

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

DER RUF VON CASTIGLIONE ¹

by

WERNER LEGÈRE

The author has not set himself the task of presenting a bibliography of Henry Dunant, but that of showing how one of the fiercest battles of the XIXth Century had such unexpected and world-wide repercussions. The loudest cry was not heard on the battle-field nor from amongst the victorious troops, but in the Chiesa Maggiore of Castiglione. It came from that church where the words "tutti fratelli" were the echo by the town's inhabitants of Dunant's innermost feelings, thus bringing fresh hope to mankind. The "appeal of Castiglione" has thus spread to the five continents after each successive war.

One should, however, mention others besides Henry Dunant who undertook the rôle of "voluntary aids", such as Father Lorenzo Barzizza, who gave such an example of active selflessness.

Werner Legère then describes the misfortunes of Dunant's life leading to misery and loneliness before the bestowal of belated honours. Two chapters in his account are however devoted to Clara Barton and her rôle in the Red Cross movement and he describes her meeting, in Geneva, with the members of the International Committee of the Red Cross on her visit to Switzerland to recover her health after the rigours of the War of Secession. Indeed the accession of the United States to the Geneva Convention and their attachment to the international humanitarian work are due to this exceptional woman. The appeal launched at Castiglione made a singular impression on her and decided her to found a strong Red Cross Society which would become ever more effective. She was in fact to become its first President in 1881.

In conclusion, the author exhorts men to listen to that appeal from the Lombard plain, giving promise of a better world.

M.I.

¹ Evangelische Verlaganstalt, Berlin 228 p., 1964, 4th edition.