

Chapter III.

Father Tracy commissioned as Chaplain ⁱⁿ
the regulars — The pious penitent — Enjoying
Morgan's breakfast — A large family —
The battle of Chattermanga — His services
under Sherman and Thomas — His resignation
— He returns to his old Mission at Huntville.

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been asked to take

~~take~~ an oath and if compelled to take ^{one} an oath at all it should be to the United States at large, As he acted as Chaplain to the 4th U. S. Cavalry previous to the war General ~~after asking his permission they~~ ^{then} elected him, with ~~under the following conditions~~ ^{that regiment} They elected him, although ~~numerous~~ ^{thought} other regiments would have done so if they ~~believed~~ ^{thought} he would have accepted, In accepting the Chaplaincy of the 4th U. S. Cavalry, ^{therefore} he accepted that the Chaplaincy of the Fourth Regt. U. S. Cavalry with the understanding that there would be no objections to him in attending at the Headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland and of visiting those of his persuasion in the regular Brigade, or other commands whenever the same may come within his reach, On the morning of the 28th April Father Gracy received a note from General ~~Howe~~ Perssonerans telling him to bring his papers from the 4th U. S. Cavalry with him, ~~that evening~~ ^{that evening} to Headquarters and that he would see about them, ~~After leaving the Army the General~~ ^{Arriving at the} ~~the~~ Shortly after arriving at Headquarters the following order was issued which again put the zealous priest on detached service as before.

I Headquarters Dep. Cumberland Mountains

May 2nd 1863

Extract,

Special Orders }
No 75

Arthur J. G. Gracy Chaplain 4th W. S. Cavalry,
is hereby detached for duty in General hospitals
in the city of Nashville will report without delay
to Surgeon A. H. Thurston Asst. Med. Dir.

By Command Major General Mosier

Col. Goddard Lt. Col. A. A. Zent,

After remaining a month in Nashville he was
again called to the front, shortly after returning
to the Camp Fathers Gracy and Christy gave a
mission to the men of the Brigade, One night Father
Christy preached on the necessity of Holy Communion.
The sermon was ^{so} very effective, ^{that} the next morning
a young man, a non Catholic, on seeing the
large number of his comrades going to Com-
munion, thought that he should go too. The orderly
sergeant of his company, a good and pious man, was
terribly shocked at the ^{preference} affair. He called the soldier
to an account. The poor fellow wept like a child.
The ^{sergeant} communicated the facts to the priest who
at once sent for the young man and asked him
about the affair. The Soldier said "Father I want
to save my soul as well as the other men" "Yes, but
you are not a Catholic" "Well father I believe all
you and that other priest ^{have} said, just the same as
any other man in the ^{regiment} ~~regiment~~ (The young man was
~~keeping all the time~~) "Be not troubled my young
friend" said the priest, "God has given us his own
wise ways of doing things often times" Father Gracy

The good father then
 gave the young man a catechism, ~~as~~ every
 word of which he committed to memory in a few
 days. He was baptized the following Sunday. Gen
 Stanley became his godfather. He belonged to the
 16th W. S. I. and was either killed, wounded
 or taken prisoner and died a short time
 afterwards. About the same time ~~as~~ poor
 unfortunate artillery man who deserted some
 time previously and joined the rank of the enemy
 was captured. The enemy's uniform was found
 upon him. ~~He had~~ ^{he had} the enemy's uniform upon
 him. He was tried and sentenced to death.
 The Provost Marshal, Capt Williams, of the 19th W. S. I.,
 asked him if he wished to see any minister. The
 condemned man replied with an oath that he
 did not. After a few kind words from the Captain
 he however said "If I were to have any preacher
 it should be that old man Greys for
 I think he is the damndest sensible one amongst
 them". The Provost Marshall at once sent the
 prisoners ^{word} ~~with~~ to the Headquarters to the General,
 who ~~was~~ ^{without delay} ~~sent to~~ ^{sent to}
 Father Grey ^{to him} ~~forward without delay~~. Arriving
 at General Mosier's Headquarters the good priest
 was conducted straightway to the condemned.
 The latter ^{was} at first indifferent and denied having
 sent for the priest. "He then said I don't know
 you, I never saw you, but I have heard of
 you"

The J. Father ^{early} then had the bracelets taken off
 & the Provost Marshal had him brought into his
 own tent, in order that he and the father might
 converse freely. In a short time he wept so that
 the guard ~~were~~ ^{surprised} looked to see what was the matter.
 The ~~good~~ priest spent the greater portion of the evening
 with the condemned ^{man}. In the next morning bap-
 tized him, and accompanied him to the place of
 execution. There were two others about to be executed at the
 same time, the ^{of whom} ~~one~~ was blaspheming in the most horrid
 manner ~~and~~ and the other was apparently indifferent
 but the penitent as he moved forward recited ^{after the priest} the
 Litany of the Holy name. When he arrived at the place
 where his coffin lay he asked pardon of all around
 him and asked all to pray for him as he said he
 should then meet a just God whom he had often
 outraged. He then knelt by his coffin and the blind
~~was~~ ^{was} adjusted over his eyes. The good father spoke a
 few last words of consolation in his ears and
 withdrew. The signal was then given. The volley
 fired and all was over. A few days after
 the army moved from Springfield to Shelby-
 ville, where the General expected to encounter
 Bragg. The latter however fell back across
 the Tennessee river and was closely pursued
 by Sherman's cavalry who arrived about the
 at Shelbyville about the morning.
 After three days heavy march the army ^{halted} ~~rested~~

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one morning in order to ~~prevent themselves &~~
~~their horses~~, In one of the ~~bars~~ take breakfast
~~themselves~~ and ^{feed} ~~and recruit~~ their horses
 In one of the mounted Infantry regiments was a
~~Irish~~ ^{Irish} captain, He was rather a jocular
 and generous fellow and was familiarly called
 throughout the regiment the "Bloody Tip," ^{but} ~~was~~ fond
 of a row ^{particularly} with an orangeman or a ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~nothing~~
 and was familiarly called throughout the regiment
 the "Bloody Tip." When ready for breakfast he
 seated himself ^{on a log} and began eating his "hard tack
 and pork" ~~and some belly~~, He was not long in enjoying him-
 self when a volley of solid shot was fired by the enemy
 and passed over his head, a few minutes elapsed
 when another ^{volley} was fired, This was more of war being
 disastrous, as one of the balls struck the log on which
 the Captain sat and drove it away with such
 velocity that it swept along with it the skirts off
 his coat and the seat out of his pants. He instan-
 tly clasped to his feet made the sign of the ^{cross} with his right
 left hand and ^{exclaimed} "In the name of the Blessed
 Virgin Mary wasn't it the Lord, Lord and may the
 devil be far from us father," ^{but} "Go mount" was sounded
 and on that day the brave 14th Irish Dragoon did
^{their} ~~the~~ work magnificently. They took more prisoners than
 they ^{had} ~~did~~ men, During the day the father was at one time
 riding to the rear, He met the captain, "Father" said
 he, "Three of your friends of ours are likely to get it hot

to-day," "If ~~he~~ said the priest "you call them friends they
 have a poor way of showing their friendship by shooting
 the hind out of a fellows breeches and make him look like
 showing the white feather," "Ah father also you know me
 too well for that, and you too must know that
 with Gods assistance ^{I'm} you are not afraid of the devil," "Seeing
 that the Capt did not like his bravery questioned the
 priest apologized and left, Next day During the day
 the army pressed on and pursued the Bragg to Winches-
 ter; Morgan the Guerilla & Dick McLeinn joined Bragg
 on his retreat, After passing on reaching Winchester the
 army pursued the retreating Confederates to W^m-
 Innville, and early one morning captured their
 rear guard just at ^{the} limits of the town. It ~~here~~
~~was~~ Among others Dick McLeinn was here taken,
 As usual Morgan got away, In the house where he made
 his headquarters was found a magnificent breakfast
 placed on ^{the} table, The Genl entered so quickly and
 so unexpected that the ~~Confederates~~ ^{Confederates} had not time to resist
 an attack or to ~~despoil the table of its delicious and~~ ^{enjoy the delicious regiments laid out for them}
~~valuable gettensaise appurages,~~ The Caterer aft
 The general was not slow in finding discovering
 Morgans breakfast, which he secured for the Chief
 and staff, After a few minutes they all entered
 followed by Father Gracy, As the good father
 entered the officers saluted them in various ways
 such as "Father are you tired," "Good morning
 father" &c, All the ladies of the house were present

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and looked wondrously at the Father of so large a family of sons. The old lady of the house seated herself close by the General & exclaimed "God be blessed and are all your men sons of that man. Is he indeed your father?" "Indeed" said the General "he is my father and these are his children" "Glorious to God" she exclaimed "I would like to see his wife" "Oh then" said the General "you can come see her" "Well then she is along" By this time the eyes of all the ladies were turned upon Father ^{Ray} who could not any longer withstand from bursting out into a fit of laughter, which he smothered by another fit of coughing. He then left the room for a few minutes but the General & staff enjoyed the fun until breakfast was announced. When all were seated to regale themselves off that ~~luxuriant~~ ^{delicious} repast abandoned by the rebel chiefs, the old lady deputized herself as a committee of one to see to Father ^{Ray} and his wants & taste. As soon as a vacancy occurred she seated herself alongside him and began a conversation with him, as follows. "Now son the General says your wife is along with you?" "Oh yes Madam I never travel without her" "The Lord be praised some of ^{your} sons look as old as yourself" "Oh that is no uncommon thing as to it is nothing uncommon to see a son as old looking as his father, or a daughter as old looking as her mother." "Oh dear me that is true there is my Nelly, my second eldest how old she looks" then turning on the word to the priest and looking at him full in staring him in the face. "Said, 'Now I want

you to bring your wife, tell I see her". "Oh yes, oh yes"
exclaimed the daughters bring her up to see us." He would like
to see her very much." The priest having some business
^{to attend to at} ~~I~~ ^{started off} headquarters left the house and returned in a few
hours. He was then asked why he did not bring his wife
along with him, to which he responded that he was
a Catholic priest, and that his wife was the church
spiritually ~~you see said he~~ ^{here} ~~grace~~ ^{I hope you see,} as
well as those with whom you conversed this morning
are my ~~sons~~ ^{children} (~~promoting to the field in front over which~~
~~A column was moving~~) The countenance of the old lady
fell, the daughters rose and left the room. In greatly
disappointed, The priest and the old lady ~~left~~ re-
mained some time in conversation with which she
expressed herself as delighted and invited ~~that~~ ^{the}
~~visit~~ ^{him} if ever he came the way again to be sure and call
to see her. She then hinted ~~that for him to leave there soon.~~
~~at home,~~ if his son accompanied him, that he would
request them to have their shooting visit home." &
~~swinging the correspondence~~ ^{was} ~~there,~~ ^{The} ~~lucky~~ ^{Gather} ~~shunning his~~ ^{birds} ~~ears,~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{soldiers}
lads go and bye fall are on their saddles in an
instant and are off. After the ~~entirely~~ ^{energy} ~~retreated~~ &
the general ^{was} ordered with his command to Alabama.
On the way ^{Father Tracy} saved several ~~buildings~~ ^{manna} buildings
destined for destruction and also frustrated the arrests
of ^{numbers of} ~~several~~ ^{persons} whose ^{cruelty} ~~had~~ ^{caused}
she suspected. On entering the city of Huntsville the
regrets who knew Father Tracy during his residence there

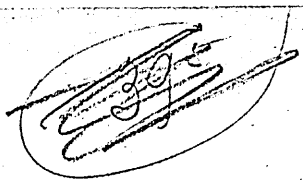
ran along the streets, exclaiming "Bress
 praisé" "Dan is Massa Gracy," and they run off the
 side walks to shake hands with him, ^{while making hands} they would
~~then~~ say "Massa Gracy is my friend", "Massa gave
 me books", "Massa, Father tell me what's right", "Bress
 God loves him", "Massa Father you stay now teach
 Inger again", "Gous our friend" The priest had to leave the
 line of ~~exposed~~ ^{at the head of which he goes with the general} to speak to the negroes. The officers as
 they passed laughed heartily and while numbers of them
 exclaimed "Father is a prisoner in the hands of his ^{friends} ~~enemies~~
 others would say "Save me from my ^{friends} ~~enemies~~" It was
 his kindness previous to that these negroes previous to the war
 that caused this attachment. The Sunday previous
 to leaving the city of Antwerp an order was issued
 to allow all negroes inside the pocket lines, but now
 to go outside, the consequence was the negroes flocked
 into the city in thousands dressed up in their best
 attire. One of them who was a preacher, finding that he
 could not return approached Father ^{Gracy} with tears in his eyes
 beseeching him to ~~interfere~~ ^{interfere} to get him per-
 mitted to return and ~~live~~ ^{live} with his wife and children
 "You know Massa Gracy" said he "I like you and
 believe all you tell me, you know I go to your Church when
 you preach for me negroes, and when you away I preach
 you tell us Bless God Massa I dis Massa I loves be
for but I loves my babies Massa, habla de gent bring
my wife and children", Father ^{Gracy} ~~interfere~~ ^{interfere} in his behalf
 and an escort was furnished him to go to the go to go fine rules

in the country for his wife and children. The next route of the army was for Winchester, Conn. In morning Salem Father observed as he passed by a house some ladies screaming at the windows, on inquiring the cause he learned that some soldiers were inside and were acting badly. The good priest remonstrated with ^{the soldiers} ~~them~~ and endeavored to remove ^{them}. His entreaties were of no avail, they would not stir. He then reported them had them arrested. In a few hours they were tried by court martial, ~~one of them~~ ^{they were} ~~was~~ ^{disarmed}, stripped of their uniform, one half of their ~~head~~ ^{heads} and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~other~~ ^{other} half of ~~head~~ ^{heads} were ~~shorn~~ ^{shorn}, and they ~~drummed out of service~~, Father Cr. was somewhat ^{halted for a week}. The army ~~passed on the Commerce river in front of Chattanooga~~. Here during this time the priest made his usual rounds through the camp. Near Bridgeport, Alabama a rather amusing scene took place between an old Irish woman and the priest. The latter had some occasion to call at her residence, on entering it he said "God save all here" "And you too" responded the old woman, ^{after the Salvation} ~~then~~ Father Cr. passed around ^{and shook} ~~shaking~~ hands with the children saying to each as he did "God bless you" "Araah then maister you are an Irishman and a Centrotie!" said the old lady. By this time a soldier had said to one of the boys "that's a priest", The young lad instantly stole over to the old lady and said in a loud whisper ^{Grammy} "that's a priest" "Araah Irisha ^{boys} ~~boys~~ ^{from} ~~from~~ ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{he} coming none ^{of your tricks} ~~of your tricks~~ on me" exclaimed Grammy striking the boy on the shoulder, "Grandmother" said Father Cracy speaking

up "I'll say to you the truth I am a priest"
 Ah then you may quit your ~~hithering~~ and leave off
 your blaspheming, shure no one would take you for
 a priest with that long back-goats beard on you."
 (And then making the sign of the cross she continued) "A
 priest, Ah, God stand between us and harm ^{you} ~~him~~
 the purity priest!" Her son who met the priest the day
 previous ~~at the day previous~~ at the general's ~~the~~ quarters
 now entered and addressing the old woman in Irish ~~put~~ ^{told her that he really was a priest}
 This put an end to her doubts, she instantly fell on her knees
 clasped her hands and raised her eyes to heaven in
 the most fervent prayer, then turned to the priest and
 asked ~~in the priest's~~ ^{him} in the most suppliant tone be
 forgiven ^{her} for what she had done and said. During
 that day Father ~~Ray~~ baptized two ~~of~~ ^{had} of her grandchildren
 & next morning said mass and many ^{of the} residents
 to Holy Communion. Early next morning the army
 moved across the Meacon Mountain and rested
^{the following} that night at Centon a small town in Hills valley
 Ga. About the middle of the night, the most Rev Archbishop
 Purcell of Cincinnati and Father Jaquette arrived.
 At 3 o'clock next morning word was received that
 Bragg had fled to Pigeon ^{in Georgia} ~~hollows~~ and orders were
~~not given~~ ^{he} instantly given to move without delay for
 Chattanooga. ~~Remains in Chattanooga~~ the general
~~expressed~~ ^{he} ~~the morning~~ ^{he} ~~after~~ ^{expressed} ~~in~~ ^{to} ~~Chattanooga~~
 His Grace said mass and the general went to
 Holy Communion. His Grace expressed a desire

to say mass when in Chattanooga. Father Greay
 accompanied by Col. Dacatt and Capt. Kelly of the
~~and~~ General's staff ^{went in} advanced at ~~the~~ ^{the} head of the column
^{in order} to have the church in readiness. On arriving at the sacred
 edifice they were horrified to learn that it had been en-
 tered the night before by soldiers of General ~~Wagners~~ ^{Wagner's}
 Brigade and rifled everything. The tabernacle was broken
 open, the altar stone smashed to pieces, the stations of the
 cross and the crucifixes broken and strewn around,
 the vestments torn to ~~pieces~~ ^{pieces} and the linens altar ~~linen~~ ^{was} carried
 off. Father G. at once started an animated search
 for the ~~present~~ ^{former} pastor. The archbishop and General
 arrived and witnessed the spoliation. Father G. then
~~initiated~~ ^{initiated} an ^{active} ~~animated~~ search for the pastor. The Rev.
 Father Nealis D. S. J. After ^{some time} ~~much ado~~ he was found on
 a sick bed suffering from a dangerous wound
 received on at the hands of two miscreants while in
 the discharge of his duty amongst his countrymen in
 the coal mines on the Nacoon Mountains. Passing
 between two houses about a mile apart he was met
 by ~~the~~ two ruffians who called themselves soldiers of
 the confederate army. They ^{ordered} ~~called~~ him to a halt and
 inquired ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~him~~ ^{him} who he was, what he was & what was his
 business there? In response he inquired of them what
 who they were who thus demanded such him to
 give such an account of himself. "I said he by
 authority you are here I will show you my pass
^{Christianity} ~~my~~ ^{name} is Nealis, I am a catholic priest —"

Before he could utter another word one of the ~~villains~~ ^{men} seized him by the collar of the coat, ^{and} drew ^{at} a long corn cutting knife raised it over his head and swore he would cut his ~~throat~~ ^{head off} ~~guts out~~, Father Nealis tore away from his grasp and was about to defend himself when the other ~~suffian~~ raised his gun and shot him through the ~~bowels~~ ^{side}. At Father Nealis' house the vestments were had, and the Archbishop celebrated Mass with Father Tracy assisting. After mass a guard was placed ~~on the church in Ambush near the church~~ ^{in order to discover who the ~~separatists~~ ^{separatists} were, if possible who the Sacralists were,} while they were watching it was entered by seven persons, word was sent to Father Tracy who brings a squad with a squad of men proceeded to the church, ~~when the~~ ^{entered the church} ~~interior~~ On entering they found the seven ^{men} ~~suffians~~ again about to ~~commence~~ ^{renew} their work of ~~epidation~~ ^{epidation}. They were arrested and brought before the General. He was about to ~~prosecute them~~ ^{have them court-martialed}, but Father Nealis ~~went~~ ^{found} on his knees begged them off. Two of them were to be Irish Protestants. The evening of the day following this occurrence the army moved from Chattanooga south ten miles along the Pigeon Mountains, at about ten miles from Chattanooga off the army ~~force~~ ^{was} joined by General Crittendon of Kentucky commanding the Twenty first corps, General Bragg was ^{about this time} reinforced with troops from Virginia and Alabama and drew up for in line of battle at Chickamauga. ~~Braxtons~~ ^{Braxtons} advanced ~~and~~ ^{was} attack to the attack, ~~and~~ ^{was} the battle ^{was} bloody and fierce, During it Father



The battle field of Chikamaunga, was in every sense, a desperate and bloody one. Father Tracy and the other Chaplains found their hands full, in attending to the spiritual wants of the Catholics; as well as in trying to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded. A routed army - a lost battle field - are fearful sights to contemplate. The one presents to you a disorganized mass of men, ~~without order~~, without hope, vainly seeking safety in flight: the other the fearful spectacle of dead and dying men, in the former ~~the latter~~ shattered and torn out of all human semblance; the latter gasping in all the pangs of terrible torture.

Such were the scenes that the Chaplains and doctors, who remained on the field, after the retreat of the army witnessed.

Here, our Chaplain was near losing his life. While preparing a dying man, he remained behind the troops, until the ^{enemy} ~~whole~~ advance had just come up to him. Having heard the man's confession he rose to go when a sharp shot took ^{away} ~~away~~ ^{at} him and sent the bullet through the breast of ~~go~~ his coat. The priest hurriedly mounted his horse, but as he did so, a perfect shower of bullets rained around ^{him}, but he miraculously escaped with a few slight scratches on his horse.

The services of the Chaplains were sorely

tried in attending the hospitals in and around
Chatham and in offering up the Holy Sacrifice
for the soldiers.

With the opening of Sherman's remarkable
Campaign Father Tracy attached himself to his
old command, the Fourth Regular Cavalry, but
soon afterwards ~~was transferred~~ at the request of
General Stanley, he joined his ~~head~~ ^{head} quarters as
Chaplain.

General Stanley, as stated elsewhere, became
a convert and was ever after remarkable
for his truly Christian piety and zeal
~~as a man~~ ^{as a man} Catholic. Though Father
Tracy enjoyed a kind of loving commission
in the army, passing from command to command,
attending to the spiritual duties of the soldiers,
he had his head quarters with General
Stanley. He also spent much of his time
with his old command, the 4th Regular
Cavalry. The further history of Father
Tracy with the army is the history of
Sherman's brilliant ~~campaign~~ ^{campaign} march
and campaign against Atlanta.

During the hundred days campaign
the good Father was incessant in his
ministrations to the sick, the dying and
the wounded, and was as well known,
and in a manner as much respected by
the troops as "Old Sherman" himself.

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After the capture of Atlanta, where we
lay encamped then preparing for
our march to the sea, Father Tracy was
devoted in his attendance and duties
and frequently said Mass both for the
benefit of the troops and citizens.
When we had struck out for Nashville, with
Thomas in pursuit, Father Tracy accompanied
the Thomas' army with his headquarters with
General Stanley. He rendered invaluable
services to the wounded along the line
of march, particularly after the battles
of Franklin and Nashville.

At Franklin he was beside General
Stanley when a bullet tore across the
latter's neck, just touching the carotid artery.
The general put up his hand and felt
that the artery of his scapular was cut by
the bullet; in his faith and vigorous belief,
he turned to the priest and said.

"Father, this ^{bleeding} ~~vicious~~ scapular through God's
mercy, has saved my life?"

After the surrender of the Confederate
armies, though Father Tracy held a
commission as Chaplain in the Regular
Army, he at once resigned, and
returned to his mission at Huntsville,
Alabama, where he set to work

to repair the injury done to his
Church and to reestablish his mission
He has been so far successful, and
before long, the Catholics of Kuntze,
trusting to the labors and exertions of
their energetic pastor, will possess
a Church worthy of their zeal and
piety and of the service of the
Most High.

It