

# NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Formerly: International Bulletin of Red Cross Societies, founded in 1869

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## Chile

The review *Cruz Roja Chilena* contains in one of its recent issues (No. 32), an article by Mr. Agustin Benedicto P. concerning an episode in the history of Chile. The events thus described showed that the humanitarian ideal was affirmed throughout. The *Revue internationale* has already had occasion to recall (April 1958) that in Latin America, to quote only one example, a warm-hearted Brazilian woman, Anna Néry, gave proof of this spirit during the war between Brazil and Paraguay.

We have pleasure in publishing the following translation of the article which appeared in the Review of the Chilean Red Cross :

On December 8, 1851, in Chile, the battle of Loncomilla took place on the banks of the river of the same name, a tributary of the Maule. This battle was fought between Government troops commanded by General Manuel Bulnes, victor of the Restoration campaign in Peru, and the opposition forces of the South commanded by General José Maria Cruz de Concepción, who had been chief of Staff to General Bulnes during the Peruvian campaign of 1839.

This battle was exceptionally hard, since out of a total strength of 7,000 for the two armies, there were only 2,700 survivors. At Talca, the most important town and the one nearest the scene of action, 2,000 men were buried and many others were drowned in the Loncomilla river which had, according to tradition, turned red on account of the blood of all the dead swept down by the current.

More than 1,500 of both sides were taken to Talca where they were distributed between the hospital and private homes which were turned into real hospitals.

A leading personality of that town, Ignacio L. Gana, writing to the famous historian Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna on October 17,

1864, describes in moving terms how its inhabitants helped the wounded of both camps :

“ After the terrible slaughter of Loncomilla, Talca was transformed into one vast hospital drenched with the blood of the wounded of the two armies. The preparations made by the authorities proving themselves insufficient to deal with so many wounded after such an unprecedented battle, the inhabitants were asked to take the sick into their own homes to care for them.

“ I can also bear out that during that scorching summer in that year of disaster, there were not enough hands in the entire village to prepare sufficient bandages and that the ladies of quality put snow on deep wounds to prevent gangrene.

“ I was witness to this selfless sacrifice which took possession of all hearts and which was demonstrated in the highest degree by the fine, charitable and benevolent action on the part of the inhabitants of Talca ”.

Mr. Gana ends his letter by giving the names of those ladies who had been outstanding in their activity for the wounded and sick.

Such a fine, humanitarian attitude on the part of the inhabitants of Talca towards the wounded and sick, devoid of all discrimination, since the victims of both sides were treated alike, showed the real Red Cross spirit and deserves being mentioned as an example. These events took place moreover in 1851, three years before Florence Nightingale brought aid to the wounded of the British Army in the Crimea, and eight years before the battle of Solferino where the idea of the Red Cross originated with Henry Dunant.

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## Philippines

The Red Cross Centenary which will be celebrated in 1963, is an event of outstanding importance for our movement ; it will signify a mile-stone on the long road of humanitarian activity on a world level ; it will also be an opportunity to celebrate, at appropriate