

## Chapter XXII

Father Sheeran falls back with Lee's army - His  
 visit to Richmond - His return to the army -  
 - Gambling in the army - A surprise - His  
 services in Winchester - A En route to Fredericksburg  
 - Caught in a snow storm - The battle of  
 Fredericksburg - Scenes and sufferings  
 both in the field and hospitals - A  
 generous donation - A day of fasting and  
 prayer - Easter days in camp - The  
 purity of the poor soldiers - The slaughter  
 pen of the Irish Brigade

~~Chapter~~

22

When Father Sheeran and the surgeons in <sup>attendance</sup> ~~company~~  
 had heard that the Confederate army was falling back from  
 Petersburg they held a ~~deliberation~~ <sup>conference</sup> they held  
~~to the effect that they did not know what to do, so they~~  
~~did the surgeons in attendance a council of war~~  
~~was held and concluded to leaving two surgeons~~  
~~and a sufficient number of nurses to take care of~~  
~~the wounded and the rest to follow the army~~  
~~At half past three in the dead of the night they~~  
~~started off leaving across fields and bye ways and~~  
~~finally reached the rear of the grand army be-~~  
~~fore daylight. On the way Father Sheeran then~~  
~~attended to the wounded who were still in the ambul-~~  
~~ances, consoling them, some spiritually and more~~  
~~physically.~~ At Shepherdstown he met his  
 Nolan & Father Kiebert at the house of a  
 Dr. Shephard of New Orleans. After breakfast  
 Father Sheeran ~~made some calls & was informed that~~  
~~the Quartermaster of the regiment had arrived~~  
~~and was eager to see him. He far found him~~  
~~some three miles ahead. The wagon teams were~~  
~~then in motion. Father Sheeran started with them~~  
~~in the direction Sharpsburg, Ferry, Charles town~~  
~~and thence towards Martinsburg where he~~  
~~practiced with them and remained all night~~  
~~with Dr. Becker, the Catholic pastor of that~~  
~~place. At 8 o'clock next morning, viz Sunday~~  
~~Sept 9th, Father Sheeran had the consolation~~  
~~of offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass~~  
~~for the second time in five weeks, and he also~~  
~~in that day, aided the pastor by hearing some~~

confessions and performing some other sacred duties.  
 In the evening he had the pleasure of being introduced  
 to several Catholic families of Martinsburg, all  
 of whom treated him kindly. On the following <sup>day</sup>  
 Father Sheeran <sup>near Martinsburg</sup> reached the camp and was there informed  
 that the army would have time to rest for a few days.  
 Believing such to be the case he resolved to take a  
 trip to the Rapidan station in search of his  
 vestments and <sup>other</sup> furniture left there by the  
 Quartermaster. That afternoon he was introduced  
 to Gen. Glaz, who was then in command of the  
 1st Ca. Brigade. Leaving business to Richmond  
 he got a pass from the General and a limited  
 leave of absence. That afternoon he returned to  
 Martinsburg & spent the night with Dr. Becker  
 who heard some confessions and said Mass next  
 morning, and then started for Winchester. There  
 he met Col. Dolan, Majors Monahan & Helligan, Capt  
 O'Rourke & Major Gable, and found his orders  
 whom he lost some days before. The next morn-  
 ing <sup>he</sup> ~~both~~ started for the Rapidan <sup>attending to his orders</sup>. On the way  
 they put up at the house of a gentleman named  
 Mr. Cornick with whom they had dinner. After  
 dinner they had some conversation during the course  
 of which he requested Father Sheeran's <sup>Creed</sup> Card, &c.  
 Cornick who was a seven day baptist was astonish-  
 ed to find that his guest was a Catholic priest.  
 He instantly retired and introduced his accompa-

and after a few minutes entered the room accompanied by his wife and daughter. They both were rather loquacious and minutely introduced religious subjects, but they got rather enough of the religious topic before an half hour passed, and for once they ~~did~~ <sup>have</sup> formed a ~~favorable~~ a rather favorable impression of the Catholic faith. ~~About 4 pm he~~ <sup>At 10 pm he</sup> started for Paris where he spent the night; there he met <sup>some</sup> of the wounded men of his regiment, who appeared rejoiced to have the news ~~in form~~ <sup>that</sup> some half dozen of the invalids put to flight a whole regiment of Federal Cavalry the night previous on the suburbs of the town. There half dozen <sup>brave fellows</sup> ~~of volunteers~~ <sup>were</sup> too were countrymen of his own. The next day he reached Middleburg, visited the hospitals, and prepared several Catholic soldiers for their long homes. That afternoon he started for Warrenton which he reached after dark. Here and put up at the house of a ~~Mr~~ <sup>Mr</sup> Catholic gentleman named ~~Mr~~ <sup>Mr</sup> Pine. Here he met Father Smoulder & Mrs & Miss Sommes, the mother and sister of the Senator. During the evening he was introduced to Dr Fisher, who had charge of the hospital at Lytleburg. The next morning he started for Richmond where he arrived the same evening. After remaining in Richmond ten days he ~~started once more~~ <sup>returned again to</sup> ~~for the~~ <sup>on Oct</sup> for the army. After two days journey,

by circuitous routes, they reached Front Royal on Oct 9<sup>th</sup> where he remained for the night. The next morning he visited Gen Tremble who was under the care of a surgeon at a private house. The General was glad to see him, held a lengthy conversation with him, and requested him to ~~be~~ ~~some commands~~. After wishing the General a speedy good bye he started for Winchester where he arrived at 5 p. m. ~~where~~ ~~he~~ ~~spent~~ the night with Col Gable who was yet suffering from his wounds. There he met with Capt ~~Smith~~ Mitchell of the 1st Va, and son of the Irish patriot John Mitchell. There also he met with Rev<sup>d</sup> morning, after breakfast he started for his brigade which was stationed at ~~Bunker~~ ~~Hill~~ ~~some~~ ~~twelve~~ miles from Winchester. When he arrived there he found that his regiment had been transferred from the 1st to the 2nd Louisiana Brigades, the 1st ~~for~~ ~~his~~ ~~being~~ ~~now~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~2nd~~ ~~Brigade~~. Father Sheeran took up his quarters along with Col. Nolan as there was no accommodation in his own regiment. The following ~~two~~ ~~morning~~ ~~he~~ ~~said~~ ~~mass~~ notwithstanding the unfavorable weather had a very large congregation. In the evening of the latter day ~~he~~ ~~Father~~ ~~Sheeran~~ ~~received~~ ~~a~~ ~~visit~~ ~~from~~ ~~Courtesy~~ ~~Genkins~~ and made arrangements with him to hear the confessions of the Catholics of his company on the Wednesday following.

On Oct 14<sup>th</sup> Father ~~Spencer~~<sup>Spencer</sup> visited Winchester and received many pressing invitations from the Catholics to give them an opportunity of performing their religious duties, as he had promised the Commanders of the Brigade to be with them on the following day, he ~~could not give this request~~<sup>could not give this request</sup> ~~so deferred for a future day~~, The following morning evening he returned to camp and the next morning rose early, heard many confessions, celebrated Mass, gave communion to those prepared and delivered a short discourse to quite a large congregation, On the 16<sup>th</sup> Father ~~Spencer~~<sup>Spencer</sup> celebrated Mass in Camp and heard numerous confessions that evening, He visited Dr. Becker at Martinsburg, who pressed him to remain all night, The following <sup>morning</sup> he aided the Dr. & Rev. Dr. in hearing confessions and said Mass a ~~few~~ ~~times~~. He then returned to Camp. In the way he met Gen. Stuart, who <sup>saluted</sup> ~~treated~~ him kindly, ~~and~~ smiling at the same time, remembering no doubt, that he was once his prisoner by mistake. Early the following morning, ~~even~~ marching orders were received and there was chance of celebrating Mass. At the army moved back through Martinsburg in the direction of Clearfork ferry, Williamsport, <sup>& encamped</sup> some two miles from the town. ~~There~~ Father ~~Spencer~~<sup>Spencer</sup> ~~found~~ ~~that it would be impossible to say Mass the next morning, so leaving word with the orderly to let him know if the army should move, returned to Martinsburg where he spent the night~~



~~the night~~  
 and the following ~~four~~ <sup>eight</sup> days with the good pastor  
 assisting him in hearing confessions, attending sick  
 calls &c. After mass on the morning of the 28th  
 day the orderly informed him that Jackson's whole  
 corps was in motion and that ~~General~~ <sup>the</sup> division were  
 moving to Perryville. It was late in the afternoon before  
 Father ~~Spencer~~ <sup>Spencer</sup> overtook his brigade. The army passed  
 through Smithfield, crossed Hanfords Ferry, and  
 Winchester railroad, advanced on the Perryville  
 pike some <sup>three</sup> miles, where they turned half a mile off  
 it and encamped for the night, in the woods. Here  
~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Spencer~~ <sup>Spencer</sup> left his blankets & baggage after  
 him at Martinsburg ~~and it~~ <sup>and it</sup> ~~being reported that~~  
~~the army were here about to take a rest here,~~  
~~he determined to return to Martinsburg for them,~~  
~~the next day.~~ Here they remained until November  
 3rd, when the ~~army~~ <sup>army</sup> began to fall back.  
 Father ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> had to go with them, and after that  
 night ~~after a weary march having no tent of his own,~~  
 he spent ~~that night~~ <sup>that night</sup> with a homeolan. The following day, Nov  
 5th, the army moved <sup>7 miles</sup> in the direction of Winchester  
 7 miles and encamped that night in an oak  
 forest. Father ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> spent that <sup>the</sup> night with a  
 poor Catholic family about half a mile from the  
 camp, hearing that there were <sup>other</sup> Catholics living some  
 three miles distant. The good ~~pastor~~ <sup>pastor</sup> sent them word  
 that he would say mass and hear confessions  
 the next morning. The orderly brought back ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~hunts~~ <sup>hunts</sup>

that <sup>Father</sup> Mr. Smulder was over in that neighborhood,  
 This was the first <sup>Father</sup> ~~Mr. D.~~ <sup>therefore</sup> had heard of him since  
 he left Warrentown. On the 7th & 8th of the  
 mess was celebrated every morning at which there  
 were many communicants. The morning of the latter  
<sup>9th of May</sup> marching orders were received, and in an  
 hour afterwards were countermanded. <sup>The</sup> seeing that  
 they were about to have the day to themselves they  
 intended to spend it in their usual <sup>cards</sup> game. Knowing  
 that Father ~~Mr.~~ <sup>Mr.</sup> had prohibited this vice in the  
 Camp, they <sup>usually</sup> retired to concealed places for  
 the purpose of carrying on the game. This afternoon  
 knowing that he was absent from the Camp <sup>they</sup> played  
 publicly ~~in~~ in some cases for stakes of \$150. Anxious  
 to know how things were going on he visited  
 the camp late in the afternoon and saw a num-  
 ber of the boys surrounding some object that seemed  
 to attract their attention. Unobserved he advanced  
 to the crowd and looking over some of their shoulders  
 he held two of them with cards in their hands and  
 countenances very serious. Between them was a pile  
 of bills ~~containing the above amount~~. By this time  
 he was ~~observed~~ <sup>observed</sup> by all around, but not by the  
 card-players who were too much engrossed with  
 their stake to notice any thing else. Slowly he  
 bent forward until within reach of the money  
 when by a well directed grasp he secured some \$60  
 of the States. The gamblers not knowing who was

~~There not knowing there~~ made use of a very  
 rough exclamation; but on finding out who it  
 was, took to their heels, amid the shout and  
 laughter of the whole camp. This money he after-  
 wards gave to the orphan of St Joseph in Richmond.  
 On the 10<sup>th</sup> the army got the route and on the  
 11<sup>th</sup> the Division passed through Winchester in  
 the direction of Runkers' hill. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Father  
 Sheeran<sup>new</sup> followed it, fearing that his services might be needed,  
 and overtook the brigade some eight miles below  
 the town. As it was wet and cold and having no tent  
 in camp he resolved to take up his quarters in  
 town. He was also glad of an opportunity to  
 remain about Winchester as there were Catholic  
 families in the place who had no opportunity of  
 attending to their duty for some time; And besides there  
 were many Catholics of the Maryland line and  
 Irish Battalion then stationed around Winchester.  
 He made his headquarters at the house of a Mrs<sup>th</sup>  
 Kearett who had gave him <sup>his</sup> parlor for a Chapel  
 and who had vestments, altar furniture and ~~everything~~<sup>and all the</sup>  
 necessary for the celebration of Mass. He remained  
~~with the family two weeks~~. On the following  
 Sunday morning Father Sheeran said Mass in  
 the church & preached a short sermon to  
 a very large congregation mostly soldiers.  
 After Mass a large <sup>congregation</sup> ~~donation~~ was made which  
 was left for the repair of the church, ~~during~~



his stay in Winchester, the Maryland battery  
 and several regiments, principally Louisianians,  
 availed themselves of the opportunity offered  
 to settle their peace with God. On Saturday  
 Nov 29th Being informed that the whole army  
 was in front of the <sup>generals</sup> ~~gates~~, and that Burnside  
 was marching towards Fredericksburg Father ~~Shannon~~  
~~reached~~ <sup>had to make change preparations</sup> to proceed to his regiment. ~~For the three~~  
~~days following there was much skirmishing but~~  
~~no actual battle.~~ On the morning of the 30th  
 several of the Maryland boys were at Confession,  
 December 1st was also spent in hearing confessions.  
 On the morning of December 2nd about 10 o'clock  
 Father ~~Shannon~~ <sup>Shannon</sup> bid adieu to Winchester and  
 started for the army. During the day he  
 passed through ~~Winchester~~ <sup>the</sup> the only  
 place where Jackson was defeated, and  
 that too by the gallant <sup>regiment</sup> ~~Crispin~~ General  
 Shields. About 3 p. m. he arrived at ~~the~~  
<sup>Woodstock</sup> ~~Woodstock~~ a town some twenty <sup>miles</sup> miles from Winchester.  
 He put up for the night at a hotel the  
 proprietor of which was a Catholic. Here  
 he met several Maryland refugees and con-  
 federate officers, several of whom embraced  
 the opportunity of attending to their religious  
 duties. The following morning the town of Wood-  
 stock was all in commotion. The Postmaster of Win-  
 chester had arrived during the night with

the contents of the Post Office. The Federals had advanced to within a few miles of Manchester, and <sup>the</sup> Confederates were retreating. At 8 o'clock that morning Father ~~St~~ left Woodstock and passed through Edinburgh, Mount Jackson, & Newmarket and arrived in Haverburg after dark, and for spent that night with a Catholic family named Scanlon. The next day he started for Gordonsville and after a terrible ride through the lonely paths of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and in the midst of a terrible snow storm was obliged to put up at a farm house on a lonely and stormy hill. The next morning he resumed his journey and reached Gordonsville <sup>in the evening</sup> about 5 p. m., and spent that night at the only hotel in the place. There he met Major Leche Goodwin & Major Brady, Kelligan, and Wilson on their way to join the army. The next morning all started off together, as they were riding along Major Brady and Father ~~St~~ <sup>Sheane</sup> ~~in front~~ <sup>they met</sup> an old gentleman met them and who gave a very sharp look at the priest. When he met the remainder of the party he inquired if that were Governor Letcher riding on the grey horse. On being informed in the negative, he replied that he looked devilish like him then. This created a hearty laugh. ~~That night~~ <sup>the following night</sup> they stopped at a splendid

mansion but all had to sleep in one room,  
 The next day, about noon, feeling hungry, they  
 repaired to another mansion where they were served  
 with a splendid dinner, and where Father Sherman  
 was treated with highest honors, the <sup>host</sup> ~~guest~~ be-  
 lieving him to be the Governor. This false impression  
 Father Sherman was several times about to remove  
 but feared if <sup>he</sup> ~~it~~ did so he might betray some of  
 his companions. That night they stopped ~~for~~  
~~on the road about midway to Guinea's Station~~  
~~at~~ at another mansion about twelve miles  
 from Guinea's Station, I which, which place  
~~they reached next morning after a pleasant ride.~~  
~~They were~~ Here the army was stationed, and was only  
 within eight miles of the afterward bloody field  
 of Fredericksburg. After a little inquiry Father  
 Sherman found his regiment encamped some two miles  
 from the station. That afternoon, ~~was~~ December  
 10th, he received a letter calling him to Richmond.  
 After receiving ~~next morning~~ after procuring  
 a pass <sup>he</sup> started off, ~~here~~ he remained at  
 Richmond ~~for~~ till the morning of the 13th when  
 hearing that ~~there was to be a battle~~ <sup>large fighting to happen</sup> he started  
 back for the army. That he did <sup>not</sup> reach the  
 old camp ground till near dark the afternoon  
 and then found that at once the terrible  
 battle of Fredericksburg was raging. ~~He~~  
~~Left Charles to look after his horse at the front~~

He sent his orderly after <sup>him</sup> in order to <sup>enable</sup> him <sup>to</sup> proceed there, The orderly however did not return till after dark and then without the horse, It being then too late to make <sup>a</sup> start even on foot, ~~leaving no one to show him the road~~ and being somewhat indisposed, ~~so he resolved~~ ~~to wait till the morning and make an early start,~~  
 The next morning he said Mass at daylight and after borrowing a horse started for the scene of carnage, Approaching the <sup>battle field</sup> he observed a hospital flag in the distance, In making up <sup>about</sup> it he found it was the hospital of <sup>the</sup> Father's <sup>not far from</sup> ~~the~~ ~~some~~ of the other hospitals attending, attending to the wounded of other Commands after having first ~~depressed~~ <sup>looked</sup> <sup>carefully</sup> with his own, Father Sheeran found the hospital of his brigade some half mile distant, where he had plenty of work <sup>but</sup> not so much with his own men as <sup>was</sup> <sup>those</sup> of other Commands, After attending to the spiritual wants of the Confederate Soldiers he went around among <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ ~~Federals~~ and prepared several of them for death, Having attended to the spiritual wants of those who needed his services he tenderly rendered all the assistance in his power <sup>in helping to</sup> ~~by~~ ~~wounded~~ dressing the wounds of the soldiers of his brigade, That afternoon he took charge of the ambulance train which was ordered

orders were given to have <sup>if possible</sup> all the wounded transported to Richmond as soon as possible. Father Sheeran took charge of the ambulance team, and those belonging to his own brigade transferred first. That whole afternoon he worked unmindful of blood dirt & mud in relieving and transporting the poor fellows. After dark he took his rounds of several hospitals and <sup>then</sup> fatigued and weary lay down to rest. The next day he took a ride over the battlefield and <sup>then</sup> made his way to his regiment. The boys ~~sat~~ greeted him heartily on his appearance. ~~He then followed Jackson some distance along the valley, where he was sent to watch some of part of the Federal army, that night he had to die in a haystack accompanied by his orderly and one or two officers.~~ In the morning he proceeded to the hospitals and attended to the wounded incessantly for four days until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. This day he announced he would begin to hear Christmas Confessions. The following two days he was busily engaged in hearing confessions preparatory to the great feast of ~~the~~ the Saviour's Nativity. On that day he said three masses one after another and gave eloquent instructions at each. And after mass the men of his command made up a splendid collection for the orphans of St. Joseph's Asylum in Richmond. The following paragraph taken from St. Joseph's the Richmond papers at the time speaks for itself.



The sister and the children of St Josephs  
 Female orphan Asylum gratefully acknow-  
 ledge the receipt of twelve hundred and  
 six (\$1206) dollars from the esteemed chap-  
 lain of the 14<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Regiment it being the  
 Christmas gift of that noble and brave body  
 of heroes. Christmas day was spent with all  
 the festivities of a New Orleans home. On this  
 during the day ~~the~~ Father <sup>Sheeran</sup> received visits from  
 numerous Catholics of A. P. Hills division.  
 The following five days Masses were offered up  
 every morning both by Father ~~Sheeran~~ <sup>Sheeran</sup> & Father ~~Hubert~~ <sup>Hubert</sup>.  
 On the 1st of January 1863 Father ~~Sheeran~~ <sup>Sheeran</sup> procured  
 a pass from Col Nolan then in command of the  
 Brigade, and started for Richmond for some things  
 necessary articles. After arriving in Richmond  
~~and~~ two of the clergymen there took sick and  
 the ~~good~~ Bishop requested him to remain till  
 one of them would get better. Having left Father  
 Hubert in the Camp, and knowing that he would  
~~return~~ <sup>attend</sup> to the spiritual wants of the soldiers till ~~the~~  
 his return Father ~~Sheeran~~ <sup>Sheeran</sup> complied with the Bishops  
 request, and remained in Richmond till the  
 26<sup>th</sup> of March, on which day he returned to  
 the Camp in order to give the soldiers of the  
 Brigade a chance to comply with <sup>their</sup> Easter  
 duties. The following day was appointed by  
 President Davis as one of fasting and prayer

and an unusual large congregation attended Mass. From that day till ~~April~~ Easter Sunday (April 5<sup>th</sup>) Fathers ~~McKen~~ <sup>McKern</sup> & <sup>McKern</sup> were as busy as possible hearing confessions; and on Easter Sunday morning when they went to the Camp to offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass the crowds of soldiers were standing knee deep in snow awaiting the celebration and almost every man of them received communion that day. ~~On the next morning there were large numbers of communions also. After this day Father McKern~~ <sup>McKern</sup> ~~to visit the other portions of Lee's army and give the Catholics in it a chance of complying with their Easter duties. Proceeding to Richmond he found Father Glenbert and requested him to remain with Col. Nolan's Brigade while he was absent. Father McKern remained away until the 17<sup>th</sup> during which time he visited~~ <sup>the vestiges of</sup> ~~the Washington Artillery, the Madison Artillery, and the Donaldsonville Artillery, all Louisiana men and nearly all Catholics. About 7 p.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup> he reached Father Smolders Camp and after a good fresh fish dinner both priests visited the Irish Battalion then acting as provost <sup>guards</sup> to Gen. Jackson. The members of this Battalion were all of Irish birth and Catholics. They had done some very hard fighting up to this time and were the particular favorites of Gen. Jackson, as he was entrusting to them the most important~~

duties. As ~~the~~ Father Shoulders visited the battalion  
 regularly. Father Sheehan's visit was one of friend-  
 ship more than of business. After spending a  
 few pleasant hours with the officers and men of  
 the battalion they returned to camp. The next morning  
 wishing to ~~visit~~ <sup>wish</sup> to visit the Wilcox Brigade who  
 among whom were a large number of Catholics  
 both priests rode over the bloody field of Fredericks-  
 burg. Although terrible were the ~~spectacles~~ <sup>spectacles</sup> which struck  
 imaginations of the good priests as they rode over that  
 field of slaughter, still no part of that bloody  
 theatre presented such a melancholy spectacle  
 as that known ~~as known~~ as the slaughter pen of  
 the Irish Brigade. The boarded fence in front  
 of the stone wall, behind which <sup>rebels</sup> ~~rebels~~ <sup>rebels</sup> ~~rebels~~  
 were posted, could be compared to nothing  
 but a scene so thickly perforated were the boards  
 with musket balls. Here it was that Pearsers  
 Irish Brigade, made those desperate charges  
 which have immortalized their names. Many  
 of those brave heroes were buried on the spot  
 where they fell, but a large number of them were  
 thrown into an ice house <sup>and covered up</sup> at a short distance  
 in rear of the battle field. After visiting  
 the men of Wilcox brigade a chance of complying  
 with their <sup>Father Sheehan's</sup> ~~last~~ duty, he visited the 8th Alabama  
 where he received Lieut R. J. Scott into the church.  
 He afterwards visited Pearsers Brigade, Mahons Brigade  
 and on April 25 he returned to Fredericksburg in order to  
 give a mission there, but soon after had to give his command  
 on account of the advances of the Federal army.