

THE REV. PAUL GILLEN AS AN ARMY CHAPLAIN.

NEW YORK, Nov. 20, 1882.

MY DEAR MR. O'REILLY:—I read the announcement a little while ago of the death of Rev. Paul Gillen and I think it appropriate to mention something of his great services in the army. He served as Chaplain of the 15th, N. Y. Volunteer Engineering Regiment, under Col. John McLeod Murphy, who was afterwards in command of the Gunboat *Carondelet*. The old gentleman and his devotion to his men of eighty years old and his devotion to his men while in the field was most remarkable. During the heat of battle, he would frequently expose himself to great danger in order to administer the rights of the Church to the dying man and at last his commanding officer was obliged to order him to the rear as he was constantly in danger of death from the fire of the enemy. He gained the greatest love and respect of the men of his Regiment both Catholic and Protestant for his sincere devotion to them on the battle field and in the hospital. I will remember the dear good old priest, when Richmond on the Potomac, lay camped before the Army of the Chickominy River going around among his men ringing his little bell to summon them to their evening devotions which he held every night in his tent where he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every morning. He was latterly stationed at Notre Dame, Indiana and was frequently in New York and he never failed to call on me when in the city and was frequently a welcome guest at my house in Brooklyn. He would take great delight in talking over reminiscences of the war which were so interesting. He was a good and holy man and has now gone to his reward.

CHARLES J. MURPHY.

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Chapter XIV.

Rev. Paul E. Gillen

... at the Commencement of ...

... in the field ...

... and wounded ...

The 42nd Infantry - The ...

Dr. Snyers sketches of ...

Chaplains life in camp - Nervous endermin ...

and for ...

Rev. Paul E. Gillen, C. S. C.

Far from his college home, the beloved Notre Dame, Ind., the Rev. Paul E. Gillen, C. S. C., died at the residence of his nephew, Degraw Street, Brooklyn, Friday evening, Oct. 20th, at an advanced age.

Father Gillen was known in all parts of the country, and wherever he went he made innumerable friends, who ever looked up to him as a true friend and guide, and who, now that he is no more in the land of the living, cannot help repeating: "May the God whom he served so long and so well deign to receive his soul into everlasting peace! Amen."

Father Gillen was more than an ordinary priest. The priesthood was his highest ambition, was his soul's desire from the tender age of childhood, and in that sacred calling his labors were so grand, that now that he has been gathered to his fathers, we can say, without hurting the tender soul of "Father Paul," that he was an extraordinary priest.

He was born in the North of Ireland about the beginning of this century, and came to this country when young. After years of trials and uncertainties, during which time he never misplaced confidence in his Heavenly Father, he was at last raised to the sacerdotal state, and soon he offered the Adorable Victim of Calvary's merit as a Father of the Holy Cross at Indiana. Before he was raised to the dignity of the priesthood, Father Paul was a missionary in the world, and if space would permit, numerous anecdotes could be told of his adventures in that direction. But if he gained souls to Christ while in the world, in religion his success was much greater.

When the late Civil War broke out he entered as a chaplain, and continued during the whole time of the rebellion, having a portable altar erected in an ambulance wagon, which could be moved as the regiments advanced. His story of life among the soldiers was as interesting as it was instructive, and the good that he achieved was very great. Among his greatest friends of those stormy times—and they continued their friendship till his death—were Generals whose names were renowned for valor and bravery, and who, when they met the priest, thought nothing too good for the old friend and companion of eventful days. And to none will the sad news of Father Gillen's death bring more genuine sorrow than to those brave warriors who were witnesses of the good wrought by this devoted man.

When the war was ended, Father Gillen returned to his home, and continued in the ministrations of his sacred calling, bringing back hardened souls to make peace with God, solacing the weak and the infirm, and rendering assistance wherever needed. Of late years, old age began to tell on the venerable priest, and, though unfitted for all the hardships of the sacred ministry, still he persevered, with a zeal worthy of him, in the discharge of his duties; and when death came to him he died, to use a familiar expression, "in the harness."

Father Paul's life was so beautiful, such grand lessons could be learned from it, that repeatedly was he asked to write it, but he would not hear of such a thing. Perhaps, now that he has gone to receive his reward, some good soul who knows will tell of the work of Father Paul—of how he labored in the Master's vineyard, in season and out of season; of the many trials and disappointments which he met during his eventful career; of his services in the late civil war; of the grand work he achieved for his beloved Notre Dame and St. Mary's Academy.

Father Gillen was not feeling well last summer, and though he wished to come to Brooklyn on business, his health would not permit it. He gained strength later on in the season, and obtained permission to visit his friends in New York. Whenever he came to Brooklyn he usually celebrated Mass for the Daughters of Mary, in charge of the deaf mutes, and it was on that errand of mercy that the aged priest of God was bent when his death-sickness seized him. He was borne to his nephew's residence, where all that could be thought of was done for the poor sufferer. Father Walsh administered the last Sacraments, and, oh! it was a spectacle worthy of the occasion to see the old priest receive his Lord for the last time. He tried to robe himself, feeble though he was, in his cassock, as in days gone by, to receive the Divine object of his love, and the effort nearly cost him his life.

The Sisters of St. Joseph, the Poor of St. Francis, and the Daughters of Mary were constant in their attendance upon the dying priest; and Dr. Freil, Father Drumgoole, Father Walsh, and Brothers Paschal and Jarlath, of Notre Dame, were his companions. All that love could do was done by Mrs. McGuinness, and the consecrated hands of the dying priest were raised in benediction in behalf of this most estimable lady.

The end came on Friday morning, Oct. 20th, just at the time when it was his wont to celebrate the Divine Mysteries.—James McKenna, in the *Sunday Democrat*.

... has probably ...
... than any other Chaplain ...
... the Potomac, being the oldest ...
... army, and the longest ...
... old, and hospital; ...
... the army from July 21st ...
... able day of the first Bull ...
... til the mustering out of ...
... Legion after the close of ...
... and of July 1865.

Gillen is a native of ...
... ville, Missouri, Co. Douglas ...
... having studied his classical ...
... native country, he came to ...
... in 1840 ... After ...
... through the United ...
... he finally settled ...
... University, became a ...
... Congregation of the Holy ...
... and continued his studies ...
... a Priest of the Holy Cross ...
... The breaking out of the ...
... to be in New York, ...
... Baltimore, on business, ...
... Catholic Chaplains, were ...
... and the inevitable ...
... that ...

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He joins the army at the commencement of
 the war - His services in and around
 Washington - His services in the field -
 His attention to the sick and wounded -
 Mass in Camp - The 42nd Tammam - The
 famous Legion - Dr. Snyers sketches of
 others Gillen, Sillars and Mooney -
 Chyblans life in Camp - Heroic endurance
 and forbearance

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Father Gillen

^{Seen (?)} This ~~reserves~~ ~~not~~ man has probably done more service than any other Chaplain in the army of the Potomac, being the oldest Chaplain in the army, and the longest attending to the field, and hospitals; ~~by~~ ^{The General of the} ~~the~~ ^{army} ~~the~~ ^{army} from July 21st 1861. The memorable day of the first Bull Run battle - until the mustering out of the Corcoran Irish Legion after the close of the war in the end of July 1865.

Rev. ^{Paul} Edw. Gillen is a native of the parish of Noville Dromiskown, Co. Longat Ireland. Having studied his classical course in his native country, he came to the United States in 1840. After many ^{travels} ~~travels~~ through the United States, and Canada, he finally settled at Notre-Dame ^{Louisiana} University, became a member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, ^{where he} renewed and continued his studies and was ordained a Priest of the ^{Order} Holy Cross.

Shortly after the breaking out of the war, he chanced to be ^{visiting} New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, on business, and hearing that Catholic Chaplains were scarce in the army, and ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} inevitable subject of ^{what} ~~the~~ ^{numbers} of ~~such~~

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The ~~bug~~ roll was beat in all the camps and the ~~Regiment~~ ^{Regiment} was under arms in ten minutes. Numbers of those who had been crowding the Confessional came ~~en masse~~ to Father Paul saying "O Father we have been wanting to go to Confession and now we must be off, what will we do?" "Kneel down my brave boys, and make an act of contrition from your hearts for all the sins of your life, with the intention of coming to Confession if you come back, or as soon as you can, and I will give you absolution," the boys obeyed immediately and in a few minutes ~~Regiment~~ ^{Regiment} were marching down to Washington.

The 9th Regt, Mass (Drill) about half a mile off with their green flag also got under way playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me," on arriving at Washington, their ^{March} course was stopped and all returned to their camps. The 9th Mass playing ^{on its return the very appropriate tune} "Jenny put the Kettle on for a cup of Tea." On returning the boys came to Confession, with grateful hearts, and all came to Holy Communion at Mass in the little tent next morning. Father Paul next visit was to the 33rd Regt N.Y., about half a mile off, especially ^{to} with Capt McGrath and his Irish Company, from Seneca Falls N.Y. Then to the 34th N.Y. ^{stationed} about a mile still further on, ^{where} a large number came to Confession with us.

Col Murphy was highly pleased to have the good Father visit his Reg^{ts} and made a bed for the Rev^d Father on the floor, just beside his own, but they had scarce gone to rest when the bug roll was beat in all the Reg^{ts} on that side of the river, and all hands ^{were called} to arms, that the Rebels were coming in. "Now Father" said the Col^{onel}, "it was God I hope sent you here this night. I will go to confession before I go out, and you will go with us and give us a blessing to our dear boys." The confession being over the whole Reg^{ment} was under arms and every officer mounted. Father Paul had no horse at the time of his own.

"Now Father" said the Col^{onel}, "the Col^{onel} has no horse, get on the horse's back behind me, boys lift his leg, get on, and hold on by me," and off the Col^{onel} dashed with Christ behind him until they came to where the men were in line of battle with rifle in hand bayonets fixed and all lying flat on the ground about 9 o'clock A.M.

"Now Father" said the Col^{onel}, "we may dismount."

The Col^{onel} having given his horse to an orderly proceeded to ^{the Father} ^{follow} a ^{throughout} the Reg^{ts} and ^{and} ^{call} ^{them} "Co. A stand up." The Col^{onel} ^{then} ^{said} "all of you who are Catholics kneel down and receive the Father's blessing." But Protestants were on their knees as quick as Catholics, after proceeding over all the companies and continuing until the break of day the Rebels did not ^{attack} ^{appear}, although we ^{and} ^{they} were ready to ^{fight}, when they heard

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~~the drums in the Union Camps~~ ~~one of the men~~
~~says afterwards~~ "By dad myself was a little
afraid getting into the line of battle before day,
for the first time, but when I saw the priest
riding behind the ~~color~~ ^{his horse}, my heart
got up, and I would fight as many Rebels as
would stand before me" ~~said an Irishman~~

After stopping some days with the 15th N.Y.
~~Foreign~~ ^{Regiment} ~~Regiment~~ ^{new} ~~Regiment~~ ^{Regiment}
~~the~~ returned to Washington, where
pouring in rapidly every day from the north.
These he attended going from one Regt. to another.
A large number of these raw recruits
had been some length of time from confession,
and after enlisting had no more opportunity
offered them, but were marched off to Washington
and thence to their encampments, and ~~then coming~~
~~to themselves~~ were most anxious for a priest
by whom they would be reconciled with their
offended God, before the day of battle arrived.
Appearing ^{there} the 24th N.Y. (many of whom had
been with him at confession some time
before) were now on the outside lines next
to the enemy, ^{four} miles west of Washington, he got
a Mr. Galt to bring him with his buggy out
to them; and when Mr. Galt (that excellent
gentleman) ^{wanted to} would return home, he had no
pass, and nothing short of a Brig. Gen's present
do, which could not then ~~be~~ ^{possibly} be got.
So, Father Paul was obliged to convey his good
friend back the whole way, and over the
long Bridge (with his General pass) into Washington,

~~where he started from~~ On returning
 Father ~~Paul~~ was fortunate in meeting with Mr
 Gibson's boy going home with a wagon to the
 next house to ^{where} the 24th N. Y. ^{was deluged} where he had
 left his satchels and altar affairs. Mr Gibson
 was a convert, and had an Irish girl lately
 arrived from the Emerald Isle, whom he used
 to take to mass in Washington every Sunday.

On hearing that the stranger was a priest,
 he called out ^{the Irish boy} "Hallo Bridget, you'd not need
 to go to Washington for mass tomorrow, here
 is a Priest." "A Priest!" exclaimed Bridget
 running out, "arrah any goodness where is he?"

"O you are welcome Father, and will you be
 hearing confessions tomorrow?" "Certainly, but
 I will come over and hear your confession
 at home, and then you can go to mass at 10 o'clock
 and holy communion ^{with} among the soldiers."

A large number attended the confessional
 that evening, next day he visited Col Carrigan
^{regiment} and both ^{regiments} attended mass at a deserted
 Protestant brick church, which Fr ^{Paul} ^{had} ^{changed}
 into a Catholic chapel, and Bridget received
 holy communion among a large number
 of the soldiers, like a lily among thorns
 Fr ^{Paul} continued hearing confessions during
 the afternoon ^{and} in the evening it got so
 tremendous rain storm, until the countersign
 was out, and he was obliged to remain in the
 church alone all night, having nothing but
 his boots for a pillow, the floor for his bed

and the ^{wool} Boston Pilot ~~for~~ his only ^{covering} bed clothes.

The next Sunday he was with General ~~Couches~~ ^{Couches} Brigade, at Bright wood, five miles north of Washington, consisting of four Regts 36th N.Y. I R.I. 40th 10th of Mass - General Couches ~~that excellent & liberal gentleman~~ was highly pleased to see the Father visit his Brigade, and sent an order to notify all his regiment to be at Catholic worship at the ^{head-quarters of the} 36th Regt N.Y. ^{beside} ~~his head-quarters~~ ^{next} day, where large bodies of Irish soldiers came from each of the Regts ^{regiments} ~~next day~~ making a splendid congregation under the green trees. In consequence of the army being scattered so far apart, Father Paul ~~had some~~ ^{had some} difficulty in having his altar affairs carried from place to place, in the hot season of August and September and wrote a petition to Major Gen. McClellan describing his situation, ^{namely} that he was a Priest of the Holy Cross, from Notre Dame University, Ind, ^{or} was serving ~~those~~ of his religion without any government pay, that if he had a horse and vehicle to carry such necessaries as a Catholic Priest requires it would enable him to continue his services throughout the various camps ~~and~~ hospitals of his army, and wound up by saying this would give so much satisfaction to those noble hearted soldiers who had left behind them Parents Brothers, Sisters, Wives & Families, ^{possible to fight for} ~~to support~~

The flag and Constitution of their country -
 Seeing so much done for their Priest - their
 hearts would glow with gratitude and ^{thanks} ~~would~~
~~conquer or die under his standard;~~
 Before presenting it, he showed it to Major
 Garrison, Asst. Adjt. Genl. That excellent
 Catholic officer, he enlarged on it showing
~~it & showing~~ ^{that} the greater portion of the
 rank & file ^{were} ~~were~~ composed of Catholics;
~~That the Catholic soldiers were the only ones~~
~~who cared any thing for a Chaplain. That~~
 Catholic Chaplains in the army were so
 scarce that were it not for the exertions
 of the Rev. Father Gillen and a few other
 zealous missionaries, this want could not be
 supplied, and without some mode of con-
 veyance, he would not be able to exercise
 these acts of charity, so much wanted in the
 army at that time. Gen. McClellan granted
^{the request} immediately, reporting it ~~to~~ ^{to} Gen. Van Fleet
^{Major} & Master Gen. who also sent it to Capt Dana of
 the Carroll who gave Father ~~Boa~~ horse and am-
 bulance, ~~with two wheels, the only sort of~~
~~carriage in the army at that time~~ - But the
 cover overhead being rather low, it was
 uncomfortable, and having got some money
 from the boys he bought a horse covered
 Carryall (or Carriage) himself and then he could
 go independent. He also invented a light
 altar with springs ^{that could be folded up} ~~to~~ ^{about 7 lbs}
 weight which he could erect or take down in one
 minute.

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He also got a spring bed which he could double up and spread out ^{in one} ~~in one~~ ^{minute}, he also got a tent made of the strongest kind, ^{Factory} sheeting two and a half yards wide, the two end poles and roof pole he could take apart in the centre making six short pieces instead of three which he would roll up in the tent and put into his Carry all. Thus having got his necessary equipments of altar, bed, tent, satchels, bedclothes, provisions for Man and horse, he proceeded, on with excellent success, among the different camps in the vicinity of Washington on both sides of the Potomac. After getting along for some weeks among these, he proceeded up the Potomac to Dorchester, where Gen Banks with a large portion of the army was encamped, after visiting these ^{regiments} ~~regiments~~ he proceeded up to Poolville about 40 miles from Washington, where Gen. Stone's that excellent Catholic ~~General~~ was encamped with three Brigades, or twelve regiments, he was overjoyed to have Father ~~and~~ visit his command, for there was no other Catholic Chaplain from there to Washington among ^{his troops were} ~~these~~ were the 42nd Regt N.Y. Vol. (Sammy Regt) principally Irish; three miles further up was the 69th Pennsylvania Vol's, Irish Regt under Col Owen; both these he had attended in the vicinity of Wash^gton before their coming up. On Sundays he celebrated two Masses frequently from three to ten miles apart, and here on Sundays he celebrated first mass

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with the 69th Co and last mass at 10 o'clock
 with the ^{42nd} Sammam Regt, ^{which was attended by men from} ~~in the center of~~ eight
 Regts, among them was Gen. Gorman's 1st
 Minnesota Vol. On Sunday Oct 20th at Ft. Paul,
 in order to have a grand turnout visited
 all the Regts the day previous notifying them
 that the second Mass would be at the Sammam
 Col. Devin of the 15th Mass was highly pleased,
 and gave orders for the Captains of Irish Companies
 to have their men attend Divine service at
 10 A.M. at the Sammam Regt. ^{Regt quarters} But the Col
 of the 20th Mass would not let a man leave
 his camp, although many Irishmen in his
 ranks were anxious to go. "What is the object,"
 said Ft. Paul, "They will get whiskey," said the Col.
 "There is not a house between this and the Sammam
 Regt" said Ft. Paul "It will come out of the woods
 to them," said the Colonel with a sneer.

On coming from the 69th ^{Pa} ~~to~~ ^{to} the Sammam
 Regt he met with Capt. Garrity, and after
 him Capt. O'Meara with their companies
 going to the river on picket duty, ^{who fell very} ~~and were~~
 very sorry ^{that} they could not stop for mass,
 but they ^{had to} ~~must~~ obey orders —

A large number attended mass, among
 others was Gen. Stone. In the afternoon
^{the troops} had order to prepare for crossing the
 River next day at Ball's Bluff. ^{Some} ~~Some~~ ^{companies}
 of the Sammam Regt were on picket at
 the river and ~~other~~ ^{other} ~~part~~ ^{part} stopped with the
 that night, hearing confusions, and sleep.

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in a small log cabin that had been
 riddled by the ~~public~~ ^{bullets} cannon some days
 before. ^{he} celebrated mass there on Monday
 morning, (a large number ^{went to possession of Comanchoes} ~~were at~~
 and after mass he ^{resolved on} ~~proceeded~~ visiting Wash-
 ington on business, when the cannon ^{opened} began
 to pass on Balls Bluff, ^{on the other side of the river} ~~on the other side of~~
 the river. ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{troops} ~~army~~ commenced crossing in a rather
 tedious manner; they had one ^{boat} ~~scow~~ which
 they ^{row} ~~rowed~~ to an Island in the river, and
 another between the Island and the Virginia
 shore. This was a tedious operation, as
 the ~~base~~ men could not get over quick
 enough to relieve their companions. ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{land}
 could not get his horse and carriage over, but
 determined to cross the river himself after
 attending to his friends. Before crossing each
 company of the ^{company} ~~company~~ ^{received} ~~received~~ absolute
~~tion~~, and benediction from Father Paul,
~~afterwards~~ ^{the} ~~69th~~ ^{company} ~~from~~ ^{received} ~~from~~
 were overjoyed to see Father P. waiting for
 them; each company knelt down on a tow-
~~path~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{canoe} ~~to~~ ^{receive} ~~his~~ ^{absolution}
 and benediction, ^{having} ~~got~~ ^{attended to, the spiritual} ~~these~~
^{ready to be got} ~~at~~, ^{left} ~~and~~ ^{left} ~~having~~ a man detailed to take charge
 of his horse and ^{wagon} ~~carriage~~, ^{and getting} ~~he~~ ^{his} ~~oil~~ ^{stock}
 ritual, and ~~stole~~ ^{he} ~~determined~~ ^{determined} crossing
 to the other side, where the sound of artillery
 and musketry were ^{drilling into a grand chorus} ~~most~~ ~~formidable~~, and
 as he was advancing to the scow ferry boat
 an officer called him to stop, saying the

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battle is over and we are ^{beaten} late, but don't
 tell that to the boys, also that the boat
^{was} sunk on the other side of the island, and
 no one ^{could} cross; There is the lifeless body
 of Col Baker coming over ^{in a canoe, pulled by a detachment} - All returned to
 their camp. ~~Genl. carrying three wounded~~
~~over to the Hamann's boat.~~ Had ~~Genl.~~ gone
 over the river he would ^{most likely} be either shot
 or a prisoner, or ^{have to} swim the river. Next day
 he had business enough on hand, attending
 to the wounded and dying, no other Catholic
 chaplain ^{being} within forty miles of him.
 At the battle of Ball's Bluff, Capt O'Mara
 that noble soldier, with his company fought
 valiantly against a powerful force of the ^{enemy} rebels,
 until there was no hope of succeeding; he then
 withdrew down the steep bluff to the river
 edge, and the boat being sunk, got a skiff
 and came to the island in order to get the other
^{boats} hauled across the island. but could
 not get this effected, and the noble O'Mara
^(who) would not desert his company in this crisis,
 went back to them; when all were taken
 prisoners, and marched off for Richmond, where
 he shared the hospitality of Libby prison,
 with his esteemed friend Gen Corcoran,
 who had been there some months before
 him. And by the way, the same Capt
 O'Mara had a green flag with stars, stripes
 and shamrocks blessed by Gen Paul, the
 Sunday before, which he kept close buttoned

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under his clothes, safe from Rebel view during his years imprisonment and showed it to St Paul safe after his liberation from prison — This same noble ^{officer} ~~officer~~ ~~officer~~ (it may be recollected) by Gen Crocorans recommendation became Col of ~~Regt~~ ~~Regt~~ ~~Regt~~ ^{an Irish Regt} in Chicago 92nd Ill. (I think) and fell mortally wounded fighting at the head of ~~his~~ ~~command~~ ~~on~~ Look-out Mountain in Tennessee Col Devine of the 15th Mass (who sent his Irish soldiers to mass) ~~the~~ ~~not~~ ~~he~~ ~~swam~~ ~~the~~ ~~river~~ ~~with~~ ~~his~~ ~~horse~~, and the Col of the 20th Mass (who would not let his men to mass) was taken prisoner and marched off to Libby prison.

After the battle of Ball's Bluff the Rev Father Martin of Philadelphia ^{became} ~~came~~ ~~a~~ ~~chaplain~~ to the 69th Ia and continued with them until after the battle of Fair Oaks ^{the} ~~in~~ June following he ~~could~~ ~~attend~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~soldiers~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~vicinity~~ ~~of~~ ~~Poolville~~, and Father Paul came to Washington, where he met his old friend Col McLeod Murphy and 15th th ~~th~~ ~~N. Y.~~ just then joined to the engineer corps, and encamped beside the Navy yard bridge on the east side of the Potomac. Here the ~~good~~ ~~col~~ ~~got~~ ~~St~~ ~~Paul~~ to make his headquarters with his Regt giving him a tent ^{and} ~~fed~~ ~~his~~ ~~horse~~, and ~~detached~~ ~~a~~ ~~private~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Regt~~ ~~to~~ ~~attend~~ ~~to~~ ~~him~~.

He made the 15th N. Y. his home during the winter. Celebrated two masses every Sunday the first at the 15th N. Y. and the second at

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either Couches ^{see} Brig at Brightwoods or
Graham's Brig beyond the Soldiers Home,
both these ^{were stationed} about seven miles from the 15th
N. Y. which in deep muddy roads made it
very fatiguing, also ^{he} attended the various hospitals
on the Washington side of the Potomac.

There ~~was~~ ^{were} a few days dry weather in December.
Father ~~had~~ ^{took} ~~crossed~~ ^{crossed} the river to see some of his old
friends; after visiting a number of them, he
learned that the Bucktails and the Pennsylvania
reserves of 15 Regts under General McCaul
had no Catholic Chaplain among them so
he started off, and to get to these ^{he} went some
miles beyond the Union lines along the Lees-
burg turnpike, and in ~~getting near the place~~ ^{getting near} he
was stopped by the Union pickets, as coming
from rebeldom, but he presented his pass
and said he wanted to visit the ^{regiments} Regts there,
"There is no Regts here" said the guard, "Yes there
is," said ~~whether~~ ^{the} "Bucktails" you are right
said the officer of the day let him go down
to the ~~regiment~~ ^{regiment} "This Regt was from the
mountainous regions of Pennsylvania and each
man had a ~~Bucktail~~ ^{Bucktail} his cap surmounted
with a Bucks tail. They were one of the
noblist & best fighting in the army," ^{were} Commanded
by Col Kane.
After visiting a number of ^{regiments} Regts he fixed
his station in Col Kane & Donough's tent of the 2^d
Penn reserves, for ^{at the grand} Bucktails and all the ^{regiments} Regts
convenient, and never had he a greater

crowd ~~numbers~~ of ~~Officers~~ Col's, Majors, Capt's, Scouts &
 to say nothing of the privates at confession.
~~As it is only sometimes that Officers attend the~~
~~confessional.~~ Next morning he had mass
 very early and a large number of Communion ^{ant's}
 but immediately the drums were beat to arms
 and many of them had scarce time to have any
 breakfast when they were off for the battle of
 Drainsville, Father P^r was off immediately, but
 the Bucktails & Pa-reserves swept all before them,
 taking a number of prisoners, horses wagons,
 artillery &c. On returning after the battle
 Father P^r came on briskly ahead of the expedition,
 and meeting with Gen Reynolds and his staff
 with some Cavalry, who stopped him, taking
 him for a rebel, ^{he} being some miles beyond
 the Union lines; but seeing his pass and learning
 he had been with the boys in the field, ^{"and was a guest}
 asked if he was not afraid of being captured,
 being in the rebel lines. "Not the least said P^r
 P^r have strong force of at my back of Cavalry
 Artillery and Infantry" "Go ahead," said the
 General: - adding after his departure to his
 staff, "That is one of the d-d-d-d old fearless
 venturesome old clergyman I ever saw."
 He ^{next} proceeded ~~on~~ to Washington and intended visit-
 -ing ^{the Corp} ~~them~~ again when the roads would be
 hardened by frost, but there was no day
 during that winter that the mud was hard
 enough to carry a horse or wagon.
 On Christmas day he celebrated his first

Mass at 7 o'clock with the 15th N. Y., at 9
 on Meridian hill with 4 Brigades, & at half
 past ten with the Pennsylvania artillery in
 a beautiful camp between Couch & Graham's
 Brigades, near the Soldiers Home, ^{five} miles from
 Washington. At the last mass he ~~gathered~~^{hunted} up
 some who could sing, and had a high mass
 for the last on Christmas day, probably the
 only high mass in the army of the Potomac
 on that day. ~~He had a most sumptuous~~
 dinner with the companions of Capt. Flood &
 Brady. He spent the evening with
 Captains Flood and Brady, who
 entertained the others to a most
 elegant dinner.

~~We~~ The writer of this work failed
 in collecting the necessary materials and
 details to write an elaborate or extended
 sketch of Father Gillen, who served faithfully
 and zealously unto the close of the war.

Dr. John Dwyer, who was Brigade
 Surgeon to the Wisconsin Legion has furnished
 the following short sketch of the Chaplains
 of the Brigade.

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How salutary this example was was proved by the sequence of one of the Staff an intelligent and leading American Protestant afterwards being received into the Catholic Church and giving as his principal reason for thinking of this step that the earnestness and unity of the little Catholic family of de Haro Quarters as well as the good conduct of the whole command made such a great impression on him -

Father Dilla was a young impulsive able priest and a ready practical preacher ~~to say the least~~ his sermons were extempore and fitted to his ^{audience} and the occasion and the chapel tent was always full on Sundays -

Father Dilla was always ready to take part in a skirmish or a ride thro' the enemy's country and there is a story (which I believe) that on one occasion while attached to Gen. Meagher's brigade that all the officers of a certain regiment being honor du combat while in action at

The priest was seen to rally the men and lead them until a more ~~capable~~ ^{fitting} officer relieved him and then the priest saw for the first time that he had outstepped the line of his proper duty.

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Father Dilla was a great ^{favorite} with the Legion but exposure while in the service superinduced a disease of his lungs which compelled ~~him~~ me to advise him to resign in August 1864. Since then he travelled seeking for health which did not come as he died ^{in 1868} ~~last year~~ I think at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

Father Paul Gillen was chaplain of the 170th and when Father Dilla left the Legion Father Paul had all the duties devolving on himself. His duties he religious and faithfully performed - early and late at his post I don't remember that he ever had one day leave of absence -

My first interview with Father Paul was at Newport News in December 1863 - a tall thin spare old gentleman of clerical appearance asked me the way to Head Quarters and introduced himself as Father Gillen of the 170th. While Father Dilla always rode on horseback, Father Paul Gillen always rode in his carriage - and such a carriage, and such a horse, as he had. Dr. Quette's Rosinante was a Dexter in comparison but Father Paul loved this horse nevertheless for by some

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peculiar construction Father Paul's horse and carriage was a combination of a Plimpton bedstead a Cathedral and a ~~restaurant~~ ^{restaurant} ~~course~~ all combined. — in the twinkling of an eye his establishment was converted into a chapel and he was never at a loss for covering or place for his altar wherever he travelled if ~~to~~ a large barn or building was to be had well and good or if the large chapel tent was up with the Quartermaster's stores he used it but if not no matter whether we were on a march or a scout the Holy sacrifice of the mass was always offered every morning at Father Paul's establishment.

At Suffolk Father Paul was accommodated with a room at Hospital near 2nd and to my own knowledge that room was morning noon and night besieged with sickies from every regiment in the Division who eagerly took advantage of the opportunities afforded them by the untiring chaplain of the Irish Legion.

Father Paul came to us from Col McCleod Murphy's regiment, New York Engineers the 15th (I think) and so was already an old campaigner and looked upon as an authority in military as

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at

well as religious matters and I am indebted to him for good advice ^{on at least} on ~~an~~ occasion. ~~The~~

The Legion being engaged at the Battle of Deserted House near Suffolk which commenced while it was yet quite dark on the morning of January 30, 1863 and the wounded being brought to the rear the surgeons had to ~~use~~ operate by candle light our duties being of a serious nature we devoted our entire attention to ~~the~~ wounded and did not notice either the approach of day light nor the fact that by the change of troops our position was becoming dangerous until Father Paul coming up gently advised us to go further to the rear and reminded us that the candles were not needed now. Father Paul had just walked over the whole field exposed to a cross fire and had given conditional absolution to an immense mass of kneeling soldiers who were counselled by him to thus act on the battle field.

Father Paul served faithfully and laboriously all thro' the war and was mustered out with his regiment. I have known many instances of his kindness of heart

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and he was the medium of correspondence with the families of many of the soldiers cheering them with his advice and friendship

the well known Father Mooney of St. Paddy's was also Chaplain of the Sixty months in the early Bull Run days and on one occasion at Suffolk paid a visit to his old regiment and offered up mass and preached a stirring sermon to us the large chapel tent was full to overflowing for Father Mooney was familiar as a household word with all

I only happen to meet the Sisters of Charity on one occasion while with the regiments and that was when Lieut Tracy of the Staff was compelled thro sickness to accept their kindness at the Sisters Hospital at Norfolk and I well remember the air of holiness and quietness which abounded there and which made the hospital seem to me at the time the best ideal of what a hospital should be of a sick man's paradise and the self sacrificing sisters ministering angels.

Yours truly
John Droyer
late Brigade Surgeon Corcoran's Regt 1st Regt