

## The International Red Cross Museum at Castiglione <sup>1</sup>

Castiglione lies between two poles: war and charity.

In this countryside, too prosperous and too beautiful not to arouse cupidity, many armies have shed blood.

But here was born, in a castle which war has destroyed, Saint-Louis de Gonzague, who renounced his title of prince to devote himself to the unfortunate and who met an early death caring for the plague-stricken. It was here too where the wounded of Solferino lay. The Army Medical Services, then almost non-existent, gave them paltry assistance. But without regard for the colour of their uniforms, the women of Castiglione lavished care upon them because they saw a man dressed in white go into the Chiesa Maggiore carrying in his arms a wounded Austrian and because they understood Dunant's message: Tutti fratelli.

And Castiglione chose charity.

The population raised a subscription and offered the Red Cross one of the city's finest buildings, the Palazzo Longhi, for conversion into a museum of charity on the field of battle.

The International Red Cross Museum of Castiglione delle Stiviere was inaugurated in June 1959 on the occasion of the centenary of the battle of Solferino <sup>2</sup>. Since then, a fairly numerous public has visited these charming baroque style rooms. But not pretentious enough to call to itself the attention it deserves, this Museum has sunk into semi-oblivion.

This cannot be allowed to continue. A fresh Committee has been constituted to make of Castiglione and its museum one of the land-

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<sup>1</sup> *International Review*, in April 1962, published a detailed article on Castiglione, its churches, the International Red Cross Museum and the exhibition rooms. See J.-G. Lossier: *Castiglione and the International Museum of the Red Cross visited*.

<sup>2</sup> *Plate*.—The entrance and one of the rooms in the Museum.

marks of the Red Cross. This management committee comprises senior officials of the Italian Red Cross, members of the Castiglione municipal authority and representatives of the Henry Dunant Institute, the League and the ICRC. It held its first meeting at Castiglione on 20 March 1970.

Its collections will be enriched, temporary exhibitions are being prepared. In addition the Palazzo Longhi will become a centre of meetings and seminars for which it is well suited.

Let us hope that the Red Cross will respond to so much good will by a keener interest. Solferino, San Martino, Castiglione, present a really extraordinary cohesive effect, a source to which a pilgrimage is well worthwhile.

*P. B.*

## Ceylon

The report submitted by the Ceylon Red Cross to the XXIst International Conference at Istanbul gives interesting details on that Society's important role in establishing and organizing a practical plan for nation-wide relief in case of disaster.

**Disaster Relief.**—A comprehensive National Disaster Relief Plan has been prepared by the Water Resources Board of the Government of Ceylon in consultation with the Ministry of Social Services which is the Agency responsible for initiating and coordinating all programmes of disaster relief caused by floods, cyclones, fire, drought, etc. The implementation and operational details have been worked out by the Ministry of Social Services. The Ceylon Red Cross Society is represented on the Committees at all levels. Further, the Director of Social Services of the Government of Ceylon is a member of the Council of the Ceylon Red Cross Society.

The responsibilities of the National Society in this plan are:—

- a) The establishment of First Aid Posts in the affected areas.