

Chapter IX.Rev. Thomas SullyChaplain, 9th Mass Vet Vol.

A new picture of Catholic persecution
in Massachusetts - Grand attitude of
the Catholic Church and people of Massachusetts -
General Cass and the 9th Mass - Father Sully
volunteers to be their Chaplain - Father Sully's
birth, education and ordination - At
Salem - former Andrews Inst. - The
Chapel tent

We are impelled by the peculiar
nature of our work to refer to a period
antecedent to the late ^{war} ~~period~~, in order that we
may present the Irish Priest and the Irish Sol-
dier, not in his strongest but in ~~his~~ ^{his} poorest
and highest light. This necessity is peculiarly ap-
parent from the fact that this chapter on ^{"Catholic} ~~the~~
Chaplains in the Army" will be devoted exclu-
sively to the seceded ~~old~~ Commonwealth of
Massachusetts where ^{once} was made a most vigorous
attempt to ostracize the foreign element, and espe-
cially the Irish ^{and Catholic} portion of it in the well ac-
knowledged years of 1852 and '53. Indeed, did we
wish, we might go back a few decades and
present scenes of such riot, wrong and horror
as might well embitter the Catholic heart
against a State which has since been so well
and bravely defended by the Irish and Catholic
citizens of the old Commonwealth.

We might picture in these pages the lurid glare
of burning convents - the awful desecration of
religious houses; of holy nuns flying from
sanctuaries sacred no longer in the eyes of a
bigoted and infamous mob; of churches as-
sailed; Priests hunted - hunted as fiercely
as ever they were by the wilds of Cromwell's

Tolcherry - ay, we might present pen pictures
 so degrading and so infamous as would fill
 the most callous human heart with horror
~~and~~ ^{and} make the very wretches, who
~~occasionally~~ ^{occasionally} ~~committed~~ them, were they living today,
 terrified to look back upon their frightful
 deeds. The demoralized Convents of Massachu-
 setts however, are part and parcel of the history
 of the Commonwealth; and the bloody crimes
 of those ^{benighted} days have left upon the once bright
 brow of Massachusetts a mark as indelible as
 that which disfigure the forehead of Cain!

But thank heaven, the times have changed! -
 No picture such scenes is now for us - to ^{more} ~~fill~~
 the pages of our ~~peaceful~~ book with the unholy
 deeds of lowly minded bigots is not the purpose
 of our pen; we simply design to write of the
 later times when the warm and kindly hearts
 of Irish Catholics ^{were} ~~now~~ filled with indignation
 at the narrow minded conduct of a State Legislature
 which authorized the mission of a thief - whose
 name is infamous - to reach the Catholic fe-
 male seminaries for mysterious traps and
 subterranean passages, where it was
 supposed that immured unwilling religions
 implacable enemies of our truly religion.

The ~~embers~~ ^{embers} of the know-nothing
 fire were still aglow with life; when the

mutterings of war came down to Massa-
 chusetts from the South. The Tribal Claims
 of the nations began to fasten the spears &
 Swords for the coming combat - the rattle
 of arms in the arsenals, and the rumbling
 of artillery upon the streets - proclaimed that
 war had allied himself with death; and
 that soon the private and public buildings
 of the ~~land~~ ^{land} would be dropped in mourning.
 The great digger sharpened his tools and increased
 his force; and, in a sudden moment, the
 black thunder of war fell upon the nation,
 and the nation looked to her sons for pro-
 tection!

What was the attitude of the plundered
 and insulted Catholic Church of Massa-
 chusetts in that hour of national peril?

Where stood the fishermen of the state at that
 solemn moment of the Union's life? Though they
 still smarted with the pain wounds inflicted
 upon them by the rigors of New England, they were
 not idle spectators of the drooping folds of "old
 glory" - they beheld the grand young flag which
 had never gone down in defeat ^{before} - a foreign
 foe, falling to the ground to be trampled under
 the feet of ~~the~~ men who had sworn they loved
 it well. It was then that the sons of Ireland
 leaped to the front - insults and ostracism -

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burned convents; and hunted priests; all were forgotten; and, when the grand old 9th of Massachusetts prepared to march forth to stand before and to defend the life of the Republic, the Catholic Church of Massachusetts - all grand and forgiving - forgetting the past, and fervently praying for the future, stood behind her Irish heroes and with uplifted hands flowered their footsteps with prayers and benedictions!

Such was the attitude of our church and people when the Irish 9th, as it is familiarly called, was organized by Col. Thomas Cass, and when its officers shortly afterwards applied to His Excellency John Albion Andrew for a Chaplain to accompany them to the field; the application of the Officers was referred by Governor Andrew to Bishop Fitzpatrick* who was sadly puzzled, owing to the scarcity of Priests at that time in the diocese, how to comply with the request.

It chanced however, that the Rev. Thomas Scully, the subject of our Memoir, was then on a visit to the Bishop; and, learning the ~~desire~~ ^{desire} of the 9th, immediately relieved the Right Reverend Father in his difficulty by volunteering to fill the place in question.

The Bishop was both astonished and pleased at the alacrity of ~~the~~ young disciple, as well he might be, having himself a large knowledge of the dangers and trials which his young ^{pupil} ~~chaplain~~ ^{was} certain to encounter - for how many times had he listened to the stories and military anecdotes of

* Bp. Fitzpatrick died on the 13th of Febry 1866.

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venerable Father Mc Elroy, when he recounted the terrible trials he experienced in his own person in the romantic but bloody campaigns of Mexico!

The Right Reverend Bishop did not allow the ardor of the young Priest to cool; he accompanied him almost immediately to the State House & was there sworn into the service of the Union; almost before he knew the situation, the unfatigable Soldier of the Cross, became a Soldier of the great Republic. Governor Andrews was as much pleased as the Bishop was overjoyed; but the joy of the Bishop and the pleasure of the Governor did not exceed the satisfaction of the boys of the 9th when they learned that their application had been successful.

When the knowledge arrived at the Campaleng Island in the Boston Harbor, the boys felt themselves Soldiers in every sense. By a thousand excuses they would get down to the Transport when it arrived and, if asked what they were doing there, would reply:

"Honor, sure we want a look at our Sagatha Avron!"

"Do ye know Jim, is he an ould man?"
One would say query.

"How should I know; are coorse he's an ould man; why shouldn't he?"

"Yes, my bonchul, but an ould man can't stand a sodger's life."

"Bah! who do ye know about it - Sure God looks out for his own - an' we can look out for him too!"

To say that the lads of the 9th were astonished when they beheld their Priest for the first time, would hardly express their sensations: In stead of an old man, they beheld a slender, modest looking young gentleman, little more, if any, than a hundred and forty pounds in weight; with a bright eye; a handsome face, and general physique which eminently well fitted him for the position to which he had been assigned.

The critical eyes of our boys soon took his measure.

"Well, he's a quint looking man God bless him, but its queer to me if he hasn't a mighty stiff back bone!"

Not only ~~the~~ the 9th boys, but even ^{Southern} ~~other~~ officers, afterwards found that he did have not only a "stiff back bone," but a heart as replete with courage, and a spirit as uncomplaining & suffering as the best man that ever battled under the flag!

We say no more than the facts warrant when we assert that a better tone permeated the Regiment, a higher and nobler spirit animated the men; a finer idea of discipline took possession of them, after Father ~~had~~ ^{fully} arrived, than

ever the brave fellows had experienced before.

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Prior to the celebration of the first mass, the camp of the 9th presented a curious scene. The soldiers were engaged in cleaning their clothes; pipe claying their brasses; "putting a polish" on their boots; every face shining with a new light preparing to worship at the Altar of God, before laying down their ^{lives} on the Altar of their Country - for the preservation of the Union - and for human liberty! The ^{camp} ~~camp~~ was crowded with hundreds of visitors. No edifice in the world held a truer or more fervent congregation, than the magnificent Church of Long Island! The brush of Michael Angelo aided by the most brilliant of human imaginations had not adorned the dome of Saint-Peters at Rome, a tithe as wondrously, as that which looked down upon the assembled thousands at that Island Cap^m. The roof of the church was a sky of glorious beauty! The green fields and the vast expanse of sun-shedded waters, was the floor fashioned by God's own hand! "Toss, then, about their brave Poet, the

Soldiers knelt, and in their gleaming
brasses and uniforms of blue worshipped
the everliving God, as they had never
worshipped Him before. Around them,
forming an outer circle, stood the visitors,
friends and relatives of the kneeling braves,
garbed in a thousand colors, with bowed
heads adding beauty to the solemn scene.
The voices of the Choir sweetly ascending; the
strange and, otherwise, solemn silence of
the scene; the young Priest agrippled for
his sacred office, - Ah, it was a scene
for an Angelo to paint, not for a feeble
pen to picture.

The Altar held no work of art. It was
ornamented simply by the flowers of the field;
and, at the elevation of the host, by ~~so~~ a
strange coincidence, was heard the solemn
roll of drums, as if music too had bowed
her head in solemn joy that Mass was
served where Mass had never been served
before!

In writing of the associations of our priest, our
pen sometimes hesitates, as if to remind us, that
we should say a kindly word of the dead who
appreciated him so well, and upon whom he
looked with a priestly and parental affection.

So then, let our pen ramble on; we are curious ourselves to see what it will tell of the dead Tom Mooney! He was the leader of the little Chorus, he, in his own unassuming way, would suddenly improvise. "Shouts Master Mooney of the 9th." How familiar the words - we hear them echo from a hundred camps - we hear them sounded after a score of battles - and we remember that the gallant fellow could never say twenty words consecutively without breaking in with - "But boys, that's nothing to do with it - where's Father Scully?" Few Priests in this world have a better or more devoted friend, than had the subject of this Memoir in poor, kindly hearted Tom Mooney, killed at Stoneham Swift on St. Patrick's day, by being thrown from his horse during the festivities of that occasion. Truly he was a good son of the church, and a finer Priest than Father Horn, or a nobler Regiment than the "Bloody Ninth," in his estimation never existed!

We have felt it necessary in this Memoir of the Chaplain of the 9th Regiment, Mass. vol's. to dwell somewhat upon matters which may appear anti-biographical; we have felt it necessary however, from the fact that we are writing here of that most exclusive of States Massachusetts, and of a citizen of it ^{as a member of the 9th} whose name is inseparably identified with its past and its present history.

For that reason if we have forced prosy to our readers will excuse us, and for another reason, that we are now about to enter into the active life and military experiences of its Chaplain.

The Rev. Thomas Scully was born in the city of Limerick - the grand old city - of the 'broken treaties' on the 24th day of March, 1833, and being ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~bird~~ ~~it is no wonder that he became~~ ~~a soldier's Priest.~~ This youth was schooled in two of the finest cities of Ireland - Cork and Dublin and, probably, that is the reason why he is so lacking of the fine Irish brogue, ~~Gen. Scott~~ ~~was~~ ~~to love so well, and which he so gloriously~~ ~~with the~~ ~~was~~ ~~of~~ ~~Victory~~ ~~from the~~ ~~Irish~~ ~~Soldiers~~ ~~in~~ ~~his~~ ~~splendid~~ ~~Campaigns~~ ~~in~~ ~~Mexico.~~ He began and finished his Collegiate career in England at one of the principal colleges, completing his education in Philosophy and Theology under the beautiful skies of Italy. A desire to practicalize the studies of the Church led him to visit America, where he arrived early in 1859, and was shortly afterward ordained Priest in Saint James Church by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Fitzpatrick.

The first mission of our young Priest was in Roxbury (now known as Boston Highlands) and Dedham; which, at that time, comprised his Parish. Here he remained ardently engaged in fathering the interests of his flock until the breaking out of the war, in which, as recorded ~~before~~ ~~here~~, he

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immediately assumed a place. We can have no better proof of the remarkable energy of Father Scully, than the facts, of his short sojourn in the country and his immediately volunteering to leave a comfortable mission, and a well beloved flock, to encounter ~~the~~ perils, pangs sufferings and probably death in order that the brave men who went forth to defend the Union, might not die without the rites of their Church. We can have no better proof of the appreciation of his Bishop than the simple fact that he was immediately assigned to the grave and a responsible position he voluntarily assumed - a thousand times more responsible than the cares of a mission, and in which he won for himself a name if equaled, certainly unsurpassed, by the brave and devoted soldiers of the cross, who so grandly associated themselves with the battles, miseries and tribulations of the Sons of The Church.

The appreciation of his bishop was still further indicated by his visit to Long Island shortly after Father Scully had assumed his duties as pastor of the Camp. On the occasion of his visit the Bishop seemed impressed with the onerous undertaking of the young clergyman, and felt more than ever satisfied with his selection of a chaplain - for in Father Tom he ~~felt~~^{saw} all the necessary elements combined for this peculiar phase of his holy vocation - youth, courage, indomitable energy, a thorough

contempt for difficulties and a natural faculty for winning the affection of his men. During that visit the Bishop bestowed his Benediction on the troops; ~~he~~ encouraged the men of the 9th to be true soldiers of Jesus Christ, as well as of the Republic, and distributed to every man a medal of the blessed virgin Mary. He instructed them to love and obey their young Chaplain, who had sacrificed more than they, in honor and preferment in his Church, to be with them in their times of danger, and who would calmly follow them through every peril. In every possible way the good Bishop of Boston showed his anxiety for the young disciple and for the ^{future of the} gallant men with whom he had embarked his fortunes.

The story of the departure of the Chaplain and his regiment until their arrival at Fortiers Manro we need not tell. The pathetic incidents of separation; the cheers; the "good byes"; the sweet & thrilling music of the bands; a week's life aboard the Cambridge and Beaufort - the names of the transports - all this our readers may imagine but our pen ~~fails~~ would fail to describe.

Upon the arrival of the transports at Fortiers Manro Chaplain Scully accompanied Col. Cox and his officers to the fort and was then introduced to General Ben. T. Butler, ^{since Governor of the State} at that time in command. The General was greatly pleased to

See a Catholic Priest in the army, & expressed the wish that he had one with himself and his men, saying, that "an army blessed with Priests could always fight well." The following ~~Sunday~~^{Saturday} the Regiment debarked at Washington, marched to the Arsenal yard & then encamped. The 9th at that place went to the Church of The Dominican Friars, where Mass was said by Father Scully and devoutly attended to by the Officers and men.

We cannot pass this portion of our narrative without relating a comical incident, ~~which~~^{which} illustrates the position occupied by the different Chaplains (Protestant & others) in the army during that early period of the war. While in Washington, at the time above referred to, Father Scully received an invitation to be present at a meeting of Chaplains. The purposes of the meeting were not stated. Father Tom of course imagined that it was a gathering of Catholic Clergymen to organize a system and uniformity of organization which might be of moment to themselves and their military flock ^{after} entering into active service in the field. In this belief he attended the gathering, - or, it might be better styled convention - and was somewhat surprised to meet a great number of Protestant ~~clergymen~~ ministers holding council together

upon the following, to them, ^{157.} ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ truly important issues; to wit:-

" I. Army Chaplains should be graded as follows. Lieuts. Captains. Majors. Lt. Colonels. Colonels. Brigadier Generals (none of them to be privates however.)

II. Said Chaplains to be paid according to rank.

III. The uniform to be similar to that worn by the army - the insignia of Rank however, to be worn embroidered upon the breast."

Such was the basis of the call of this convention. Such the platform upon which they had, in caucus, determined to stand.

Having elected a president and other necessary officers the meeting was formally called to order.

"Mr President!" were the first words that fell upon the ears of the assembly. A tall, gaunt, dark visaged man, robed in garments somewhat the worse for wear, with a soiled white linen gathered under his chin, syllabated the above portentous words. ~~Silence fell down upon the house like a an on the~~ This Minister had been ~~determined to fire the first shot in the conclave having got the nation on the hip, he and his colleagues were determined to take advantage of it - Oh glorious Country! Oh magnificent Union! That these should be made objects of attack and trade by these can sons whose periodical~~ ^{shout} ~~was like that of Elijah Pogram!~~

"his boastful answer to the tyrant and the despot - is that his bright home is in the setting sun." That bright home of the setting sun was in danger and the so called men of God, taking advantage of its difficulties, had gathered together to share the spoils of its dismemberment!

"Mr President:

of the importance of this occasion no man among us can doubt. The country is in a difficult situation, who is right or who is wrong none of us need take the responsibility of judging - the American bird is in danger - our lives are precious and having a stake in the skinning we are bound to look out for that stake - Rank and Money - that's the stake, and better ministers, that stake must come ~~come~~ from the rumps of the country! Generals are getting big pay; politicians are speculation - and if we keep on, our meat will come from the horn of the Keow! This meeting is called for elevation ourselves, and Lord knows we need elevation!" So I propose the following petition:

And the Rev. gentleman presented a paper asking to be graded as above and paid according to grade. He had no sooner assumed his seat than another gentleman ~~he entered~~ assumed his place.

"There's nary a time ten five ^{letter} once, when the enemy is in danger - what's the danger and where the enemy? I her left a congregation of nigh on a hundred folks who were charmed with my

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gospel talk and ~~who~~ ^{who} give a salary of
~~about~~ ^{about} ~~thousand~~ ^{thousand} dollars - ~~take it and~~
~~out in beech wood~~ - but I'd rather come here
and fight for the Kenney than ~~take~~ ^{take} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~now~~ ^{now} I agree
with Brother Silas - we have the country on the
hips - now's the time to strike for pay ~~and~~ rank
I endorse them ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~resolves!~~ ^{resolves!} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~worthy~~ ^{worthy}
~~brother~~ ^{brother} ~~whose~~ ^{whose} ~~love~~ ^{love} ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~human~~ ^{human} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~other~~ ^{other}
~~brother~~ ^{brother} ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~gold~~ ^{gold} ~~imitated~~ ^{imitated} "Brother Silas" and
~~and~~ ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{others} ~~followed~~ ^{followed} in the same strain; but
the importance as well as the grave matter of this
chapter will not allow us to dilate upon what
followed; our design being simply to present the
reader with the part taken in this convention by
Father Scully who was an amused spectator
of the scene. During the debate upon the petition many
eyes had been turned toward him; every man
in the meeting saw in a moment that he was
not one of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~themselves~~ ^{themselves} - but they imagined that the
almighty-dollar influenced him as well as the
other members of that memorable ~~congregation~~ ^{body}.
The President of the Convention finally called
upon the Rev. Mr. Scully, Chaplain of the 9th-M.
V. Father Tom arose; he spoke as solemnly as
if he were addressing his people from the altar:
"Gentlemen: I cannot join you in your
movement upon the Government. She has enemies
without - I am sorry to learn that she has foes

within. I have a higher rank than the President or the Congress of the United States can give to man! I am a Catholic Priest! I labor in the service of God. He is my paymaster. My men will support me, and I need not to trouble the Government of this nation - now sadly troubled indeed - to do that which my Church commands me to do without money and without price; but if my vote will be of any use to ^{you} gentle men, for I know you have families depending upon you, I hope that you may be all generals and be paid as such!" and with a quick bow and quizzical smile, Father Tom went from among them leaving the men ~~worshipping him~~ ^{begs to shift for themselves.}

The stay of Father Scully and his Regiment in Washington was of short duration; for, a day or two after their arrival, they took up their march for an available spot called Emarts Farm, and afterwards, Wool's Hill, ~~in~~ ^{near} the ~~here~~ ^{border} of ~~Mexico~~; here the men soon fixed themselves comfortably and awaited events.

In a few days, they were startled by the thunder of the guns at Bull Run. ~~There~~ ^{Then} the news came to them that the Union armies had experienced an overwhelming and disastrous defeat!

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We remember well the condition of Wash-
ington at that time. The Stores were deserted
and the doors flung open, nobody to sell goods
and nobody to steal them. Wounded soldiers
lying about on every hand; where the people
had disappeared to it was impossible to tell.

The day too, was not an dismal when the news
of the defeat reached the 9th Regiment. It
had but little effect - as the boys however, they
were only anxious to come in contact with the
~~enemy~~ ^{enemy} and give an additional touch to the
magnificent picture painted by the glorious
69th Regiment of New York, under the gallant -
Corcoran, upon the memorable occasion referred to.

At Ennarts Farm the 9th was visited by Grover
or Andrew of Massachusetts. It is no wonder
that this distinguished man was a general fa-
vorite with Irish Officers and Soldiers. The domes-
tics in his family were Irish and Catholic, he
would employ no others, and when he called
upon the Regiment in this camp he brought
with him blessed medals and prayer books
to present to the brothers of two of his domestics
enlisted in the 9th. He visited the tent of
Father Scully who sent for the ones, to
whom his Excellency presented the Sacred

emblems and expressed the great pleasure
 it gave him to bring them to the boys in person;
 he then entered into conversation with them,
 and when he departed he shook them cordi-
 ally by the hand, and was loudly cheered
 as he ~~departed from~~^{left} the camp.

From Manly-Town the Regiment crossed
 the Potomac, pitching ~~their~~ ^{the} camp at
 Arlington Heights, where they were
 received with bonfires, lighted by the
 gallant ~~69th~~ 69th N.Y. - with cheers and
 other tokens of joy. Here Fort Corcoran
 and Fort Cass were built for the better
 protection of the Capitol. In these labors the
 two 5th Regiments ~~were~~ worked side by
 side harmoniously together and at one
 time expected and wished to be Brigaded.
 This was not to be however, much to the
 disappointment of both.

Shortly after their arrival at this camp the
 men of the 9th Regiment got together a generous
 fund which they presented to their beloved
 Pastor, requesting him to purchase a Chapel
 Tent. This was soon done and the Regiment
 became the owner of as fine a chapel tent
 as was in the army of the Potomac. The

men were never backward in coming to the assistance of the young Priest, rather anticipating than awaiting an expression of his wishes. Quater-Master Mooney, after the purchase of the Tent became more active than ever, and was soon engaged in organizing a choir; and, as he came from a family of musicians, this work he accomplished most successfully, for the 9th could boast many excellent singers. The Chapel Tent was dedicated at Tates Church by a High Mass, and, assisted by the choir, of which the ~~very~~ ~~enthusiastic~~ Mooney was leader, it was a grand and solemn celebration.

It was not only attended by the soloists of the 9th Regiment, but brave men gathered from all quarters to worship God and witness the holy ceremonies of the true Church. With the low tones of the priest would sometimes mingle the clash of arms; the roll of drums; the quick sharp ^{words} of commands from some marching squad performing a necessary duty. Sometimes the shouts