact that the Catholic University of America secured twenty-three of those scholarships, while the State University of Illinois secured forty-nine, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology fifty-eight. As the first award stood the scholarships were divided be-

²⁴ "The average record of jobs found throughout the entire country by the Knights of Columbus was over 5,000 per week," *Knights of Columbus in Peace and War*, op .cit. p. 390.

²⁵ Books of Chicago K. of C. Employment Service office. At the close of the service December 31, 1920, there had been placed 39,872 men.

²⁶ See *Report of Supreme Board of Directors, Jan. 30, 1919*, p. 38 et seq.

tween thirty-three colleges. The total expense of these scholarships is estimated at above one million and a quarter dollars for the four-year period. In addition to what goes with the scholarship the Knights of Columbus supply \$12.00 per week during the scholastic year for maintenance to men who do not secure board and lodging at the colleges or schools.²⁷

But the Knights of Columbus were not satisfied with merely providing a limited number of men with a college education. They sought a wider field and found it in the popular free schools established in the principal cities throughout the country. Not all of the figures with reference to these schools are available yet. Those of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, earliest established, have proven extremely popular. The schools of Chicago, however, will suffice for illustration of the stupendous work being accomplished.

The Knights of Columbus free schools for servicemen opened in Chicago February 9, 1920. From that date to July 31, 1920, when the schools closed for vacation, 4,333 students enrolled and attended the classes. After the summer vacation the schools opened again on September 13th, and to November 12th, 4,100 men had enrolled and were attending the various classes.

At the present time there are one or more classes in accounting, advertising, bookkeeping, commercial art, commercial law, English for foreigners, grammar school course, automobile mechanics, mechanical drafting, typewriting, public speaking, reinforced concrete work, electricity, machine shop practice, woodworking, oxy-acetylene welding, salesmanship, French, Spanish, traffic management, mathematics, English, radio telegraphy, engineering, stenography and a high school course.

Besides free tuition, the books, tools, drawing instruments and supplies are furnished free to ex-servicemen and women of these schools.²⁸

²⁷ The official report for 1920 of the Knights of Columbus committee on education concerning K. of C. college scholarships for former servicemen has just been made public. It shows that where last year the Knights maintained 415 former servicemen in colleges and universities in all courses but law and medicine, that this year the number has been reduced to 322 through resignations and failure to meet standards, as well as through transference on the part of many scholars to K. of C. free night technical courses. Apart from these specifically limited scholarships the K. of C., through state and national boards, are maintaining scores of veterans in colleges in law and other courses.

²⁸ Taken from records of Free K. of C. School of Chicago.

A VICTORY MEMORIAL

Calculating the cost of its program of education, based upon the economies observed in all its work, it was considered that a balance of the trust fund donated by the American people would remain, and with a view to conferring a lasting benefit, both upon the loyal men who followed the flag, and upon their country, the Knights of Columbus have offered to the American Legion, the official organization of the United States Servicemen, \$5,000,000 with which to erect a memorial building in Washington, D. C., for the perpetual use of veterans of all wars.

Thus will the Knights of Columbus have administered the trust reposed in them by their fellow countrymen. But it is not contemplated that this brilliant conclusion of their war activities shall bring to an end their private benevolences or their public usefulness. There are the best of reasons for believing that the future of the Order may safely be forecast by the character of its past accomplishments.

JOSEPH J. THOMPSON.

Chicago.