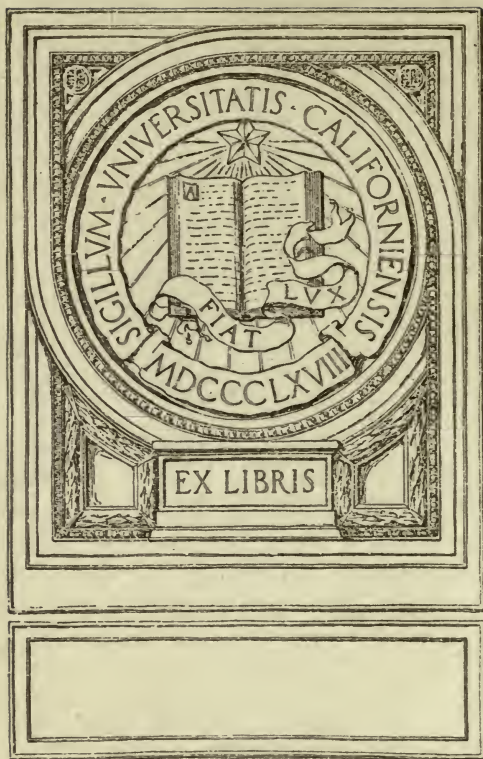


A SHEPHERD

AMONG WOLVES

CARDINAL MERCIER



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A SHEPHERD AMONG WOLVES

J'exprime au chef vénéré de l'Église catholique romaine, mon admiration pour la conduite du Cardinal MERCIER qui, à l'exemple des glorieux prélats du passé, n'a pas craint de proclamer la vérité à la face de l'erreur et d'affirmer les imprescriptibles droits d'une juste cause au regard de la conscience universelle.

ALBERT I^{er}

Roi des Belges.

Univ. of
California



H.E. CARDINAL MERCIER, ARCHBISHOP OF MALINES (MECHLIN).

A SHEPHERD AMONG WOLVES

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

War-Time Letters of Cardinal Mercier

SELECTED (WITH HIS EMINENCE'S PERMISSION) BY

ARTHUR BOUTWOOD

FROM

“Un Évêque défenseur de la cité.”

THE FAITH PRESS, 22 BUCKINGHAM STREET,
CHARING CROSS, W.C.2.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

CARDINAL MERCIER needs no introduction to the people of England—he has spoken for himself in deeds which made a dark time splendid with the civic virtues of the christian life, and his name is revered wherever heroic sanctity and saintly patriotism are valued.

The pastor and defender of a martyred people in a violated land, at once an apostle and a patriot, he is foremost among those whom the needs and duties of terrible days have made pre-eminent, and, in his country's grateful memory, his name will be immortal. For Belgian generations yet unborn he saved the Belgian Fatherland, and that inheritance of faith and strength which he has preserved for them will be all the greater because of what he was and of what he did.

In these letters and allocutions we see the agony of Belgium, and we see the Cardinal at work. We see him consoling and encouraging, assiduous for the integrity of the national sentiment, fortifying Belgium's stricken but unconquered soul,—we see him uplifting Patriotism into the high circle of christian duties, purging national retribution from private passion, making the Justice of God his people's confidence. It is a record of things which should not be forgotten.

HAKLUYT EGERTON.

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SALUTATION TO THE SOLDIERS.

Malines, 1st Aug., 1914.

To the Clergy and the Faithful of the Dioceses of Belgium.

Very dear Brothers,

This is a solemn moment. Agony wrings our hearts. Children, wives and mothers are weeping.

Nevertheless, our valiant soldiers start for the frontier with a firm step, determined—should it prove necessary—to defend the independence of our native soil.

Let us salute these brave men with all honour!

May our words, interpreting yours, bear to them our brotherly sympathy! May they bring them comfort in their present uncertainty!

To-morrow—Sunday, 2nd August—in all the churches Benediction will be sung, to which the public authorities, with their families, will be summoned with special urgency, to the end that it may please God to turn away from Belgium and from Europe the dangers which threaten them.

After to-morrow, the priests will say every day the prayers of the Mass *Pro pace*:

“ O God, sovereign Master of Kingdoms and of Kings, Thou Who strikest but to heal, and Who of

Thy goodness dost spare us—have compassion upon us ; preserve for us, by Thy power, the blessing of peace, and grant that we may take advantage of it for the amendment of our lives. We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹

✠DÉSIRÉ JOSEPH, Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

✠ANTOINE, Bishop of Ghent.

✠GUSTAVE JOSEPH, Bishop of Bruges.

✠CHARLES GUSTAVE, Bishop of Tournay.

✠THOMAS LOUIS, Bishop of Namur.

✠MARTIN HUBERT, Bishop of Liège.

¹ Prayer taken from the Mass *Tempore belli*.

APPEAL FOR CHARITY.

Malines, 2nd Aug., 1914.

To the Clergy and the Faithful of the Diocese of Malines.

Our very dear Brothers,

Yesterday, making ourselves the interpreter of your feelings, we sent to our soldiers greetings of fraternal affection, of gratitude and of respect.

To-day we have sung for them, in our metropolitan church, the Litanies of all the Saints ; we have seen them close at hand, we have bowed to them, we have blessed them.

They are alert, valiant ; but it is not difficult to read on their foreheads the deep sadness of their souvenirs—the sadness being more noticeable, perhaps, than any disquietude at the prospect for the morrow.

They are ready to sacrifice their lives without thinking much about it ; but from their homes the head will be missing, strong arms will be wanting, and they wonder in anguish, who, during their absence, will take care of their old parents, of their wives, of their mothers, of their little children.

The Government has made a generous initiative. It is our duty to second it.

It is necessary that, before setting out on the

campaign, our fighting men should have their minds free and their hearts at rest.

It is your duty and ours to relieve them from their anxiety.

I appeal with full confidence to the clergy of our parishes.

I beg the Deans to commence, at once, the organization of care committees for families suffering through the mobilization.

Every deanery will have one or more committees with which the clergy and the laymen of the parishes—especially the members of the Poor Relief Boards, the Societies of S. Vincent de Paul, the ladies of the Compassion, the ladies affiliated to the Diocesan Federation of Catholic Women—will be asked to collaborate.

In places where public authorities found a committee authorized to receive assistance, the clergy will do their utmost in support of it.

But we must not limit our intervention to material aid.

We must also, we must above everything, think of souls.

Christian mothers, you weep for your absent sons, you are troubled about them. We want to sustain your courage and to quiet your fears. Every week—preferably on Saturdays—in honour of the very Holy Virgin, a solemn Mass will be celebrated in all our parishes on behalf of our soldiers, and the families who have either a father or a son in the army. Let your little children pray with you, communicate

with you, that it may please the Divine Providence to bring back to you, safe and well, those whom duty has taken from their homes.

Widen your charity. Our very dear Brothers, pray for all those brave men, to whatever nation they belong, who endanger their life, who offer it up, or who have already sacrificed it in the service of their country.

We ourselves shall make it our duty to say the Mass every Saturday in union of heart and mind with the clergy and the faithful of our beloved diocese.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. de Malines.

PIETY AND CHARITY.

*Malines, Fête of Our Lady of the Snows,
5th Aug., 1914.*

To the Religious Communities of the Diocese of Malines.

Our dear Sons,
Our dear Daughters,

We seem to see your faces turned towards the public authorities and towards us, and to hear you ask with unanimous enthusiasm, "And us, tell us what we can do for our country."

You can help it effectively in three ways :

You will bless God for the greatness of soul with which He has inspired the King, the Government and the Nation. Belgian patriotism has never been exhibited with such majesty as in these last days ; the sentiment of brotherhood has never been so clearly brought out ; the valiance of our youth has never been so powerfully affirmed. The clergy have shown themselves wonderfully generous. The moral level of our country has risen. We must thank and bless the Author of all good for this.

Pray for our soldiers and their families. You have gladly undertaken to make an annual *journée d'apostolat*. Will you, every week, on the day which falls to you, offer the Holy Mass, the Holy

Communion, your daily duties, your works of penitence, your adorations before the very Holy Sacrament for our dear country. We shall authorize the exposition of the very Holy Sacrament, one day a week, in every community. Let us place our whole confidence in our good Mother, the universal Mediatrix of the Church, the very holy Virgin Mary, and in the intercession of S. Joseph, Patron of Belgium. Take part, if you possibly can, in the services that will be celebrated in your parish.

Finally, will you let us know if, later on, you will be able to place your premises and your staff at the service of the ambulance. Kindly let us know, at once, how many beds you can spare. We request you to send your offers to the competent authorities, who will then give you all necessary instructions.

Your piety and your charity will be a constant appeal to the divine Pity. The omnipotent God will watch over Belgium.

Receive, our very dear brothers and our very dear sisters, with the assurance of our religious devotion, our paternal benediction.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

ACTION, PRAYER AND PENANCE.

Malines, 11th Aug., 1914.

To the Clergy of the Malines Diocese.

My very dear Colleagues,

The admirable zeal of our clergy has both touched and supported us.

A legion of priests, secular and religious, who spontaneously offered us their services as military chaplains or for ambulance work, have had the grief of seeing the service they were so eager to undertake refused them. God will keep account of their generous intentions.

Sorrowful circumstances, however, may arise which will admit of their fulfilling their office among our dear soldiers. None of us know where or when the approaching battle—which is likely to be heavy and bloody—will take place. Professors on holidays, monks who have had leave from their superiors, will then find an opportunity for the exercise of their devotion. They ought at once to furnish themselves with a certificate of identity provided by the communal authority, and to add to it, if possible, a portrait stamped by the same authority. Provided with these indispensable documents, they

will hold themselves ready, either to go and occupy a fort, or, at the very first news of an engagement, to go to the chief military chaplain—or, in default of him, to some other military chaplain—who will give them a Red Cross armlet, issued by the War Ministry, and assign them a post of service among the combatants. Canon Loncin, Secretary to the Archevêché, undertakes to supply all the necessary instructions to those who are concerned.

In like manner, the clergy of the parishes in imminent danger will at once go to the help of the army. They too must be furnished with a certificate of identity, examined and endorsed by the administration of the commune.

These voluntary chaplains are warned that they cannot count for certain on victuals or billets allocated to the army. They go, therefore, at their own risk and peril. “A la guerre comme à la guerre!”

Among the parochial clergy there are many who grieve at being tied to their vicarages, while others are allowed to follow their initial enthusiasm.

Their work, though more obscure, is no less pleasing to God. They also have a patriotic mission to fulfil. Let them devote themselves to the troops quartered in their parish, let them maintain the composure of our people, encourage them to finish the harvest, console anxious or mourning families, guide the piety of the faithful, restrain imprudent passions towards those whom unfortunately it is our duty to call “our enemies.”

Educational establishments, not employed as hospitals for the wounded, may be very useful in kindly receiving the children of families forced to quit their homes. They are begged to send their charitable offerings to Canon Van Olmen, secretary to the Archevêché at Malines.

At the very time that these lines reach you a violent conflict may have taken place, crushing thousands of victims. On the first free day, a service will be held in every parish of the diocese, for the repose of the souls of those brave men who in that conflict will have sacrificed their life—perhaps the support of their home—on the altar of the country. As long as military operations last, the same service will be repeated every week, with special remembrance of the allied nations who mingle their interests and their patriotism with ours.

We particularly wish that, on the 15th of August, there should be in every parish a penitential procession. There will be no music nor banners, nor boys or girls in costume groups. Litanies of all the Saints will be sung. The most Holy Sacrament will be carried.

Let us redouble, my dear colleagues, our religious zeal and devotion.

Heroism is stirring the nation. Let us associate ourselves, to our utmost, with this enthusiasm. Let us pray, let us do penance. Let us fast; let us recommend fasting to Christian families at least once a week—Fridays, for example. Let us encourage the faithful to purify their consciences

more than ever, to render their manners still more serious, that it may please God once more to bless the foresight of our leaders and the valiance of our soldiers.

“Unto thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

“My God, my trust is in Thee, and I shall not be ashamed.

“Let not mine enemies triumph over me: those who look to Thee for salvation will not be confounded.”¹

On the day when our land is gloriously freed, we shall not fail to give to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the very Holy Virgin and to S. Joseph, public testimony of our gratitude. Pledge yourselves with us to-day to fulfil this promise.

Parish priests will communicate this letter to their parishioners, or a summary of it, if that seems to them more opportune.

I remain united to you, dear colleagues, in feelings of the closest affection.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

PS. Families lodging soldiers, ambulance workers and labourers; also children of families placed in distress by the mobilization, are dispensed from the law of abstinence.

We dispense from the law of Sunday rest those occupied in work for the defence of the position of Antwerp.

The Vicars of large towns are requested to

¹ Ps. xxv. 1-3.

administer Holy Communion as early as 5 o'clock in the morning for the convenience of pious and charitable persons who have to be at their posts by the side of our valorous wounded soldiers very early.

✠D. J.

BELGIUM'S GREATNESS OF SOUL.

Malines, Vigil of the Assumption, 14th Aug., 1914.

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Malines.

Our very dear Brothers,

We have never before felt ourselves in such close communion of soul with the clergy and the faithful of our Diocese, and with the whole of the great Belgian nation.

Yes, the nation is great. Great in its King, who commands with intrepidity the three armies allied for the liberation of our territory; great in its Government; in its General Staff, who foresaw for us the formidable event; great in its sons, who are falling to show that justice and honour are worth more than life—or who are going, without a tremor, to take the glorious places of those who have fallen already.

On the battlefield Belgium is writing the finest page of her history.

But what she is not writing, that of which God alone is the witness, is the heroism of soul. We can only divine some indications of it, and how eloquent they are already!

On Sunday, in the course of a procession organized by the town of Malines in honour of Our Lady of

Hanswyck and under the protection of the relics of the martyr of S. Rombaut—the Saint whom Great Britain, our ally to-day, sent to us twelve centuries ago¹—a father held out his vigorous hand to me : “ I have six sons,” he said ; “ they are all in the army.”

A young mother writes to me : “ My eldest son has gone : I had the courage to kiss him on the forehead without trembling.”

A workman with seven children : “ I could not resist the strong current,” he said, “ but you will see that my wife and family have bread, won't you ? ”

And how noble they are in their mournful solitude, these humble farms from which the men are absent, and where the stable is empty : it is the women who with their own arms are bringing in the harvest.

And our young aristocracy, who were sometimes thought to be entirely absorbed in pleasure or gambling—it is there, faithful to its old traditions of faith and honour, raising, in its enthusiasm, a volunteer corps whose number, precocity and spirit surpass all anticipation. I blessed them by hundreds, these brave young men, happy to be able, for even a few moments, to replace their absent relatives.

My brothers, I must stop, because my pen would never have done were I to relate all the heroic deeds of which you and we have, during these eight days, been the wondering witnesses.

¹ *S. Rombaut*. The patron Saint of Malines, martyred A.D. 775. His feast is on 1st July. There is some evidence that he was Irish: his Bollandist biographer, however, contends vigorously for an English origin.

We did not know the magnanimity of our country.

Suffering is the great revealer of the human spirit. When the aged Simeon foretold that Christ would meet with a storm of opposition, that His divine mother would have her heart pierced by a sword, he added that these bloody persecutions would lay bare the deep thoughts of a multitude of hearts, "the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

At this very hour Belgium is verifying these inspired prognostications.

The whole nation, without distinction of race or party, has risen above all that held it bound to private interest: all its aspirations have mounted to the same ideal—country, liberty, the triumph of justice.

Courage, dear brothers; our right—we have a firm conviction of it—our right will triumph.

To tell the truth, it is triumphing already. For all Europe is praising the genius and the decision of our leaders, the valiance of our troops, the pride of the nation.

Let us go on praying, that the result of battle may confirm the moral victory of our patriotism.

Our parochial churches do not empty; at dawn, the congregations at Mass and communions increase; in the evening, there are family prayers; at eight o'clock, the adoration of the very Holy Sacrament, the singing of the Litanies of the Saints and of the seven penitential psalms, the uninterrupted recitation of the holy rosary in the House of God;

public processions; all these religious manifestations take place calmly, the soul torn with anguish yet strong, the heart bruised yet firm, speak clearly of your unanimous trust in the compassionate goodness of our God.

Courage, my brothers, persevere in your faith, in your penances, in your charity. Put the purity of your consciences above everything. In fact, what really matters is not that which the world sees; it is the privacy of the heart, the invisible recess that is read by the eye of divine justice and of divine love.

Christian mothers, your sons have put their souls at peace with God before leaving you. Encourage their faith when you write to them. Commend them to their guardian angel. Quicken the piety of those who remain at home. Lead your little children to the communion rail.

Whatever be the valour of our troops, the wisdom of our generals, the strength of our allies, God remains the supreme arbiter of history.

In the terrible crisis that hangs over Europe, is it not true that the souls of those of us who believe, feel, above us, hovering over us, the changeless Sovereignty of Him Who sees everything, Who can do everything, yet Who is also the Father Who loves us?

I send you, my very dear brothers, to you, to our combatants, to your homes, to your pastors, the expression of my heartfelt sympathy, of my paternal pride and my episcopal benediction.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, protect Belgium.

Mary, mother of divine grace, our hope, have pity on us.

S. Michael, Archangel, pray for us.

Holy guardian Angels, pray for us.

S. Joseph, patron of Belgium, pray for us.

S. Rombaut, pray for us.

S. Lambert, pray for us.

S. Aubin, pray for us.

S. Eleuthère, pray for us.

S. Bavon, pray for us.

S. Donatien, pray for us.

S. John Berchmans, pray for us.

Blessed Joan of Arc, pray for us.

All the Saints of God, intercede for us.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

THE DUTY OF PARISHES. GERMAN PROMISES.

Mallnes, 16th Oct., 1914.

Dear Colleagues and devoted Fellow-workers,

The clergy of the Province of Antwerp is partially dispersed, and I have no certain means of getting into direct communication with you all. I therefore beg those among you who receive these lines to be so good as to transmit them to the colleagues with whom they are in touch.

It is urgent that Parish Priests and Vicars should return to their parishes, if they have left them. The roads, moreover, are open, and public security is guaranteed everywhere. The return of the clergy will restore courage ; as soon as homes are re-peopled honest men can drive out marauders, set themselves to work again, and normal life will once more perceptibly resume its course.

The Governor of Antwerp, Freiherr von Hoiningen, General Huene, has authorized me to make the three following declarations to you in his name, and to communicate them to our peoples by means of your kind agency :—

1. Young men need not have the least fear of being taken away to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army or to be employed in forced labour.
2. If individual infractions of police regulations

are committed, the authorities will find out the responsible authors of them and will punish them, without throwing the responsibility on the population as a whole.

3. The German and Belgian authorities will neglect no precautions to ensure food for the people.

Even in the parishes where the church and the presbytery are devastated I ask the pastor to rejoin his flock immediately; to arrange for worship in some temporary place, whether a committee room, a granary, or a private house, and to ask lodging for himself at the house of one of his faithful parishioners.

The first care of the priest after his re-establishment among his own people, will be to form a *Relief Committee*, which he will direct and which will be composed of influential and generous persons in the parish.

The object of this committee will be to secure shelter, if only provisional, for families in distress; to help them to find immediate means of subsistence; to exhort them to take up again field work, seed-sowing, trades; to reopen, as soon as possible, schools and catechism classes for the children; and, generally, to bring to every one that moral comfort and religious confidence of which so many souls have need in the grievous times through which we are passing.

Parishes upon which misfortune has beaten less heavily have an obvious duty of charity to fulfil towards the districts more severely tried. These will

also have their Relief Committees—they will send their contributions to the Archevêché,¹ whence distribution will be made according to the needs of the diocese.

The public authorities will certainly step in for the final reconstruction of houses destroyed by the war; but the private initiative of charity ought to provide, under the pressure of necessity, the cost of the first re-settlement and the immediate work of cultivation: it is for this generous initiative that our valiant and devoted clergy must appeal.

Persons of means ought to consider it a rigorous obligation of charity to come to the aid of the unfortunate and to put us in a position to exercise our ministrations among them.

Until further notice, we grant dispensation from abstinence from animal food on Fridays and fast days.

Dear colleagues and devoted collaborators, I beg you to receive assurance of my religious devotion.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

This letter will be read from the pulpit the first Sunday after its reception.

¹ After the 20th of this month, please God, the administration of the Archevêché will be reinstalled at Malines.

PATRIOTISM AND ENDURANCE.

Malines, Christmas, 1914.

My very dear Brothers,

It would not be possible for me to tell you to what extent the thought of you has been ever present with me, during these months of suffering and mourning that we have just been through. I was obliged to leave you suddenly on the 20th of August, in order to discharge my last duties to the loved and venerated Pope whom we have just lost, and to fulfil a religious obligation from which I could not withdraw myself—the election of the successor of Pius X, of the Pontiff who to-day governs the Church under the name, full of promise and hope, of Benedict XV.

At Rome I heard—blow upon blow—of the partial destruction of the Collegiate Church of Louvain; of the burning of the library and the scientific laboratories of our great University; of the devastation of the town, and the fusillades; of the tortures inflicted on women, on children, on defenceless men. And while I was still shuddering at these horrors, public telegrams announced to us the bombardment of our noble metropolitan church, of the Church of Nôtre-Dame above the Dyle, of the episcopal palace, and of considerable portions of our dear city of Malines.

At a long distance from my diocese, without any means of communication with you, I was obliged to wrap up my grief in my heart, and to carry it, with the thought of you—which never left me—to the foot of the Crucifix.

And this thought sustained my courage and brought me light: a catastrophe bursts upon the world, I said to myself, and our dear little Belgium—so faithful to God in the mass of its people, so proud in its patriotism, so great in its King and in its Government—is the first victim of it. She bleeds, her sons fall by thousands—in our forts, on the battlefields—to defend her right and the integrity of her territory; soon there will not be on Belgian soil a single family that is not in mourning; why, oh, my God, all these sorrows? Lord, Lord, hast Thou abandoned us?

Then I looked at my crucifix; I contemplated Jesus, the gentle and humble Lamb of God, lacerated, covered with His blood as with a garment, and I thought I heard fall from His lips the words which the Psalmist utters in His name: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

The murmuring was arrested on my lips, and I thought of what our Divine Saviour said in His Gospel—“The servant must not be treated better than his Master.” The Christian is the disciple of a God who became man in order to suffer and to die. To be stubborn against grief, to revolt against Providence because it permits suffering and mourning, is to forget one’s origins, the school in

which one was formed, the Exemplar whom each one bears inwrought in his very name of Christian, Whom he honours in his home, contemplates on the altar before which he prays, and invokes on the tomb where he must sleep his last sleep.

My very dear brothers, later on we shall revert to the providential law of suffering, but you will not deny that, if it has pleased a God made man, holy, innocent, spotless, to suffer and to die for us sinners, guilty, perhaps even criminal, it ill becomes us to complain, whatever we may have to endure. The truth is, that no catastrophe in the world, in so far as it only affects human beings, is comparable with that which our sins provoked, and of which a God willed Himself to be, on Calvary, the innocent victim.

This fundamental truth recalled, I feel it easier to ask you to face the situation in which we find ourselves, and to speak to you, without circumlocution, of our duties as well as of our hopes,

These duties I sum up in two words: *Patriotism and Endurance.*

I. PATRIOTISM.

Our very dear brothers, I want to make myself the interpreter of the gratitude that animates us, you and us, whom age, social position, or other circumstances have made beneficiaries of the heroism of others, without having been associated in it in an immediate and personal manner.

When, at Havre, on my way back from Rome,

I went to visit our wounded—Belgians, French or English—when, later, at Malines, at Louvain, at Antwerp, I shook hands with the brave men who had a bullet in the body, or a wound upon the forehead through having marched to the assault of the enemy, or stood up to the shock of his attacks, there rose spontaneously to my lips a word of deepest thankfulness to them: “My valiant friends,” I said, “it is for us, for each one of us, for me, that you have endangered your life and are suffering. I want so much to express to you my esteem, my gratitude, and to assure you that the whole country knows how much it owes you.”

This is absolutely true—our soldiers are our saviours.

The first time, at Liège, they saved France; the second time, in Flanders, they stopped the enemy's march on Calais; France and England know it well, and to-day Belgium stands before them, and before the whole world as well, as a land of heroes. Never, in my life, have I felt so proud of being a Belgian as, when going through French railway stations, breaking a journey at Paris, visiting London, I was everywhere witness of the enthusiastic admiration of our allies for the heroism of our army. Our King is, in the estimation of every one, at the very summit of the moral ladder; he is the only person not to know this, while he walks about the trenches like the simplest of his soldiers, encouraging, with the serenity of his smile, those whom he asks never to fear for their country.

The first duty, then, of every Belgian citizen, at the present moment, is gratitude to our army.

If a man had saved you from a shipwreck, or from a fire, you would consider yourself bound to him by an eternal debt of gratitude.

It is not a question of one man, it is two hundred and fifty thousand men who are fighting, suffering, falling for you, in order that you may live free, in order that Belgium may preserve her independence, her dynasty, her patriotic unity, and that—after the vicissitudes that take place on battlefields—she may rise up nobler, prouder, purer, more glorious than ever.

Pray every day, my brothers, for these two hundred and fifty thousand men and for the officers who are leading them to victory; pray for our brothers in arms; pray for those who have fallen; pray for those who are striving all the time; pray for the recruits who are getting ready for the struggles of the morrow.

In your name I send them, from here, the salutation of our brotherly sympathy, and the assurance not only that we pray for the success of their arms and for the eternal salvation of their souls, but also that, for their sake, we accept all that there is of pain—physical and moral—for us, in our oppression at this moment; all that the future may yet have in store for us of temporary humiliation, of agony and of sorrow.

On the day of final victory we shall all share

the honour ; it is only right that we all share the pain to-day.

From echoes that have reached me, it appears that, in certain places where the population has least suffered, there sometimes rise bitter words against God, words which, if weighed coldly, would be almost blasphemous.

Oh ! I understand only too well the revolt of natural instinct against the evils that are pouring down upon Catholic Belgium : the spontaneous cry of conscience is always that success at once crowns virtue, and that injustice will be immediately repressed.

But Scripture says the ways of God are not our ways ; Providence, during an interval measured by His wisdom, gives free course to the play of human passions and the clashing of interests. God is patient because He is eternal. The last word, that of compassion, is for those who have faith in Love. " Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God, for thou shalt yet praise Him, Who is thy Saviour, and thy God."

When that saintly man Job, whom God held up to future generations as a model of constancy, had been deprived by Satan, one after another, of his wealth, his children, his health—his friends dropped off from him, speaking contemptuously and inciting him to revolt : his wife suggested blasphemous opinions and imprecations : " What do you gain by preserving your integrity ? " she

said: "Curse God and die." Though standing quite alone, the man of God was yet unshaken in his faith. "You speak the language of madness," he replied; "when God pours His gifts upon us, we take them from His hand; why should we now refuse the ills with which He afflicts us? He is the Master. He gives; He takes away: blessed be His holy Name for ever."

Now the result proved that the saintly man was right: it pleased God to recompense His faithful servant in this world: He gave him again twice as much as had been taken from him, and out of regard for him, forgave his friends.

Perhaps I am less ignorant than any one of what our poor country has suffered, and I trust that no Belgian will doubt that all these sufferings are resounding in my soul both as a citizen and as a bishop. The last four months seem to me to have been a century.

Our brave men have been cut down by thousands; wives and mothers weep for the absent whom they will see no more; homes are empty; poverty increases; the agony is poignant. At Malines, at Antwerp, I have seen the population of two great cities given up—one for six hours, the other for thirty-four—to a continuous bombardment, to the terrors of death. I have been over the greater part of the most devastated regions of the diocese . . . and what I have seen of ruins and ashes surpasses all that, notwithstanding my very serious apprehensions, I could possibly have imagined.

Certain parts of my diocese that I have not yet had time to see . . . have suffered the same ravages. Churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, convents—a very considerable number—are either useless or in ruins. Whole villages have virtually disappeared. At Werchter-Wackerzeel, for example, out of 380 homes there remain 130; at Tremeloo, two-thirds of the commune is razed to the ground; at Bucken, out of 100 houses there remain 20; at Schaffen, out of a collection of 200 habitations 189 have disappeared; there remain 11. At Louvain, a third of the city is destroyed: 1,074 properties have disappeared; on the town lands and in the suburban communes, Kessel-Loo, Herent and Héverlé, taken together, there is a total of 1,823 burnt properties.

In this dear city of Louvain, from which it is impossible for me to detach my souvenirs, the superb collegiate church of S. Peter will never recover its former splendour; the ancient college of S. Ives; the school of the beaux-arts of the town; the commercial and consular school of the University; the secular halls; our rich library with its collections, its 15th century books, its unpublished manuscripts, its archives; the gallery of its glories from the first days of its foundation, portraits of rectors, of chancellors, of illustrious professors, by the sight of which masters and pupils of to-day became impregnated with traditional nobility and were stirred up to work; all this accumulation of intellectual, historic, and artistic

wealth, the fruit of five centuries of labour, all is annihilated.

A great number of parishes were deprived of their pastors. I can still hear the sorrowful accents of an old man whom I asked if he had had Mass on Sunday in his shattered church: "It is now two months," he replied, "since we have seen a priest." The parish priest and the vicar were in a concentration camp at Munsterlagen, not far from Hanover.

Thousands of Belgian citizens have been deported in this way into German prisons, at Munsterlagen, at Celle, at Magdeburg. Munsterlagen alone has 3,100 civil prisoners. History will tell of the physical and moral tortures of their long Calvary.

Hundreds of innocent persons were shot. I do not possess in a complete form this sinister necrology, but I know what was in it, notably 91 at Aerschot, and there, under menace of death, their fellow-citizens were obliged to dig the ditches for burial. In Louvain and the adjacent communes 176 persons—men and women, old men and nurslings still at the breast, rich and poor, healthy and sick—were shot or burnt.

In my diocese alone, I know that 13 priests or monks were put to death. One of them, the parish priest of Gelrode, in all probability fell as a martyr. I made a pilgrimage to his tomb, and there—surrounded by the flock that, only yesterday, he tended with the zeal of an apostle—I asked him to watch over, from Heaven above, his parish, the diocese and the country.

We can neither count our dead nor measure the extent of our ruins. . . Even in those places where lives have been preserved and buildings remain intact, how much hidden suffering! Families, only yesterday in easy circumstances, are now in difficulties; commerce has stopped; all business activity is suspended; industry is at a standstill; thousands and thousands of workmen are out of work; working-women, shop-girls, humble servants, are deprived of their livelihood; and these poor souls turn over feverishly on their bed of sorrow, and ask us "When will the end be?"

We can only reply "That is God's secret."

Yes, my very dear brothers, it is God's secret.

He is the Master of events, and the Sovereign Controller of society. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The round world, and they that dwell therein." The first relation which arises between the creature and his Creator is that of the absolute dependence of the first upon the second. The creature's very being is dependent; its nature, faculties, deeds and works are all dependent. Every moment that passes by, dependence is renewed, because, without the support of the Omnipotent, that which exists at one second would vanish at the next. Adoration, that is to say, acknowledgment of the Divine Sovereignty, is not the term of a fugitive act, it ought to be the permanent state of a creature conscious of its origins. On every page of our Scriptures Jehovah

affirms His sovereign domain. The whole economy of the Ancient Law, the whole history of the chosen people, tend to the same objective: to maintain Jehovah on His throne, to cast down idols. "I am the Lord," He says in Isaiah, "and there is none else, there is no God beside Me. Who is like unto Me? Let him come forward and speak! . . . Is there any refuge besides Me? I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things . . . Woe to him that striveth with his Maker; *let* the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or the work to the workman, How badly is it done! . . . Speak, set it forth, yea deliberate. But know there is none other God beside Me, a just God and a Saviour."

Ah! proud reason, you think you can do without God! You sneer, when by His Christ and by His Church, He pronounces solemn words of expiation and penance. Vain man, intoxicated with ephemeral success, satiated with money and pleasure, you insolently believe yourself to be all-sufficient! And the very God was banished into oblivion, disowned, blasphemed amidst plaudits—sometimes even by those whose position demanded that they should set the example to others of respect for order and its laws. Anarchy penetrated the lower orders; upright consciences were tried by scandal: "How long," they thought, "how long, O Lord, wilt Thou tolerate the pride of iniquity? Master, where

art Thou, and wilt Thou finally let the impious be in the right, the impious who declare that Thou carest not for the work of Thine hands? ”

A thunder-clap, and all the calculations of men are upset. The whole of Europe trembles on a volcano.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

All minds are agitated, disturbed, yet the dominant feeling is the realization that God is showing Himself the Master.

The nations who were the first to make the assault, and those on the defensive, equally feel themselves in the hands of One without whom nothing happens, without whom nothing is brought to its end.

Men long unaccustomed to prayer are turning towards God. In the army, in civil life, in public, in their secret hearts, they pray. And this time, prayer is not merely words learned by heart that fall from the lips, it rises from the depths of the soul and presents itself before the Sovereign Majesty under the sublime form of the oblation of life. The whole being is sacrificed to God. This is adoration, the fulfilment of the first and fundamental precept of the moral and religious order: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.”

Even those who murmur and have not the courage to bow their heads under the hand that strikes and saves us, implicitly recognize that God is the supreme Master; for they only blaspheme

Him, because, in their opinion, He does not meet their wishes with sufficient haste.

For ourselves, my brothers, we sincerely wish to worship Him. We do not yet see, in all its glory, the revelation of His wisdom, but our faith can trust Him. We humble ourselves before His justice, and we hope in His mercy. Like the holy man Tobias, we recognize that He chastises us for our sins, but we know that He will save us because He is merciful.

It would be cruel to dwell on our wrong-doings at the very moment when we are paying for them so heavily and with such greatness of soul. Yet must we not confess that there is something to expiate? "To whom much is given, from him much will be required." Now, did the moral and religious level of the country rise equally with its economic prosperity? Sunday rest, attendance at Mass on Sundays, respect for marriage, laws of modesty—what did you do in these matters? Even in Christian families what became of the simplicity of our fathers, the spirit of penitence, belief in authority? And, above all, what of ourselves, monks, priests, bishops, whose sublime mission it is to show forth in our lives, still more than with our lips, the Gospel of Christ—have we given ourselves the right to say to our people in the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"? We worked, yes; we prayed, again yes; but that is not enough. It is the duty of our calling that

we should be the public expiators of the sins of the world. Now what has dominated our life, bourgeois comfort or expiation ?

Oh, yes ! we all, in our turn, fell under the reproach that the Eternal made to His chosen people after going out of Egypt : “ My people have waxed fat and kicked ; My sons have been unfaithful, and have treated Me as if I were not their God ; I will treat them as if they were no more My people.”

“ Nevertheless I will save them, for I will not have their adversaries despise them and say ‘ our hand has been powerful ; it is we, and not the Eternal, who have done all these things.’ Know then that it is I who am God, and there is none other God beside Me ; I cause to live and to die, I wound and I heal.”

God will save Belgium, my brothers, never doubt it for a moment.

Better still, let us say, He is saving it.

In truth, can you not already see, through the light of the conflagrations and the smoke of blood, tokens of His love ?

Can he be called a patriot who does not feel how much greater Belgium has grown ?

Which of us would have the courage to tear out this last page of our history ?

Who does not contemplate with pride the radiance of the glory of our tortured country ?

While in suffering she brings heroism to birth, our mother is pouring fresh energy into the blood of her sons.

We had need, let us admit it, of a lesson in patriotism.

A great number of Belgians wore out their strength and wasted their time in sterile quarrels, quarrels of classes, of races, of personal passion.

But when, on 2nd August, a foreign power, confident in its strength, and oblivious of faith of treaties, dared to threaten our independence, all Belgians, without distinction of party, of position, of origin, rose as one man, closely united under their King and their Government, to say to the invader : " You shall not pass."

At once we found ourselves resolutely conscious of our patriotism : that is because there is in each one of us a feeling far deeper than personal interest, than the ties of blood and the struggle of parties ; it is the need, and consequently the will, to devote one's self to the general good, to what the Romans called *Res publica*, the public welfare : this feeling is *Patriotism*.

Country is not an agglomeration of individuals or of families dwelling on the same soil ; exchanging neighbourly or business intercourse, more or less limited ; having common memories, happy or painful : no, it is a partnership of minds in the service of a social organization which it is necessary at any cost—were it even at the cost of one's blood—to safeguard and defend, under the direction of him or of those who preside over its destinies.

And it is because they have *one* soul, that fellow countrymen live, through their traditions, *one* life

in the past ; that, through their common hopes, they live *one* perduring life in the future.

Patriotism—inner principle of unity and order, organic bond between members of the same country—was considered by the best thinkers of ancient Greece and Rome to be the highest of natural virtues. Aristotle, prince of heathen philosophers, held that disinterested service of the city, that is to say of the State, is the terrestrial ideal *par excellence*.

The religion of Christ makes patriotism a law ; there is never a perfect Christian who is not a perfect patriot.

It raises the ideal of heathen reason higher and gives it precision, showing that it is only realized in the Absolute.

Whence, in fact, comes this universal irresistible enthusiasm which, in one onrush, throws the whole national will into a supreme effort of cohesion and resistance to the enemy forces that threaten the nation's unity and independence ?

How explain that, suddenly, all interests yield to the general interest ; that all lives are offered for sacrifice ?

It is not true that the State is essentially worth more than the individual and the family, considering that the welfare of families and individuals is the *raison d'être* of its organization.

It is not true that country is a god Moloch, on whose altars all lives may be legitimately sacrificed.

The brutality of heathen customs and the despotism of the Caesars led to the aberration—

which modern militarism tends to revive—that the State is omnipotent and that its discretionary power creates Right.

No, replies the Christian theologian, Right is peace, i.e. internal order in the nation, built on Justice. Now Justice is only absolute because it is the expression of the essential relations of men to God and to each other.

Moreover, war for the sake of war is a crime. War is only justified on the ground of being the necessary means of assuring peace.

“Peace,” says S. Augustine, “must not be used as a preparation for war: war must only be made to obtain peace.”

In the light of this teaching, which S. Thomas Aquinas resumes on his own account, patriotism is clothed with a religious character.

The interests of family, of class, of party, the corporal life of the individual, are, in the scale of values, below the patriotic ideal, because this ideal is Right, which is absolute. Or again, this ideal is the public recognition of Right in its application to the nation—national Honour.

Now, in reality, there is no Absolute but God.

God alone, by His Holiness and the Sovereignty of His empire, governs all interests and all wills.

To affirm the absolute necessity of subordinating everything to Right, to Justice, to Order, to Truth, is then, implicitly, to affirm God.

And when our humble soldiers, whom we compliment on their heroism, reply with simplicity:

“ We have only done our Duty,” “ Honour demanded it,” they express, in their own way, the religious character of their patriotism.

Who does not feel that patriotism is “ consecrated,” and that an attack on national dignity is a sort of sacrilegious profanation ?

A staff-officer once asked me if the soldier who falls in the service of a just cause—and that ours clearly is—is a martyr.

In the rigorous and theological acceptation of the word, no, the soldier is not a martyr, for he dies arms in hand, while the martyr gives himself up, without resistance, to the violence of his executioners.

But if you ask me what I think of the eternal salvation of a brave man, who consciously gives his life to defend the honour of his country and to avenge violated Justice, I do not hesitate to reply that there is no doubt whatever that Christ crowns military valour, and that death, accepted in a Christian spirit, assures to the soldier the salvation of his soul. “ Greater love hath no man than this,” said our Lord, “ that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

The soldier who dies to save his brothers, to protect the hearths and the altars of his country, fulfils this highest form of love. The moral value of his sacrifice will not always be submitted to minute analysis,—this I insist upon,—but is it necessary to believe that God asks of the brave man, swept into the fire of battle, the methodic precision of the moralist or theologian ?

We admire the heroism of the soldier—is it possible that God does not receive it with love?

Christian mothers, be proud of your sons. Of all our sorrows, yours is, perhaps, the most worthy of our respect. I seem to see you in mourning, but standing by the side of the Virgin of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross. Permit us to offer you our congratulations at the same time as our condolences. Our heroes are not all mentioned in the Army's Order of the Day, but we are justified in hoping for them the immortal crown which encircles the foreheads of the elect.

For such is the virtue of an act of perfect love that, of itself alone, it wipes out a whole life of sin. Of a sinner instantly it makes a saint.

To think this ought to be a Christian consolation to all of us; those who, not only among our own soldiers, but in no matter what belligerent army, obey in good faith the orders of their leaders, to serve a cause they think just, may benefit by the moral virtue of their sacrifice. And how many are there not, among these young men of twenty, who perhaps would not have had the courage to live well, yet, in the passionate impulse of patriotism, find the courage to die well?

Is it not true, my brothers, that God has the supreme art of mingling mercy and wisdom with justice, and ought you not to recognize that if, for our earthly life, the war is a scourge—the destructive force and extent of which it would be difficult to measure—it is also, for souls, an agent

of purification, a means of expiation, a lever which aids them to climb the heights of patriotism and Christian disinterestedness ?

II. ENDURANCE.

We can say it without pride, my brothers, our little Belgium has risen to the first rank in the estimation of other nations.

One meets, I know, in Italy and Holland especially, clever people who say " Why expose Belgium to this immense loss of wealth and men ? Would it not have sufficed to protest verbally against the enemy's aggression, or, if it were necessary, just to have fired a cannon on the frontier ? "

But all men of spirit will take our side against these inventors of paltry calculations.

Utilitarianism is not the norm of Christian citizenship, either for individuals or for societies.

Article 7 of the treaty signed at London, 19th April, 1839, by King Leopold, in the name of Belgium of the one part ; by the Emperor of Austria, the King of France, the Queen of England, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia of the other part ; declares that " Belgium will form an independent and perpetually neutral State, and that she will be bound to preserve this same neutrality towards all other States."

On their side, the co-signatories of the treaty " promise for themselves and for their successors, on the strength of an oath, to fulfil and observe the said treaty in all its points and articles,

without infringing them or allowing them to be infringed."

Belgium was pledged in honour to defend her independence: she has kept her word.

The other Powers were pledged to respect and to protect Belgian neutrality: Germany has broken her oath, England is faithful to hers.

These are the facts.

The rights of conscience are sovereign: it would have been unworthy of us to entrench ourselves behind a pretence of resistance.

We do not regret our first enthusiasm; we are proud of it. In a tragic hour, writing a solemn page of our history, we willed that it should be both single-hearted and glorious.

And, as long as it is necessary, we shall know how to put our endurance to the proof.

The masses set us the example. Citizens of every social position have given their sons to the country lavishly: but it is the poor who will suffer most from privation, from cold, perhaps from hunger. Now, if I judge of the general feeling by what I know to be the truth in the populous quarters of Malines, and in the most afflicted communes of my diocese, the people are strong under suffering. They await the revenge, they never ask to give in.

In the hands of divine omnipotence, trial is a two-edged weapon.

If you revolt against it, it will wound you to death. If you bend your head and accept it, it will sanctify you.

God tries us, says the Apostle S. James, but it is never He who incites us to evil. Everything that comes from Him is good; in God's design everything that comes down to us from Heaven is a stream of light and a token of love. It is we, who, obeying the leading of disordered passions, sometimes transform the gifts of Providence into a mortal poison. "Blessed," the old Apostle concludes courageously, "blessed is he who endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

A truce to our murmurings, my brothers.

I would gladly apply to you the words that the Apostle S. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, addressed to all Christians, reminding them of the example of the bloody sacrifice of Our Lord upon the Cross. "You have not yet resisted unto blood," he said to them. It is not only the universal and transcendent example of Calvary to which I would draw your attention; there is also that of our thirty—perhaps forty—thousand soldiers who have shed their blood for the country. Compared with these brave men, tell me, you who are temporarily deprived of your customary comfort, of your papers, of your travelling facilities, of your family intercourse, what have you endured, what have you suffered?

Let the patriotism of our army, let the heroism of our King and of our dearly loved Queen, so pathetic in her greatness of soul, serve to stimulate

and sustain us ! Do not let us complain ; do not let us complain any more.

Let us deserve our liberation. Let us hasten it by our valour, still more than by the prayers of our lips.

Courage, my brothers, the suffering will pass ; the crown of life for our souls, glory for the nation, will never pass.

I do not ask you—mark that—to renounce any of your patriotic hopes.

On the contrary, I consider it an obligation of my pastoral charge to define for you your conscientious duties in face of the Power who has invaded our soil and who, for the moment, occupies the larger part of it.

This power is not a legitimate authority. Therefore, in your private heart, you do not owe it either esteem, or fidelity, or obedience.

The only legitimate Power in Belgium is that which belongs to our King, to his Government, and to the representatives of the nation. He alone is the authority for us ; he alone has a right to the affection of our hearts, and to our submission.

Of themselves, the public administrative acts of the occupant would have no force ; but the legitimate authority tacitly ratifies those which the general interest justifies, and it is from this ratification alone that their legal value comes.

Occupied provinces are not conquered provinces ; Belgium is no more a German province than Galicia is a province of Russia.

Nevertheless, the occupied part of the country is in a *de facto* position to which she must loyally submit. The greater number of our towns are given up to the enemy. These towns must respect the stipulated conditions of their surrender.

From the beginning of military operations, the civil authorities of the country urgently recommended private persons to abstain from acts of hostility towards the enemy army. These recommendations remain in force.

Our army alone—in companionship with the valiant battalions of our Allies—has the honour and the duty of national defence. Let us be able to wait for definite deliverance by it.

Towards those persons who are governing our country by military force, and who, in the bottom of their hearts, cannot but admire the chivalrous energy with which we have defended, and still defend, our independence, let us exercise the respect that the general interest necessitates. Many of them to-day protest that they wish, as far as lies in their power, to lighten our trials and to help us to take up again a minimum of regular public life. Let us respect the rules that they impose upon us, so long as they do not attain either the liberty of our Christian consciences or our patriotic

dignity. Do not let our courage consist of bravado, nor our bravery in disturbances.

You specially, my very dear colleagues in the priesthood, see that you are the best guardians of patriotism and the best support of public order.

On the battlefield you have been simply splendid. The King and the army wonder at the intrepidity of our military chaplains in face of death, at the devotion of our ambulance-workers and our stretcher-bearers. Your bishops are proud of you.

You have suffered much. You have been grossly calumniated. Be patient: history will avenge you. This very day I bring my testimony to it. Wherever it has been possible, I have questioned the people, the clergy—notably a very considerable number of priests who were deported into German prisons, but whom a humanitarian sentiment, to which I am glad to pay homage, set at liberty. Now I affirm on my honour, and I am ready to declare on oath, that, up to the present, I have not met a single ecclesiastic, secular or regular, who has excited the civil population to use arms against the enemy. On the contrary, since the first days of August, they have all faithfully obeyed the episcopal instructions that they received, which ordered them to use their moral influence with the people to calm them, and to get them to respect military orders.

Persevere in this ministry of peace, which is, for you, the soundest form of patriotism.

Accept with noble courage the privations that you have to undergo.

If it be possible, simplify your lives still more. One of you, reduced by pillage to a position bordering on destitution, said to me lately : " I live now as I wish I had always lived."

Multiply the efforts of your charity, both corporal and spiritual. Following the example of the great Apostle, be entirely absorbed every day by the cares you give your church ; " Who is weak and I am not weak ? who is offended and I burn not ? "

Make yourselves champions of the virtues, as civic honour and the Gospel both command you, " Whatsoever is true, whatsoever is honest, whatsoever is just, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." May the worthiness of our own life, my very dear colleagues, authorize us to adopt the proud conclusion of S. Paul : " Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you."

CONCLUSION.

Let us then continue, my very dear brothers, to pray, to do penance, to be present at holy Mass,

and to communicate for the holy cause of our dear country.

Sunday, 3rd Jan., will be set apart as a day of universal prayer for Belgium and for our Allies.

There will be a general communion and a solemn benediction on that day for the success of our arms.

I enjoin afresh upon the parish priests to celebrate every Saturday a funeral service for the repose of our soldiers' souls. I know well how small the pecuniary resources left to any one. Nevertheless, if you have but little, give of the little that you have, in order to alleviate the destitution of those of your fellow countrymen who find themselves without shelter, without coal, without enough bread. To this end, I have charged the parish priests to form a Relief Committee in every parish. Support it, and of your charity send me the alms which you can spare from your superfluity, if not from your necessity, in order that I may distribute them according to the needs brought under my notice.

Our misfortunes have touched other nations. England, Ireland and Scotland; France, Holland, the United States, Canada, rival each other in generosity to soothe our distress. This spectacle is at once mournful and majestic. Here again is revealed the Providential wisdom which brings good out of evil. In your name and in mine, my brothers, I offer to the governments and the nations which

address themselves so nobly to our misfortunes the heartfelt testimony of our admiration and our gratitude.

With touching kindness, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, was the first to turn his paternal heart towards you.

When, directly after his election, he deigned to embrace me, I had the assurance to ask him that his very first pontifical benediction might be for Belgium, already so severely tried by the war. He responded eagerly to my wish, which I knew to be yours also.

To-day, with exquisite delicacy, he takes the initiative in renouncing your annual mites for Peter's-pence. In a communication, dated on the blessed day of the Feast of the Immaculate Virgin, he deigns to tell us how keenly he feels our troubles; he prays for us, calls down on the Belgian Nation protection from on high, and bids us hail, in the near advent of the Prince of Peace, the dawn of better days.

* * * * *

One word more, my very dear brothers.

At the beginning of this critical time, I said to you that, on the day of the liberation of our territory, we shall know how to give to the Sacred Heart and the very Holy Virgin public testimony of our gratitude. Since that date, I have been able to consult my colleagues in the episcopate, and, in

agreement with them, I ask you to make, as soon as possible, a fresh effort to hasten the construction of the National Basilica that Belgium has promised to dedicate to the Sacred Heart. As soon as the Sun of Peace shines over our country, we will restore our ruins, we will give back shelter to those who have none, we will rebuild our churches, we will refurnish our libraries, and we shall greatly hope to put the crown on this work of reconstruction by raising, on the heights of the capital of Belgium, free and Catholic, the National Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

Then, every year, we shall make it our duty to celebrate with solemnity the Friday after the Octave of the Fête Dieu, the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

Further, in every district of the diocese, the clergy will organize annually a pilgrimage of acts of grace to one of the privileged sanctuaries of the Holy Virgin, in order specially to honour the Protectress of our national independence and the universal Mediatrix of Christian society.

Accept, my very dear brothers, my best wishes for yourselves and for the happiness of your families, and receive, I beg you, my paternal benediction.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. de Malines.

Cardinal Mercier had many disputes with General von Bissing *à propos* of this letter. The latter

having affirmed that His Eminence had consented to the postponement of the reading of "Patriotism and Endurance" by the Belgian clergy, the Primate of Belgium dictated to Mgr. Evrard, Curé Doyen of S. Gudule, the following admirable declaration :

"Neither verbally, nor in writing, have I revoked, nor do I revoke, what were my original orders.

"I protest against the violence offered to my pastoral functions.

"Everything has been done to get me to sign a modification of my letter, but I never did that.

"Then they tried to separate me from my clergy by forbidding them to read my letter. I have done my duty ; my clergy ought to know whether they should do theirs."

CALL TO PRAYER.

*Feast of S. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist,
21st Sept., 1915.*

Our very dear Brothers,

The first battle between good and evil had for its theatre the skies.

Before producing the group of worlds that circulate in space, the Sovereign God had created spirits in such multitudes that they greatly surpassed—according to the apparently correct teaching of S. Thomas Aquinas—the total, however unimaginal, of material creatures.

God classified these angelic substances in distinct orders, according to the functions that providentially devolved upon them and according to the divine perfection that it was their special mission to reflect. The harmony of each of these orders, their activity before the throne of the divine Majesty, led to their being called the “angelic choirs”; S. Paul enumerates nine of them, grouped in three wider categories called hierarchies, which themselves form one complete organization, sometimes called the choir of angels, and sometimes, for a reason to be indicated later on, the celestial host.

Thus our terrestrial globe and other planets form,

with the sun around which they gravitate, a solar system: the stars of the firmament are so many suns grouped in constellations, which, in their turn, are enveloped in the immense organization of a sidereal world regulated by the laws of universal gravitation.

The stars are irresistibly fixed in their orbits, but from intelligent beings, angels and men, the sovereign Master has been pleased to ask freely-paid homage.

To a certain extent, our virtues are our own work, and it will add to our honour in heaven to enjoy a felicity that we have won for ourselves. In the same way, the holiness of pure spirits is the fruit of a moral trail which they have had to undergo.

Theologians generally agree that the subject of their trial was the announcement of the great Mystery of Christ, and the order given them to bow in adoration before a God-Man. Herein, says the apostle S. Paul, lies the great religious Mystery, "God manifest in the flesh . . . seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

And when, in his letter to the Hebrews, he shows us the eternal Father introducing His only Son into the world, he tells us that all the angels were ordered to worship Him.

At the beginning of time, as in the temple in Jerusalem, and as on the supreme day of final

judgment, the Word of God made Man is the sign of contradiction; He is, for some, the occasion of ruin; for many others, a principle of new life; for all, a standard of battle, and for His own mother a piercing sword; thus it pleased God that the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed.

The angels then perceived, in the long vista of their thoughts, this divine Jesus; His Humanity itself reduced to nothingness, "more like a worm of the earth than a man: the crowd overwhelmed Him with opprobrium, repulsed Him as an abject thing; passers-by cast disdainful looks upon Him, sneered, murmured blasphemous words and shook their heads, saying to each other: 'He trusted in God, let God save him!' . . . But the Lord was deaf to the prayer of the suppliant. A savage pack howled at Him, perfidious enemies harassed Him—they pierced His hands and His feet, they bared one by one all His bones . . . Nevertheless it is of this outcast of the human race that a great Church—wide as the world, durable as the centuries, at whose table rich and poor sit down together—will proclaim"; "that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

There were spirits who would refuse the homage

of their adoration to our Christ Jesus ; doubtless their pride would suggest to them that to humble a pure spirit before a God-Man, to hail as above themselves on the throne of God, a man—to bow before a woman whom a Church would acclaim Queen of the Angels, would be to abdicate their position. Lucifer, their leader, raised the standard of revolt, while S. Michael—who, henceforth, would be called Prince of the Celestial Host—collecting round him the faithful legions, cried to them : “ God is the Master, He has no equal whatever.”

Truth triumphed, God’s Right necessitated that ; Satan and the evil spirits whom he had gained over to his cause were expelled from heaven, and we read in the Apocalypse that in eternity is heard echoing the song of the conqueror : “ Now is come salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.”

The drama of Lucifer and S. Michael is ceaselessly renewed through the centuries, my brothers. In our souls and in society, at every period of history, the armies of good and evil are wrestling ; error and truth, injustice and right, crime and innocence dispute for final triumph until the day when the two cities—that of love of God and that of hatred of Him—will be definitely constituted by the irrevocable sentence of the supreme Judge. “ Come,”

He will say to those on His right hand, "ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." On the other hand, "Depart from Me," He will say to those placed on His left, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

In this capital struggle, the only one of which the importance is absolute and decisive for all of us, we have as our auxiliaries the angels of heaven. Each soul has its guardian angel: each parish, each diocese has its protecting angel. The capital of our country has the special privilege of being placed under the patronage of the famous avenger of justice, S. Michael, and his protection spreads over the whole fatherland.

In the sinister times in which we live, we cannot help often recollecting, with devotion, this glorious patronage.

For many years, at the request of Pope Leo XIII, you have been accustomed after Mass to pronounce, all together, this invocation: "We implore you, Prince of the Celestial Host, drive back into hell, Satan and the other evil spirits who are spread over the world to the danger of our souls." Perhaps routine has, here and there, made of this prayer, which ought to be spoken thoughtfully and clearly by every one, a more or less confused verbal formula; take care in future, alternately with the priest, to pronounce it slowly and distinctly, for the defence of the Right of

Belgium. This will be your first homage to the great Archangel.

Here is the second : The 29th of this month of September, the Church celebrates the feast of S. Michael ; two days after will be October, which Pope Leo XIII made the month of the Holy Rosary ; finally, the first day of October coincides, this year, with the first Friday in the month, a day of special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

My brothers, our trials are being prolonged ; do not, I implore you, yield to weariness ; do not cease to pray and to do good ; the sower must wait for the harvest ; in good time it will come and will not escape us.

For a year now, there has been in this dear diocese a magnificent outburst of religious life. The communions—already greatly increased under the influence of Pope Pius X—are yet further multiplied ; in many parishes, and—this is worth noticing—especially in those that have suffered most severely, they have almost doubled. May this enthusiasm spread ! May it be sustained !

Do not let your courage sink.

A year ago you were trembling, we were trembling for our independence : the assailant had on his side force, numbers, carefully concerted plans : humanly speaking we had everything to fear. I remember how, on the 8th of September, 1914, from the height of the sanctuary of Notre Dame de la Garde at

Marseilles, where three French Cardinals and ourself had met to consecrate our sister countries to the maternal protection of the Very Holy Virgin Mary, we turned our looks, not without melancholy, towards the northern plains and said to ourselves with the Psalmist: "Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God"; and if, my very dear brothers, I am not mistaken, it is the same day, 8th September, 1914, the Feast of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, that dates the first bulletin of victory from that glorious but still mysterious battle on the Marne—terminal point of the invasion, starting-point of the retreat—a victory which we supplicate the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of the Rosary and of Mediation, and the Archangel S. Michael to hasten and complete.

So then, my brothers, in the interval between the 29th of September and Friday, the 1st of October, or on Sunday, the 3rd of October, all the members of our beloved flock should, at least once, make the Holy Communion.

This will be a fine exhibition of Christian confidence and of patriotic endurance.

The parish priests will reserve one day—Thursday, for instance—for a General Communion for little children. I seem to hear our Divine Saviour repeat again to the mothers of families and to the pastors of souls, the call which is recorded in His Holy

Gospel: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Christian parents, listen also, I beg you, to this other warning of our Divine Master: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones . . . it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Do not then, I conjure you, familiarize these little angel children with immodesty; have for your little girls, have for your young daughters, the same respect that their angels have for them—their angels who, appointed to guard them, none the less always behold the face of their Father which is in heaven. Fervent souls will not be contented with a single communion during our approaching *triduum*: the greatness, the trials, the hopes of our country and of our allies each in turn calls for their acts of grace, their compassion, their Christian faith—they will bless the Sacred Heart, they will invoke the sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary, they will place our combatants under the shelter of S. Michael's shield. These fervent souls, by their example and by their zeal, will draw the hesitating, the lukewarm—those who are retarding the hour of our deliverance—to the communion-rail, and (every evening of the month of the Rosary) to the Benediction of the very holy Sacrament.

My brothers, may these few lines contribute to revive in you the worship of the holy Angels, and to habituate you to practice a more sustained, more reverent, more confident intercourse with them. Our guardian angel is charged by God to follow us and to watch over us in all our ways. You do not see him, you do not touch him, says S. Bernard, but would you then be sunk in matter to the point of believing only the testimony of your own eyes and hands? Have faith in the Word of God, and put your trust in the protection of the holy Angels. "They are faithful," says S. Bernard, "they are prudent, they are powerful; who should be able to make us afraid? Let us accept their guidance, let us bind ourselves to them, let us thus hold fast to the protection of the God of Heaven."

Every time that a grave temptation assails you, that a severe trial threatens you, invoke him who, through all the happy or unhappy vicissitudes of life, is your Guardian, your Guide, your Helper: call him to you, and say to the good God: "Lord, save us, we perish."

The present letter will be read from the pulpits of the parish churches and public chapels of the diocese on Sunday, the 26th of September, at every Mass.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY AND THE DAY OF THE DEPARTED.

Malines, Feast of Saint Theresa, 15th Oct., 1915.

My very dear Brothers.

I do not think there is in any literature a panorama equal to that which the Catholic liturgy brings before our eyes on All Saints Day and the Day of the Departed.

Beginning with the Vigil, the Church familiarizes us with the thought that our departed, when they leave us in a state of grace, are received into the hands of God, sheltered from pain and grief, and that even if we were so foolish as to think them dead, they are none the less living and at peace.

On the day of the feast of All Saints', while the priest goes up to the altar, where the sub-deacon chants the Epistle, the faithful, in the transport of their joy, have eyes for nothing but the opening in the skies, where Christ Jesus, Conqueror of death and sin, displays before the blessed city the trophies of His triumph. The centuries before Christ have sent their legions there; each of the twelve tribes of Israel is represented by twelve thousand of the elect; then comes a multitude, that no man can

number, of saints of all nations and races and tongues ; they stand before the throne where reigns the Lamb of God Who has taken away the sins of the world ; their robes are of immaculate whiteness, their hands wave branches of palm, and from east to west, from north to south, the skies ring with the loud voice of their acclamations: "Thanks to our God, the supreme King, and to the Lamb, we are saved !"

The Angels are at the festival ; their choirs surround the royal throne : the heralds of Nature and of the Gospel are in their ranks, and all this immense assembly, falling down in adoration, repeats "Amen ! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever !"

It pleased Providence to confide to the Apostle, whom the Saviour loved, the charge of revealing more fully to the world the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the compassionate designs of His Sacred Heart.

After the Evangelists S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke had finished narrating the birth, public ministry, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ ; after S. Peter, S. Paul, S. James and S. Jude had developed under multiple aspects the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, it was important to trace out, for prepared souls, the paths of love.

This was especially the apostolic *rôle* of him who had the privilege to lean, at the Last Supper, on the breast of the Eternal Priest; to receive, at the foot of the Cross, by the side of the Queen of Martyrs, the last breath of the divine Crucified, the last drops of water and of blood that Longinus's lance caused to flow from the Sacred Heart which so loved men, yet which, in spite of so much love for *us*, is still, always, so little loved by all of us, my brothers, by each one of us so little loved!

S. John wrote his Gospel, his three letters and his Apocalypse, less, it seems, to make us acquainted with the Jesus of history, than with the celestial Jesus, eternally consubstantial with the Father, revealer of the intimate Mystery of the divine life, reascended by His own power into the regions of glory, where, sharing the throne of the very holy Trinity, He realizes the prophetic speech, "Thou shalt be my Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"; the Jesus who for ever offers to His Father, for us, the sacrifice of Calvary and—still for us—His continuous ever-living intercessions, until He shall come to us again, to exercise His supreme Judicature over mankind for the last time; the glorified Jesus, Who, in union with His Father, sends without intermission, to His loved Spouse, the Church, the divine Paraclete Whom He promised to her in His farewell address.

In his Apocalypse, that is his *Revelation*, the last

of the series of the divinely inspired Books, S. John has specially at heart the strengthening of the courage of suffering souls.

The first heathen persecutions had already begun to rage ; others were imminent ; the heart of the old apostle was bleeding ; the Church of his Christ Jesus struggled, suffered, wept ; there were hero-martyrs who triumphed, but there were also weak men who gave way.

And, so far as he could cast his prophetic eye over all the long road of the centuries down which Christian society would pass, he saw toil and tears mingled with blood.

And Christ is no longer with us. The apostles and their first disciples had at least the consolation of seeing Him, of hearing Him, of sometimes taking their meals with Him. The most distrustful, like Thomas, could kiss the wounds in His feet and hands, could thrust a finger into the gaping wound in His Sacred Heart. But for us, we are alone, and it is only from a long way off that Jesus loves us !

Oh, no, a thousand times no, replies the Seer of the Apocalypse ; no, you are not alone.

Christ foretold you that the servant would be treated like his Master ; " If they have persecuted Me," he said to them, " they will also persecute you," and Christ keeps His word.

Yet, at the moment of His farewells, Christ also foretold you that He would dwell with you

until the end of the world. And in this also He keeps His word. He has promised you His Holy Spirit and He sends Him to you, and whosoever lets himself be possessed by the Divine Love will experience that Christ is with him and lives in him.

And this time, Christ is no more the defenceless Lamb who is led to the slaughter; He is no longer the Jesus who allows Himself to be spit upon, mocked, crucified; He is the Lamb as Conqueror, the Avenger of truth and justice, the Sovereign imperturbably sure of His final triumph. He is, says S. John, "The Prince of the kings of the earth"; when He chooses, He will "rule them with a rod of iron"; emperors and kings are His vassals, and when "they make war with the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them; the day will come when the rich and powerful and strong will tremble before Him like the most abject of slaves; "Fear not," He says to His Church, "I am the first and the last, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore and have the keys of hell and of death."

In the Apocalypse, the history of the Church is symbolized by a Book, whose pages are sealed in seven different places, by means of seals which He alone Who is the Sovereign Master of history, the new David, has the right and the power to break.

The loosing of the seals discloses a long succession of famines, sickness, wars, persecutions—but, over all these visions of suffering and mourning, there

looks down the divine smile of Him whom you have heard the tribes of Israel and the phalanx of the blessed acclaim as their Saviour and their God.

O my brothers, how good it is, in our hours of distress and ruin, in the prolonged expectation of our coming deliverance, to give ear to these prophetic words that we have recalled to you. One of the elders, pointing out to the prophet the faithful of the Church, asks him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" "These," he continued, "are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

In the light of these predictions, the most agonizing problem of public conscience is solved, doubts are dissipated, blasphemies are abashed.

From the moral point of view, the great problem is that of evil and of suffering.

Why must we suffer? Why must the innocent suffer, and, I might add, why are they, in the sight of God, the preferred victims of suffering?

All the nations of Europe are, at this moment,

under the burden of sorrow ; but does it not seem that Providence appoints to the most Christian among them the largest share of sacrifice ?

Poland, whose name alone evokes the idea of martyrdom ; Poland, so stubbornly loyal to its Faith and to its liberty, is ravaged, trampled upon, drenched with blood.

Her episcopate has addressed to Catholicism an appeal for help to which, heavily tried as we are ourselves, our hearts will respond, by our prayers and by our charity.

And we ourselves, is it necessary to reiterate our sorrows ?

National life is suspended ; our factories, our workshops, our Universities are closed ; our King is absent ; thousands of young men, of heads of families, groan in foreign prisons or endanger their life every moment on the fields of death ; wives and mothers are in tears ; and in the forceful language of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, the times are charged with hatred and carnage.

Well, yes, my brothers, the Christian nations suffer, and the bloody tragedy of 1914-1915, of which they are the heroes, proves once more that Providence does not mean to depart from its general law which orders that its chosen should occupy the place of honour in the procession of suffering.

But why, you will say to me, this kind of relentlessness in making the innocent suffer ? " Wherefore, O my God, hidest Thou Thy face," said Job, " and holdest me for Thine enemy ?

Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro, and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble? ”

O my brothers, it is very necessary that we speak to you without circumlocution. Do not say, I beg you, since they are Christian, why do the Christian nations suffer? Say rather: Our dear Belgium is Christian, notoriously, completely Christian in virtue of our age-long traditions: is it not then worthy of her to claim a prominent place on the hill of Calvary?

Would you forget that the Founder of the society to which it is our glory to belong is the Crucified? Do you not know that His mother, whom the gentle Jesus loved, humanly and divinely, as no other son ever loved, was warned from the dawn of her maternity that the Son whom she would bring into the world would be the victim chosen by God for the expiation of the sins of mankind; that even she would have her heart pierced, and that before becoming Queen of Heaven she would be Queen of Martyrs?

Do you forget that the soil in which the foundations of our holy, Catholic, apostolic, Roman Church were laid, was for three centuries watered by an almost continuous stream of the blood of legions of martyrs?

The Leader of our army proclaimed: “Whoso will follow Me, must take up his cross.”

And have you not heard the Apostle S. Paul successively recall to you, time after time, the law of your origin? In his Epistle to the Romans

he says, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry: Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Elsewhere, the valiant Apostle says: You are the disciples of Christ and you wish to show yourselves worthy of His Gospel: well—"unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

We are only really children of God in virtue of being brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the strict sense of the word, the Father eternal has only one Son, His Word, and if he deigns to adopt us into the divine family, it is in order to give His only Son the honour and the joy of having a group of brothers; moreover, they will all be copied from the model of their eldest Brother. "For whom He did foreknow," says S. Paul, "He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Now, our eldest Brother is the Incarnate Word; and not only was He incarnate and suffered, but He was incarnate in order to suffer, in order to be able to suffer.

The Incarnation and the Redemption form a unique Mystery: the first is only one stage towards the second. Such is the teaching of S. Thomas Aquinas.

Now is it not true, my brothers, that your generous hearts would bear it ill that our divine Jesus should be alone in trouble? Would you not feel cruelly humiliated if He said to you: I wish to drain the chalice of sorrow to the dregs alone; as for you, drink large draughts from the cup of pleasure? Is it not true that you would receive on your knees with even more gratitude than homage your tiny portion of the holy cross?

The Passion of our divine Saviour is not a finished work, writes S. Paul: As far as I am concerned he says, I "rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church."

Then, at the conclusion of his Epistle to the Hebrews, making a direct appeal to all of us, the noble apostle cries: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God."

The horrors of war have roused from indifference a great number of persons, and for that we bless the wisdom and the compassion of Him who knows so wonderfully how to bring good out of evil; but these horrors have, in the mind of God, another aim and ought to produce in us another effect, that is to make us accept and love the law of suffering.

The good things of this world fascinate you:

suspect their attractions, do not make riches the supreme ideal of your life.

You suffer privation; your tears flow; you are exposed to mischief-making, to vexations, to calumnies, or perhaps to persecution: do not rebel, do not murmur.

You heard, a little while ago, the Epistle of the Mass, which announced to you the final triumph; read the Gospel for this same day of All Saints; Our divine Saviour repeats His Beatitudes to you, it is the programme of the struggles which prelude victory.

Oh, I seem to hear rising from your ranks a voice which protests: "Impossible," it murmurs, "that happiness can be found in privation and tears!"

Impossible? My brothers, make the experiment.

Our Lord never deceives any one.

When He declares the conditions of happiness, it is *de fide* that he who fulfils them cannot but be happy.

Understand clearly, it is not a question of that superficial content which a giddy head and a flighty heart might momentarily find in pleasure. No, it is a question of the deep happiness of the soul; of that complete peace which dominates all ephemeral feelings; of that steadfast self-possession that neither surface agitations nor the deepest wounds of Time can touch; in short, it is a question of that happiness which the Gospel and the Church call "eternal rest."

Everybody will not understand us, that I know.

There are some who will say in their conscience what certain rather cowardly hearers of the teachings of Christ said, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?"

There will, then, be some who will refuse to listen to us. But you at least, fervent souls whom our Lord Jesus Christ has already perhaps shaped in the school of contradiction and misfortune—you who, during the last year, have (more than others) suffered destitution, agony, mourning—you, religious souls, who are pledged by your vows to walk most faithfully along the bloody track of the Way of the Cross—you above all, pastors or educators of our youth, priestly souls whose mission was to make known to the world, not by any means a Gospel sweetened to suit the taste of human frivolity, but the true, strong, austere Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ("born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried")—you will constitute that *élite* of whom the book of Maccabees speaks, by whom the salvation of Israel will be brought about.

There were certain philosophers, the Stoics, who affected to say: "Grief, you are only a word!" And they imagined that thus they were able to hide themselves from its embrace.

No, grief is not merely a word: it rends, it cuts deep, it penetrates, and sometimes it kills.

It must not be rejected, it must be loved. "Give me a heart which knows how to love," said St. Augustine, "and it will understand me."

In order to realize the hope of achievement, what sacrifices are not made by the passion for travel, by scientific ambition, by a profane or even guilty flame, by maternal solicitude, by devotion to country ?

The scalpel of the surgeon makes you shudder ; but you give yourselves up to the hands of the operator because, from his skill, you expect the restoration of endangered health.

All the same, the scalpel that wounds you cannot, at the same moment, repair your tissues.

On the other hand, the Divine Surgeon of your body and your souls always pours out balm at the same time as grief, in such a way that the souls who most ardently love our Lord come to love suffering itself as the infallible means of quickening in themselves the flame of the Divine Love. And thus is verified that wonderful saying of S. Augustine : " Love, and you will not suffer any more ; or, if you still suffer, your suffering itself will come to be loved."

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The consoling teaching to which you have just listened, on the sanctifying mission of suffering, forms a natural transition between the Feast of All Saints' and the Commemoration of the Departed, and will help us to understand the position, at once sorrowful and peaceful, of the souls in Purgatory.

The pious English oratorian, Father Faber, in

his very attractive book, "All for Jesus," analyses with great delicacy the two contrasting aspects of the theological doctrine of Purgatory.

The first of these aspects is sorrowful; souls suffer in Purgatory. S. Augustine and S. Thomas Aquinas consider that the souls that suffer least there—for pain there is graduated—yet undergo pain more acute than any torture known on earth.

Souls in Purgatory have, indeed, left this life in a state of grace: their rightful destiny is the blessedness of Heaven; they know this, and with all the impetuosity of their enthusiasm, at once natural and Christian, they would fain throw themselves into the arms of Him on whom is henceforth concentrated all their love.

But, like the bird, held back by a thread, of which S. John of the Cross speaks somewhere, they are captives. The thread is slender, there are the *disordered dispositions* left in the soul by past, though absolved, sins; there is the debt of *punishment* incurred by sins pardoned, yet not fully expiated; nevertheless, however thin it be compared with mortal sin, which excludes the deceased for ever from Paradise, this thread temporarily holds the soul back in *expectation of God*.

An expectation all the keener because God is better known and more desired, and the absence of corporal organs cuts short all the distractions or

dissipations that man finds on earth in the satisfaction of the senses.

This mournful waiting for God is the *essential* pain of Purgatory.

S. Thomas gives it the same name as that of the damned, the pain of being deprived of the sight of God (*dam*); not, be it understood, because it is identical in both cases, for in the case of the damned chastisement is accompanied by hatred, while in the case of souls in Purgatory it is supported by love; but because the pains of both have, for a time, a common character—they deprive the soul of the sight and possession of God.

An analagous conception has led Councils and theologians sometimes to oppose to each other Heaven and Hell, as if there were not, between the state of the blessed and that of the damned, an intermediate state: in that case, under the elastic name of lower or infernal regions, they comprehend both the eternal hell of the condemned and the temporary imprisonment of Purgatory.

The torment of deprivation of God has a perceptibly grievous effect upon the soul. To the principal pain of the *dam* is added, says the theologian, the secondary pain of the *senses*.

The fact that our physical sufferings result from a lesion or other organic change, sometimes suggests the idea that an incorporeal soul must be insensible.

Two things are forgotten: first, that in the

human organism the source of vitality and of the sensibility of organs is in the soul ; and then, that it is not the lesion or organic change as such, but the lesion or change which one notices, or is conscious of, that causes suffering: the proof of which is that when fainting, pain ceases ; anæsthesia and unconsciousness go together.

Now the soul, disincarnated, is none the less the root of the organic and sensitive powers which during terrestrial life emanated from it, and which will emanate from it again in our resuscitated bodies.

As for consciousness, it is much more vivid in the soul in its state of separation than in its state of union : it is therefore more accessible to the feeling of suffering than it was in this world.

S. Thomas Aquinas is of the opinion that the *sensible* pains of Purgatory surpass those of which we have any experience.

How mad we are to expose ourselves so lightly to these heavy but necessary reprisals of Justice, especially since our Divine Saviour has been so lavish with His warnings and His aid to spare us from them !

An act of perfect contrition, or confession with imperfect contrition ; Christian acceptation of the law of work and of the troubles of life ; fasting and abstinence prescribed for us by the Church, or that we voluntarily impose upon ourselves ; alms,

prayer, the holy Mass and the holy communion—so many means of expiating while deserving and of deserving by expiating!

Do not murmur, then, I beg you, against divine Justice, which you yourselves have provoked; but beat upon your breast and set about doing penance.

And in view of your death, which will come at an hour when you least expect it, ask from your relatives, your friends, your parish priest, a great act of charity.

Our divine Saviour, who compassionates all our weaknesses, instituted a sacrament, the object of which is to sustain our moral force in the last struggles of life, and to wipe out the last traces of sin in our souls, before they appear before the tribunal of God.

Extreme Unction, or more plainly, the *Holy Unction of the Sick*—the *Sacrament of Unction* as it was called by the Council of Trent and the Roman Ritual—will restore you to health if that be best for you, or is able, if you leave this world, to ensure your escape from the pains of Purgatory. Is it not deplorable that prejudiced stupidity—doubtless instigated by the perfidy of Satan—should give credence to the idea that this blessed Sacrament is the precursor of death?

It is given to the dying, yet they dread to give it to the sick!

While you are in good health, therefore, you will

ask your priest, your doctor, your neighbours, to procure for you the Holy Unction for the sick, not when you are desperately ill, but as soon as there is serious probability that your life is in danger—thus, with serenity, in full consciousness, you will receive what the Council of Trent calls “the most powerful succour” for the great transition, and you will respond to the ardent desire of the Heart of God, who wishes to see you go up straight from earth to Paradise.

We see then, that, under its first aspect, Purgatory is agonizing, sorrowful.

On the other hand, there is nothing, continues Father Faber—the interpreter of those consoling revelations made to St. Catherine of Genoa—nothing more beautiful, after heaven, nothing more peaceful, more submissive to God, than the kingdom of suffering souls.

Dante—the great Italian poet whose philosophy and theology are at the same height as his literary genius—sees the souls in Purgatory wafted in a light skiff that scarcely skims the surface of the waters; an angel, like a divine bird, stirs the air with his wings, and the skiff is thus steered. They sing, in chorus, the psalm of deliverance, *In exitu Israël de Aegypto*. Their only anxiety is to grow purer, “more beautiful” as the poet expresses it, in order to be no longer unworthy to appear before the infinite holiness of God.

Every day, at the canon of the Mass, the priest has a special prayer for the souls of the departed. "Remember them," he says to the Lord, "they have gone before us into eternity, provided with the token of faith, and they rest in the sleep of peace."

They do not yet taste eternal rest, in all its coolness and light; but they are none the less safe in Christ, to whom they have the joy to belong. The Council of Trent calls them "deceased in Christ."

They are confirmed in grace, sheltered from sin, even, thanks to the special protection of God, safe from venial sin.

It is no longer in their power to increase their merit, but they are none the less generous with it, putting into practice the theological and moral virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, with which they were enriched when they left this world; their time of trial is spent in acts of hope, of courage, of patience, of charity, of religious conformity to the most holy will of God.

They suffer intensely: they will suffer perhaps for years if not for centuries, but they worship the Justice that purifies them, they reverence the infinite Purity that keeps them at a distance: from Purgatory there never arises either a murmur or a blasphemy. These noble, engaging souls "truly sleep in peace and rest in Christ" awaiting their final Beatitude. "To all the souls who

rest in Christ," says the Liturgy of the Mass, "mercifully grant, O Lord, refreshing sojourn, full of light and peace, in Thy Paradise."

"O Christ, our God, Thou art the Resurrection and the Life and the Rest of thy servant N. in his sleep," says a touching prayer in the Græco-Slav liturgy for the dead. "We glorify Thee, with Thy Father, who knows no beginning, and with Thy most holy, helpful and quickening Spirit, now, henceforth, and for ever and ever. Amen."

All the same, my brothers, there must be no mistake about it: suffering, though accepted and loved, is none the less suffering.

The desolation of the souls in Purgatory is all the more painful because they are absolutely powerless to help themselves.

Happily, God has disposed things in a marvellous order. Impotent for themselves, the souls in Purgatory are yet capable of praying for us. And we ourselves have a thousand ways of helping them.

In sin, there is the fault and there is the punishment, and the punishment is not always liquidated as soon as the sin is pardoned.

In every good and every beneficial work accomplished by a soul in a state of grace there is, beyond the merit which is strictly personal and inalienable, and consists in an increase of grace and in a fresh and certain title to an increase of celestial glory—there is, I say, an atoning value which

expiates the punishments due for the sins, mortal or venial, already pardoned.

This atoning value divine generosity has made transferable to others. You have, then, the power to relinquish it, by an intentional act, for the benefit of your brothers, and particularly (if that be your wish) for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory.

The Church, which is in possession of the atoning value of the works of the Holy Virgin, of the Martyrs, of the Saints, puts them in part at our disposition, under the form of indulgences, in order that (by means of works of penance or piety) we may transfer them to the suffering souls.

Whence, my brothers, you see how far your power of expiation and help can go. Good works, toil, sufferings loved or borne in a Christian manner, voluntary mortifications, alms, prayers public or private, the use of the Sacraments—here you have in your power so many means of soothing these poor souls, who (like the paralytic in the Gospel) see near them the health-giving pool which would make them new again, but must wait for the charity of some helping hand to plunge them into it.

The Church has approved an act which is called heroic: it consists in giving up to the souls in Purgatory everything by which we could make satisfaction, even the prayers that others offer or will offer to God on our behalf, both now and after our death. This act does, in fact, involve a dis-

interestedness so complete that it partakes of heroism.

Do not do this without having maturely reflected upon it; but if grace urges you to it, and the director of your conscience approves the step, do it resolutely.

Further, the more you forget yourself, the more your personal merit will increase, and thus—thanks to the superabundant mercy of God, which besets us behind and before—you will lose only to gain the more.

Besides, the souls in Purgatory will reimburse you, both now and after their liberation, that which you have sacrificed for them.

Fervent souls, desirous of simplifying their spiritual life, have adopted the practice of transferring to the Holy Virgin, “Consolatrix of the afflicted,” the care of distributing their prayers to the suffering Church.

This act of filial abandon is also a way of purifying and widening your charity.

The Church teaches you by example. She does not wish a single Mass to be celebrated without the priest adding to its special intentions that of succouring all faithful Christians, living or dead.

Enter then into this broad spirit of the Liturgy.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the means *par excellence* of shortening the duration of Purgatory for suffering souls. The Council of Trent declares

this expressly. "Purgatory does exist, and it is in the power of the faithful, by their prayers, to help the souls who are detained there; but, of all prayers, the most powerful is the offering of the Sacrifice of the altar."

Certain theologians estimate that Purgatory is more populous than our own globe. We cannot say what degree of probability there is in this conjecture, but there is little doubt that Death has mown down so many lives this last year, that the number of souls, awaiting in suffering our sympathetic generosity, has very considerably increased.

We cannot, therefore, praise sufficiently the large heart of the Sovereign Pontiff, Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XV, who has deigned to grant to all priests of the Catholic Church the privilege of celebrating three Masses for the departed, on the Day of the Dead.

One of the last pontifical acts of Pope Pius X was to grant to the faithful the means of procuring, on the Day of the Dead, a plenary indulgence, "toties quoties," exclusively applicable to souls in Purgatory. On condition, then, of confessing and communicating, the faithful will obtain a plenary indulgence, on 2nd November, as many times as they visit a church or a public or semi-public oratory, and there pray for the deceased, according to the intentions of His Holiness.

I have perfect confidence, my brothers, that you will second this generous impulse of our beloved Popes.

You will make it your duty to visit our churches many times on the Day of the Departed.

Then, on this same day, I request that there shall be, in every parish of the diocese, a solemn Mass on behalf of our soldiers who have fallen on the battle-field. I should like this High Mass to be at a very early hour, in order that the parishioners may associate themselves more intimately in the Holy Sacrifice by communicating at it with the priest. The celebrant will then better understand the exquisite prayer of the canon: God Almighty, accept our Sacrifice "in order that all of us who are at the table of the Altar, nourished by the Sacred Body and the Holy Blood of Thy Son, may receive in their plenitude all the blessings of heaven and the divine grace. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."

And if it is sadly true that the nations war against each other, yet souls are sisters. You will not exclude any one from your prayers, not even the soldiers who have fallen wielding their weapons against us. You will, however, pray with preference for the souls of your countrymen and their allies. You will be assiduous at the Holy Mass on their behalf, during the whole month of November.

I further request that, in every village church and in every decanal church of the towns, there shall be, one day in November—Wednesday, the 17th, for example—a very solemn service for the repose of the souls of the soldiers who have sacrificed their lives to safeguard our independence. At this service

a collection will be made on behalf of our brothers in Poland.

* * *

War is ravaging the nations, patriotic sentiments are clashing ; it is good to find respite from these cruel spectacles in the contemplation of the dogma of the Communion of Saints.

Heaven, Purgatory and this earth form but one catholic family in which all souls have the same Father, our God thrice holy, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; one only Mother in Heaven, the Very Holy Virgin Mary ; and on earth, during their exile, one only Mother, the Holy Roman Church ; one only Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus.

Among the denizens of these three realms, let us accustom ourselves to the interchange of our prayers, our works, and our sufferings.

It is recorded in the first Book of Maccabees, that Jonathan, anxious to preserve friendly relations with the Spartans, assured them that, at every solemnity, the Jewish people always remembered them in their sacrifices and religious observances : for, he added, it is seemly that brothers should think of their brothers.

In the second Book of the same inspired work, it is recorded that Judas Maccabeus, the day after a battle in which there had been heavy casualties, ordered a gathering, in order that an expiatory sacrifice for the dead should be celebrated at

Jerusalem. "A beautiful and pious action," adds the book, "inspired by faith in the resurrection of the dead. Of course, if Judas Maccabeus had not believed that the soldiers killed in battle were still living and must rise again, it would have been futile and unreasonable on his part to ask for prayers for the dead. Moreover, he held that a very fine reward is reserved for those who sleep in piety, and this again is a religious and holy idea. So we see that Judas Maccabeus had this expiatory service for the dead celebrated, in order that they might be delivered from their sins."

With a yet better title than had the righteous of the Old Law, we, sons of the New Covenant, wish to testify, by the devout remembrance that we keep of our absent brothers, by our alms and our prayers for the dead, that we believe in the communion of saints, in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the flesh and in the life everlasting. Amen.

This letter is to be read, in three portions, in all the churches and chapels of our diocese, at every Mass.

**To their Eminences the Cardinals and to their
Lordships the Bishops of Germany, Bavaria
and Austria-Hungary.**

24th Nov., 1915.

[An important group of German Catholics, under pretext of replying to a French work entitled "The German War and Catholicism," calumniated the Belgian nation. A professor of Paderborn, Rosenberg, making himself the mouthpiece of his countrymen, frightfully insulted the honour of the Belgian name in a book entitled "The German War and Catholicism: A German reply to French attacks, prepared by German Catholics," a book all the more perfidious because it is apparently moderate.]

To this book, translated into French and Flemish, and circulated through the Belgian provinces, Mgr. Mercier and the Bishops of Namur, Liège and Tournai replied in the following letter addressed to their colleagues in Germany and Austria-Hungary, inviting them to hold an impartial inquiry into the accusations formulated by Professor Rosenberg.]

Eminences, Messeigneurs,

For a whole year, we Catholic Bishops have given to the world—you bishops of Germany on one side; and we, bishops of Belgium, France

and England, on the other side—a most disconcerting spectacle.

Hardly had the German armies swarmed over the soil of our country than the rumour was spread among you that our civilians were taking part in military operations ; that the women of Visé and Liège tore out the eyes of your soldiers ; that the populace had sacked, in Antwerp and Brussels, the property of expelled Germans.

As early as the first days of August, Dom Ildefons Herwegen, Abbé of Maria-Laach, addressed to the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines a telegram in which he implored him, for the love of God, to protect the German soldiers from the tortures that our countrymen were supposed to inflict upon them.

Now it was notorious that our Government took precautionary measures in order that the citizens should all be made acquainted with the laws of war ; in every commune the arms of the inhabitants had to be deposited at the communal house ; by means of placards, the people were warned that only citizens regularly enrolled under the the flag were authorized to bear arms ; and the clergy, anxious to second the mission of the State, had spread by word of mouth, by parochial notices and by placards fixed on the church doors, the instructions issued by the Government.

Accustomed for a century to a *régime* of peace,

we could not imagine it possible that any one could, in good faith, accuse us of violent instincts. Strong in our right and in the sincerity of our pacific intentions, we replied to the calumnies about "snipers" and "eyes dug out" by shrugging our shoulders, persuaded that the truth would not fail to come to light of itself.

The clergy and episcopate of Belgium were in personal relation with a great many German and Austrian priests, monks, and bishops; the Eucharistic Congresses at Cologne in 1909, and at Vienna in 1912, had furnished opportunities for personal acquaintance and mutual appreciation. So we felt certain that the Catholics of the nations at war with us would not judge us lightly; and, without being much disturbed by the contents of Dom Ildefons' telegram, the Cardinal of Malines merely asked him to unite with us in preaching gentleness: for, he added, it has been pointed out to us that the German troops shoot innocent Belgian priests.

As early as the first days of August, crimes had been committed at Battice, at Visé, at Berneau, at Herve and other places; but we tried to hope that they would remain isolated deeds, and, knowing the important position of Dom Ildefons, we had perfect confidence in the following declaration that he was kind enough to send us on 11th August: "I am informed on the highest authority, that 'formal

orders ' have been given to the German soldiers, by the military authorities, to spare the innocent. As to the very deplorable fact that even priests have lost their lives, I beg to draw the attention of your Eminence to the fact that, latterly, the frocks of priests and monks have become objects of suspicion and disgrace, since French spies have made use of the ecclesiastical habit and even of the costume of nuns to hide their hostile intentions."

Notwithstanding, hostile acts towards the innocent continued.

On 18th August, 1914, Mgr. the Bishop of Liège, wrote to Commandant Bayer, Governor of the town of Liège: " One after another, many villages have been destroyed; prominent persons—priests among them—have been shot: others have been arrested, though all of them protested their innocence. I know the priests of my diocese; I cannot believe that a single one of them would be guilty of hostile acts towards the German soldiers. I have visited many ambulances and I have seen the wounded Germans there cared for as zealously as the Belgians. They admit this themselves." ¹

No reply was made to this letter.

At the beginning of September, the Emperor of Germany lent his authority to the calumnious

¹This protestation was repeated on 21st August to General Kolewe, who had become Governor of Liège, and again on 29th August to His Excellency Baron von der Goltz, Governor-General of the occupied Provinces of Belgium, who at this time was staying at the Episcopal Palace at Liège.

accusations of which our innocent people were the object. He sent to Mr. Wilson, President of the United States, the following telegram, which, to the best of our knowledge, has never been retracted : "The Belgian Government has publicly encouraged the civil population to take part in this war which it had carefully prepared long before. The cruelties perpetrated in the course of this irregular warfare, by women and even by priests, upon doctors and nurses are such that my generals have finally been compelled to have recourse to the most severe means of chastising the guilty to prevent the blood-thirsty population from continuing these abominably criminal and odious deeds. Many villages, and even the town of Louvain itself, have of necessity been demolished (except the very beautiful Hôtel-de-ville) in the interest of our defence and for the protection of my troops. My heart bleeds when I realize that such measures have become inevitable, and when I think of the numberless innocents who have lost their homes and their belongings through the criminal deeds in question."

This telegram was placarded in Belgium by order of the German Government on 11th September. No later than the next day, 12th September, Mgr. the Bishop of Namur asked to be received by the military government of Namur and protested against the reputation that the Emperor sought to give the Belgian clergy ; he affirmed the innocence of

all the members of the clergy shot or injured, and declared himself ready to publish the guilty deeds that they could succeed in establishing.

The Bishop of Namur's offer was not accepted and nothing came of his protestation.

Calumny was consequently free to take its course. The German press fomented it; the *Kölnische Volkzeitung*—organ of the Catholic Centre—vied with the Lutheran press in Chauvinism. The very day on which thousands of our fellow-citizens, ecclesiastics and layman, from Visé, Aerschot, Wesemael, Herent, Louvain, and twenty other localities—as innocent of deeds of war or of cruelties as you and we are—were dragged as prisoners across the railways of Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne, and were, during deadly hours, made a spectacle for the unwholesome curiosity of the Rhenish metropolis; they had the grief of proving that their Catholic brethren poured forth as many insults upon them as the Lutheran sectaries of Celle, of Soltau or of Magdeburg.

In Germany not one voice was raised in defence of the victims.

The legend which transformed the innocent into the guilty, and crime into an act of justice, thus became accredited, and on 10th May, 1915, the *White Book*, the official organ of the German Empire, dared to take up these odious and cowardly lies on its own account, and to circulate them in neutral

countries: "It is indisputable that wounded Germans have been stripped and killed, yes, horribly mutilated by the Belgian population, and that even women and young girls have taken part in these abominations. Wounded Germans have had their eyes dug out, ears, noses, fingers, sexual organs cut off, or their entrails torn open; in other instances German soldiers have been poisoned, hung from trees, had boiling liquids poured over them, or been burnt, so that they have died in atrocious suffering. These bestial proceedings of the population not only violate the obligations expressly formulated by the Convention of Geneva concerning the respect and care due to the wounded of the enemy army, but are opposed to the fundamental principles of the laws of war and humanity."

For one moment, dear colleagues in the faith and the priesthood, put yourselves in our place.

We know that these accusations of the imperial Government are calumnies from beginning to end. We know it; we swear it.

Now to justify these accusations, your Government calls upon witnesses who have never been submitted to any checking by examination from the other side.

Is it not your duty, not only out of charity, but in strict justice, to enlighten yourselves, to enlighten your flocks, and to provide us an opportunity for the judicial establishment of our innocence?

You owe us this satisfaction in the name of that Catholic charity which is above national conflicts;

you owe it us to-day in strict justice, because a Committee, sheltered by your—at least tacit—approval, a Committee composed of all that is most distinguished in Germany in politics, science, and religion, has countenanced these official accusations, and has confided to the pen of a Catholic priest, Professor A. J. Rosenberg, of Paderborn, the task of condensing them into a book entitled: “*Lying Accusations of French Catholics against Germany*,” and has thus saddled Catholic Germany with the responsibility of active and public propagation of calumny against the Belgian people.

When the French book, to which the German Catholics oppose theirs, saw the light, their Eminences Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, and Cardinal von Bettinger, Archbishop of Munich, thought it necessary to send a telegram to their Emperor in these words:

“Revolted by the defamations against the German Fatherland and against its glorious army contained in the work ‘*The German War and Catholicism*,’ our heart feels the need of expressing to your Majesty its sorrowful indignation in the name of the whole German Episcopate. We shall not fail to pour out our complaint to the Supreme Head of the Church.”

Well, Most Reverend Eminences, Venerated Colleagues of the German Episcopate, in our turn, we, Bishops of Belgium, revolted by the calumnies against our Belgian country and its glorious army, contained in the White Book of the Empire, and

reiterated in the reply of the German Catholics to the work of the French Catholics,—*we* feel the need of expressing to our King, to our Government, to our army, to our country, our sorrowful indignation, and, in order that our protest may not run counter to yours without useful result, we ask you to be so good as to help us to institute a tribunal of impartial inquiry. You will appoint, in your official character, as many members as you wish, and whoever you please to choose: we will appoint as many—three, for example, on each side. And by common agreement, we will ask the Episcopate of a neutral State—Holland, Spain, Switzerland, or the United States—to be so good as to appoint a chairman for us who would preside over the work of the tribunal.

You have carried your complaints to the Supreme Head of the Church.

It is not just that he should hear your voice only.

We have, you and us, an identical duty—that is, to place before His Holiness verified documents on which he will be able to found his judgment.

You are not ignorant of the efforts we have made, one after another, to obtain from the Power that is occupying Belgium the constitution of a tribunal of inquiry.

The Cardinal of Malines, on two occasions, in writing—24th of January, 1915, and the 10th of February, 1915,—and the Bishop of Namur, in a letter addressed to the Military Governor of his province on the 12th of April, 1915, begged for the formation of a tribunal composed of German and

Belgian arbitrators in equal numbers, and presided over by a delegate from a neutral State. Our earnest entreaties were met by an obstinate refusal.

Meanwhile, the German authorities were careful to institute inquiries, but they wished them to be one-sided—that is to say, without judicial value.

After having refused the inquiry demanded by the Cardinal of Malines, the German authorities went into various localities where priests had been shot, peaceful citizens massacred or imprisoned, and there, on the deposition of certain witnesses taken by chance or carefully selected—sometimes in the presence of a representative of the local authority who did not know the German language, and thus found himself obliged to accept and to sign on trust the *procès-verbaux*—they thought it possible to found conclusions which could afterwards be presented to the public as the result of an impartial examination.

The German inquiry at Louvain in November 1914 was held under these conditions. It is therefore void of authority.

So it is natural that we should turn to you.

The court of arbitration, which the Power in possession has refused us, you will grant us, and you will obtain for us from your Government the public declaration that the witnesses invited by you and by us will be able to say all that they know without having to fear reprisals. Before you, and under protection of your moral authority, they will feel themselves in greater security, and encouraged to

testify what they have seen and heard. The world will have confidence in the joint-Episcopate of our two nations; our common superintendence will authenticate the evidence, and will guarantee the accuracy of the *procès-verbaux*. The inquiry, conducted thus, will inspire confidence.

Eminences and Venerated Colleagues, we demand this inquiry above all, in order to vindicate the honour of the Belgian people. It has been violated by calumnies started by your people, and by their highest representatives. And you know as well as we do the adage of moral theology, the human, Christian, Catholic adage: Without restitution, no pardon.

Your people, through their political organ and their highest moral authorities, have accused our fellow-citizens of having perpetrated on wounded Germans atrocities and horrors of which the White Book and the Manifesto of the Catholics drew up the aforesaid details; to all these accusations we oppose a formal denial, and we demand to bring proof that that denial is well founded.

In return, to justify the atrocities committed in Belgium by the German army, the public authorities—by the very heading of the White Book, *Die Völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs*, i.e. *The violation of international law by the proceedings of the Belgian people*—and the hundred Catholic signatories of the work, *The German War and Catholicism: German reply to French attacks*, affirm that the German army is found, in Belgium, in a

position of legitimate defence against a perfidious organization of *francs-tireurs*.

We declare that nowhere in Belgium has there been an organization of *francs-tireurs*, and, in the name of our calumniated national honour, we demand the right to prove the absolute truth of our affirmation.

You can call before the tribunal of impartial inquiry whoever you like; we shall invite to appear there all the priests of parishes where civilians, priests, monks and laymen were massacred or threatened with death to the cry of *Man hat geschossen*, "they fired"; if you like, we will ask all these priests to sign their deposition on oath, and then, under pain of professing that the whole Belgian clergy is perjured, you will be obliged to accept it, and the civilized world will not be able to challenge the conclusions of this solemn and decisive inquiry.

But, Eminences and Venerated Colleagues, we may add it is to your interest, as much as to ours, to constitute a tribunal of honour.

For our part, resting upon actual experience, we know and therefore declare that the German army in Belgium, in a hundred different neighbourhoods, gave itself up to pillage, incendiarism, imprisonments, massacre, sacrilege—contrary to all justice and to every feeling of humanity.

We declare this notably of the communes the names of which have figured in our pastoral letters, and in the two Notes written by the Bishops of Namur and of Liège, the 31st of October and the

1st of November, 1915, respectively, to His Holiness Pope Benedict XV, to His Excellency the Nuncio at Brussels, and to the Ministers or representatives of the neutral countries in residence at Brussels.

Fifty innocent priests, thousands of the innocent faithful, were put to death; hundreds of others, whose lives were preserved through circumstances quite independent of the will of their persecutors, were in danger of death; thousands of the innocent, without any preliminary trial, were made prisoners, and, when they were released, it was found that the most searching cross-examination to which they were subjected had not been able to establish any guilt whatever on their part.

These crimes cry to heaven for vengeance.

If, by formulating these denunciations, we calumniate the German army; or if the military authorities have justifiable reasons for ordering or allowing these acts that we call criminal, Germany owes it to her honour and her national interest to *prove* them unfounded. So long as German justice is non-existent, we hold the right and the duty to denounce what, in all conscience, we consider to be a serious attack upon Justice and our honour.

The Chancellor of the German Empire, in the sitting of 4th August, declared that the invasion of Luxembourg and of Belgium was "*contrary to the provisions of international law*"; he recognized that, "in not taking any notice of the justifiable protests of the Governments of Luxembourg and of

Belgium, he committed an *injustice* which he promised to make good"; and the Sovereign Pontiff, alluding intentionally to Belgium—as he condescended to write to M. le Ministre Van den Heavel by His Eminence Cardinal Gaspari, Secretary of State—pronounced in his consistorial allocution of 22nd January, 1915, this irrevocable judgment: "It is the duty of the Roman Pontiff, whom God has appointed sovereign interpreter and avenger of eternal law, to proclaim, before all, that *no one must, for any reason whatever, violate justice.*"

All the same, politicians and casuists have tried, ever since, to evade or emasculate these decisive words. In their reply to the French Catholics, the German Catholics employ their usual mean subtleties, and try to corroborate them by fact. They have, at their disposition, two witnesses, one anonymous, who says that on 26th July he saw French officers in conversation with Belgian officers on the Boulevard Anspach at Brussels; the other, a certain Gustave Lochard of Rimogne, who deposed that two French regiments of dragoons—the 28th and the 30th—and one French battery, crossed the Belgian frontier on the evening of 31st July, 1914, and remained entirely on Belgian territory during the whole of the following week.

Now the Belgian Government declares "that, before the declaration of war, no French troops, however few, entered Belgium." And it adds: "No honest witness can be found to contradict this declaration."

Our King's Government, then, accuses the assertion of the German Catholics of being false.

We have here a question of the first importance, at once political and moral, on which we ought to enlighten the public conscience.

If, notwithstanding, you decline to examine the general question, we ask you at least to be so good as to check the witnesses on whom the German Catholics rely for the decision against us. The deposition of this Gustave Lochard relates to facts easily checked. The German Catholics should be anxious to cleanse themselves from the reproach of falsehood, and should make it a conscientious duty to retract, if they have allowed themselves to be deceived to our injury.

Of course, we know that it is very repugnant to you to think that regiments whose discipline, honesty and religious faith you say you know, have given themselves up to the inhuman acts with which we reproach them. You wish to persuade yourselves that this is not so, because it cannot be so.

And, we, compelled by evidence, reply to you that it can be so, because it is so.

In face of fact, no presumption holds good.

For you as for us, there is only one issue possible: the verification of fact by a commission whose impartiality is, and is seen by every one to be, unquestionable.

We have no difficulty in understanding your point of view.

We also respect—please believe this—the spirit of discipline, of work, of faith, of which we have so often met the proofs, and gathered the evidence, among your countrymen. But there is a very large number of Belgians who confess bitterly to-day how they have been deceived: they have lived through the sinister events of August and September; truth has triumphed over their strongest predispositions. The fact cannot be denied: Belgium has been martyred.

When foreigners from neutral countries—Americans, Dutch, Swiss, Spaniards—question us as to the manner in which the German war has been conducted, and we narrate certain scenes, of which, in spite of ourselves, we have been obliged to prove the horror, we minimize the impression, as far as possible, so strongly do we feel that the naked truth exceeds the limits of belief.

At the same time, when, the full reality put before you, you are able to analyse the causes—some distant, others immediate—of what one of your generals, in face of the ruins of the little village of Schaffen-lez-Diest and the martyrdom of the pastor of the parish, called “a tragic error”; when you consider the influences that your soldiers came under, on their entry into Belgium, and in the intoxication of their first success, the seeming incredibility of the truth will appear to you, as it does to us, less astonishing.

Above all, Eminences and Venerated Colleagues, do not allow yourselves to be held back by the

vain pretext that to-day an inquiry would be premature.

Strictly speaking, *we* might say that, because, at the present time, the inquiry would be made under the most unfavourable conditions for us. Our people have, in fact, been so thoroughly terrorized, the prospect of reprisals is still so menacing for them, that the witnesses whom we should call before a partly-German tribunal would hardly dare to tell the truth to the uttermost.

Decisive reasons, however, forbid any dilatory proceedings.

The first, one which will go straight to your heart, is that we are the weak and you are the strong. You would not misuse your power against us.

Public opinion is generally on the side of the first who makes himself heard.

Now, while you have full liberty to inundate the neutral countries with your publications, we are shut in and reduced to silence. We are hardly allowed to raise our voices inside our churches; preaching there is controlled, that is to say, travestied by paid spies; conscientious protests are designated revolt against the public authorities; our writings are stopped at the frontier as contraband articles. You are, therefore, the only ones to enjoy liberty of speech and pen, and if you will, out of charity and equity, procure a particle of this liberty for the accused Belgians and provide them with an opportunity of defending themselves, it is your duty to protect them *as soon as possible*. The

old judicial adage *audiatur et altera pars* is found inscribed, they say, on the pediment of numerous German tribunals. In any case, with you as with us, it expresses the rule for the official judgments of the Episcopate, and doubtless, with you as with us, it has passed into the popular language in this picturesque form, "Who hears only one bell, hears only a sound."

You will say, perhaps, "It's ancient history. Forget it. Instead of throwing oil on the fire, address yourselves to forgiveness, and join your efforts to those of the Power in occupation, who asks only to heal the wounds of the unhappy Belgian people."

O Eminences and dear Colleagues, do not add irony to injustice.

Have we not suffered enough? Have we not been, are we not still, sufficiently cruelly tortured?

It is the past, you say; resign yourselves, forget.

The past! But all the wounds are bleeding! There is not one honest heart that is not bursting with indignation. While we hear our Government say, in the face of the world: "He is twice guilty who, after having violated the rights of others, yet tries, with the most audacious cynicism, to justify himself by imputing to his victim faults never committed," our populace only suppress, by the greatest possible effort, their heavy imprecations. Only yesterday, a countryman from the outskirts of Malines heard that his son had fallen on the battlefield. A priest was consoling him. The honest man replied, "Oh, him I gladly give to the country,

but my eldest, these — took from me, and, like cowards, threw into a ditch.”

How can you expect us to obtain from these unhappy men, who have known every kind of torture, one sincere word of resignation and of pardon as long as those who have made them suffer refuse to make any admission, to utter one word of repentance, or to offer any promise of reparation ?

Germany cannot give us back the blood she has caused to flow, the innocent lives that her armies have mown down ; but it is in her power to make restitution to the Belgian people of their honour which she has violated or allowed to be violated.

We demand from you this restitution, from you who are pre-eminently the representatives of christian morality in the German Church.

There is something more profoundly sad than political divisions or material disaster : it is the hatreds that injustice, whether real or imagined, accumulates in so many hearts made to love each other. As pastors of our peoples, is not the duty incumbent upon us to facilitate the dispersal of these evil feelings and to re-establish on the basis of justice—that basis so unstable to-day—the union in love of all the children of the great Catholic family ?

The Power in occupation does, in fact, speak and write of its intention to stanch our wounds.

But in the legal tribunal, intention is judged by action.

Now all that we know—we, poor Belgians who

are temporarily subjected to the domination of the Empire—is that the power whose honour is pledged to govern us according to international law as codified in the Hague Convention, disregards its pledges.

We are not speaking of individual abuses committed against private persons or communes, the character of which can only be established by impartial examination after the war ; for the moment we are only considering acts of the Government such as they appear from official documents emanating from it, placarded by it on the walls of our towns, and, consequently, directly involving its responsibility without any possible discussion.

Now, from the date of the occupation of our provinces, the infractions of the Hague Convention have been numerous and flagrant. We give a list of them here under certain headings, and furnish in an appendix¹ the proofs of our allegations. Here are the chief points of infringement :—

1. Collective punishments inflicted for individual deeds, contrary to article 50 of the Hague Convention.

2. Forced labour for the enemy, contrary to article 52.

3. Fresh taxes, in violation of articles 48, 49 and 52.

4. Abuse of requisitions in kind, in violation of article 52.

5. Ignoring the laws in force in the country, contrary to article 43.

¹ See page 126.

These violations of international law, which aggravate our unhappy lot and heap up, in hearts habitually peaceful and charitable, a ferment of revolt and hatred, would not be continued if those who commit them did not feel themselves supported, if not by the positive approbation, at all events by the complacent silence of those who form opinion in their own country.

With confidence, then, we renew our appeal to your charity ; we are the weak, you are the strong ; come and judge if it is still lawful for you not to help us at all.

Further, there are reasons of a general kind for the constitution of a Commission of Inquiry by members of the Catholic Episcopate.

We have dwelt on that already ; the spectacle that our divisions give to the world is disconcerting ; it is a cause of scandal and evokes blasphemous opinions.

Our people cannot understand how you can ignore the doubly flagrant iniquity that has been perpetrated upon Belgium—the violation of our neutrality ; the inhuman conduct of your soldiers—and that, knowing it, you do not raise your voices to condemn it and to dissociate yourselves from it.

On the other side, what must scandalize *your* people, Protestant and Catholic, is the rôle imputed by your press to the Belgian clergy and to a nation over which a Catholic Government has presided for

thirty years. "Beware," said Mgr. the Bishop of Hildesheim to his clergy on 21st September, 1914, "these complaints that the press is circulating about the priests, the monks and the nuns of Catholic nations, are digging a ditch between Catholics and Protestants on German soil, and the religious future of the Empire is put in peril." The campaign of calumny against our clergy and our people has never relaxed. Erzberger, Centre Deputy, seems to be given the part of fomenting it. In Belgium itself, in Antwerp Cathedral, the 16th Sunday after Pentecost, Heinrich Mohr, one of your priests, dared to say from the commanding position of the pulpit of truth, to the Catholic soldiers of your army: "Official documents inform us that the Belgians have hung German soldiers on trees, sprinkled them with boiling liquids and burnt them alive."¹

There is only one way of stopping these slanders, i.e. to give full daylight to the truth, and public condemnation, by the religious authorities, to the really guilty.

For honest people, believers or unbelievers, there is another matter of reproach, that is, the folly of putting in the forefront a computation of the advantages or disadvantages that would accrue to Catholic interests by the success of the Triple Alliance, or of the Quadruple Entente. Professor Schrörs of Bonn University was the first, to our

¹ This sermon was published in the periodical *Die Stimme der Heimat*.

knowledge, to consecrate his leisure to these irritating calculations (cf. *Der Krieg und der Katholizismus*.)

The religious consequences of the war are the secret of God, and no one of us is in the Divine confidence.

But there is a question dominating all that—the question of morality, of justice, of honour.

“Seek first,” says our Lord in His holy Gospel, “the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the rest will be added unto you.”

Do the right, come what may.

So we bishops, at the present time, have a moral—and therefore religious—duty, which takes precedence of all others, and that is to search out and proclaim the Truth.

Did not Christ, of whom we have the distinguished honour to be at once both disciples and ministers, say, “My mission is to bear witness to the truth”?

On the solemn day of our episcopal consecration, we promised to God and to the Catholic Church never to be deserters from the Truth, never to yield either to ambition or to fear, when it is a question of proving that we love it.

In the name of our vocation, then, we have a common rôle and a common ground of understanding. Confusion reigns in all minds: what some call light, others call darkness; what is good to some is evil to the rest. The tribunal of impartial inquiry, to which we have the honour to invite your delegates, will contribute—we cherish this hope—to dispel more than one ambiguity.

Our Holy Father the Pope calls for peace as his most ardent wish ; in the letter that he deigned to send you at Fulda, on the occasion of your last assembly, he urged you, he urges us all, to wish for it as he does. But he wishes for it only as based on respect for law and the dignity of peoples.

We shall therefore respond to the wish of our common Father by working in concert for the manifestation and the triumph of Truth, on which justice, the honour of nations and final peace should rest.

Accept, Eminences and Venerated Colleagues, the expression of our feelings of respectful and fraternal devotion.

NOTES.

Two months later, Count von Wengersky, Kreischef of the District of Malines, wrote the following letter to the Cardinal :—

“ Malines, 20th Jan., 1915.

To his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines.

According to a report in the press, many innocent priests have been killed in the diocese of Malines.

To enable me to make an inquiry, I beg your Eminence to be so good as to let me know if innocent priests of the diocese of Malines have been killed, and who these priests were.

I should be very glad to learn further, under

what circumstances they were killed, and contingently, at what date and by what troops.

Chief of the District, WENGERSKY, Colonel."

The Cardinal replied as follows:—

" Archbishop's House, Malines, 24th Jan., 1915.

To the Count von Wengersky, Kreischef, Malines.

Monsieur le Kreischef,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the letter 268/11, dated 20th January, which you have been so good as to send me.

The names of the priests and monks of the diocese of Malines who, to my knowledge, have been put to death by German troops are the following:—
[*Here follow eleven names.*]

At Christmas, I did not know for certain what fate had befallen the priest of Hérent. Since then, his body has been found at Louvain and identified.

The numbers cited in my Pastoral Letter are, to-day, greatly increased: thus for Aerschot I gave 91 victims; now the total of Aerschotois exhumed was, a few days ago, 143. But this is not the moment to dwell upon details. Their relation will find a place in the inquiry you give me reason to hope for.

It will be a great consolation for me to see full light thrown on the events which I was obliged to

recall in my Pastoral Letter, and on others of the same kind.

But it is essential that the results of this inquiry should be presented on indisputable authority.

To this end, I have the honour to propose to you, and, by your courteous intervention, to the German authorities, that the commission of inquiry be composed, in equal numbers, of German delegates and of Belgian magistrates designated by the head of our magistracy, and presided over by the representative of a neutral country. I am glad to think that His Excellency the United States Minister will not refuse to accept this presidency, or to entrust it to a delegate chosen by himself.

Accept, I beg you, Monsieur le Kreischef, the assurance of my high consideration.

(Sgd.) D.J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines."

There was no reply to this letter.

On the 10th February, 1915, the Adjutant von Fleming called at the Archbishop's House of Malines on behalf of the Kreischef, ostensibly to renew verbally to the Cardinal the questions to which the latter had already replied in writing in his letter of 24th January. The Cardinal pointed out to the adjutant that questions of this nature ought to be formulated and replied to in writing. He therefore drew up, in the following terms, the Kreischef's demands and the replies proper to them; the

document was then signed by the adjutant and by the Cardinal of Malines.

“Adjutant von Fleming asks me in the name of the General Government :—

1. In what communes have priests been shot ?
2. What were the troops that put them to death and on what day ?
3. Does the bishop of the diocese profess that these priests were innocent ?

1. The names of the communes have already been printed in my Pastoral Letter of Xmas 1915.

2. The German General Staff is in a better position than any one else to know what troops occupied a commune on any specified day. The people easily recognize the German uniform, but do not for the most part distinguish the regiments of which the army is composed.

3. My personal and deliberate conviction is that the priests whose names I have given were innocent ; but, justly, it is not our business to establish their innocence ; it is for the military authorities, who have harshly maltreated them, to establish their guilt.

Witnesses called to give evidence before a one-sided commission will generally be afraid to tell the truth. This evidence cannot be fully known or

universally accepted, until a mixed commission is formed to collect it and to guarantee its impartiality and exactitude.

Therefore I can only renew, for the third time, my proposal to confide to a mixed Commission, composed in part of German magistrates and in part of Belgian magistrates, the care of throwing full light on the facts of the matter on which the General Government has the happy inspiration to institute an inquiry. In order to give to the result of the inquiry the full authority desirable, it is necessary that the tribunal be presided over by a delegate from a neutral State

(Sgd.) D.J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

(Sgd.) von FLEMING,

Rittmeister and Adjudant des Kreischefs in Mecheln.

Malines, 10th Feb., 1915."

There was no reply to this letter.

Before finishing the notes relating to the inquiries we have to make a rectification.

In their reply to the French Catholics, the German Catholics speak of outrages upon the nuns, and write :—

“The German Governor-General in Belgium questioned the Belgian bishops on this matter . . . The Archbishop of Malines made known that he could not furnish any precise information upon any case whatever of violation of nuns in the diocese.”

The last phrase is technically correct, but leads the careless reader into complete error. I did, in fact, write to the Governor-General that I could not furnish him with any precise information, because my conscience forbade me to give up to any tribunal the information—alas! only too precise—that I possess. Assaults upon nuns have been committed. Happily, I believe they are not very numerous, but to my knowledge there have been several.

Since it has pleased the Governor-General to make public an extract from the reply that I had the honour of sending him on this delicate matter, it is my duty to reproduce here the full text of our correspondence.

Here is the letter that the Governor-General wrote to me on 30th March, 1915 :

“Eminence,

The foreign press—side by side with other accusations, which, for the greater part, are already recognized to be false—has issued the grave reproach that the German soldiers, since entering Belgium, have not hesitated to commit assaults upon Belgian nuns.

It is not necessary to say that such deeds, if they can be verified, would certainly be strongly reprobated by the General Government and by the German Government. On the other hand, equity demands that accusations proved untrue should be suitably denounced.

I dare to hope that the disclosure of the full truth will equally satisfy the sense of justice and the interests of the Church. I believe, therefore, I shall be able to count upon the courteous support of your Eminence, if I ask you to help me in my efforts with a view to elucidating the facts.

The documents that your Eminence may wish to communicate concerning the casual cases of assaults on nuns will enable me, at the same time, to understand what steps the situation requires.

Accept etc.,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING."

This is our reply :—

“ Archbishop’s House, Malines,

16th April, 1915.

Monsieur the Governor-General,

I have received the letter No. 1243 that your Excellency has done me the honour to address to me, and I regret having been prevented from replying to it sooner.

It is true that rumours are being circulated, accepted by some newspapers, denied by others, on the subject of the outrages that Belgian nuns have suffered from German soldiers, and, like your Excellency, I protest against those who, lightly and without proof, either make public, or publicly maintain, such odious accusations.

But when your Excellency asks me to help you

throw light on the grounds, strong or weak, of these imputations, I find myself under the necessity of asking you a preliminary question.

Has the civil authority the right to institute an inquiry into facts of so delicate a nature ?

Who will put the interrogations ?

The confessor ? The doctor ? They are bound by professional secrecy.

The superiors ? Do they always know all the truth ? And, if they know it through having learnt it under seal of secrecy, have they the right to speak ?

Will one dare to question the parties chiefly concerned ? Would not that be cruel ? Ought one to try to make witnesses speak at the risk of exposing the victims of violation—already so wretched—to bear before public opinion the blemish of dishonour ?

As far as I am concerned, I should not dare to submit any one to interrogation on a subject so delicate, and the confidences which have been, or may be made to me spontaneously in this matter, my conscience forbids me to communicate to others.

Our duty, Excellency, is, by every means in our power, to prevent the public being entertained with these capricious and unsavoury allegations, and I shall applaud with all my heart the repression by Justice of those who, either from *parti pris* or from unpardonable levity, invent or spread such allegations.

But I think we cannot go farther without encroaching on the rights of conscience, and risking the violation of the freedom of the inner tribunal.

Receive, etc.,

(Signed) D. J., Card. MERCIER, Archbishop of Malines.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, BARON VON BISSING,
Governor-General, Brussels."

INFRACTIONS OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION

(cf. page 113).

Germany signed the Hague Convention.

The first German Governor-General, Baron von der Goltz, declared his full knowledge of the Hague Convention in a decree published by him on 12th November, 1914.

The second German Governor-General, Baron von Bissing, in a solemn proclamation published 18th July, 1915, declared his intention "*to administer Belgium according to the Hague Convention as affecting the laws and customs of land warfare*" . . . He added: "*His Majesty the German Emperor, after the occupation of the Kingdom of Belgium by our victorious troops, confided the administration of the country to me, and charged me to fulfil the obligations resulting from the Hague Convention . . .*"

There is the law.

Here are the facts.

I. COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENTS.

Article 40 of the Convention stipulates: "No collective punishment, pecuniary or other, shall be inflicted on the people because of individual acts for which they cannot be considered jointly and severally responsible."

Now the history of the occupation includes three periods: that of invasion, and those successively presided over by Baron von der Goltz and Baron von Bissing.

During the period of invasion collective punishment was systematically applied under every form. Proofs of this assertion abound. Here is one, which alone is sufficient:

In proportion as the invasion gained ground, the Commander-in-Chief of the army caused to be placarded, in three languages, on red paper, a proclamation in which he said:

“Villages in which acts of hostility are committed by the inhabitants against our troops *will be burnt*.

“*Villages in proximity to points of destruction will be held responsible* for damage to the roads, railways, bridges, etc.

“The punishments announced below will be carried out very severely and without mercy. *The whole of the people will be held responsible*. Hostages will be taken in large numbers. The heaviest war levies possible will be inflicted.”

Under the Governorship of Marshal von der Goltz, a proclamation signed by the Governor-General's own hand and promulgated 2nd September, 1914, in the occupied territory, said expressly: “It is the harsh necessity of war that punishments for hostile acts *strike the innocent as well as the guilty*.”

Consequently, collective punishment was applied without any consideration.

Take a typical example: the town of Brussels was condemned to pay five millions fine, because one of its policemen had—unknown to the communal authorities—been lacking in deference to a functionary of the German civil administration.

A notice signed Baron von der Goltz, placarded the 7th October, 1914, applies the collective penalty to the family. It says: "The Belgian Government has sent orders to the militiamen of several classes to rejoin the army . . . it is strictly forbidden to all those who receive these orders to carry them out. . . . *In case of disobedience, the militiaman's family will be held equally responsible.*"

Under the government of General Baron von Bissing, that is from 3rd December, 1914, *collective* punishments, in violation of Article 50, were continuous. Here are some specimens.:

On 23rd December, 1914, a notice placarded at Brussels said: "If the burial places of fallen soldiers are violated or damaged, not only will the culprit be punished, but the whole *commune will be made responsible for it.*"

A notice from the Governor-General dated 26th January, 1915, makes *all the members of the family* responsible for the fact if a Belgian between 16 and 40 years of age, fit for military service, crosses into Holland.

And in fact, under the most futile pretexts, they punished the communes with very heavy fines: the

Commune of Puers had to pay 3,000 marks because a telegraph wire was broken, though inquiry established the fact that it fell because it was worn out!

Malines, a working-class town without resources, had a fine of 20,000 marks inflicted on it because the Burgomaster had not notified the military authorities of a journey that the Cardinal, deprived of the use of his car, had been obliged to make on foot.

II. FORCED LABOUR FOR THE ENEMY.

According to Article 52 of the Convention, "*Requisitions in kind and service* can only be claimed from the communes or the inhabitants under three conditions :

" On condition that they do not involve, for the people, the obligation of taking part in war operations against their country ;

" On condition that they only relate to the necessities of the army of occupation ;

" On condition that they bear due proportion to the resources of those from whom they are demanded."

It is *piquant* to notice that Article 23 contains a *finale* that was proposed at the second Hague Congress in 1907, by the German delegation ; this is it : " It is forbidden to a belligerent to compel the nationals of the other side to take part in operations of war directed against their country."

Now then :—

1. From the beginning of the invasion, Belgian

civilians in twenty neighbourhoods were compelled to take part in operations of war against their own country. At Termonde, Lebbeke, Dinant and elsewhere in many districts, *peaceful citizens, women and children, were compelled to walk at the head of the German regiments* or to form a curtain in front of them.

At Liège and Namur, civilians were forced to dig trenches, and were also employed in repairing the fortifications.

The *régime* of hostages proceeded with fiendish rigour. The proclamation of 4th August, quoted above, spoke of it without any circumlocution: "Hostages will be taken in large numbers."

An official proclamation placarded at Liège in the early days of August says this: "Any aggression committed against German troops by others than soldiers in uniform, not only exposes the perpetrator to be immediately shot, but will further bring the most violent reprisals upon all the inhabitants, and specially upon those Liègeois who are retained as hostages in the citadel of Liège by the Commander of the German troops."

These hostages are Mgr. Rutten, bishop of Liège; M. Kleyer, burgomaster; the senators, representatives, permanent deputy and the alderman of Liège.

2. *Under the Government of Field-Marshal von der Goltz* the requisition of service, practised during the whole of August, was carried on under every possible form: digging trenches; work on fortifications, carting, work on the roads, railways, etc.

An order from the Governor-General, appearing on 19th November, said: "Will be punished by imprisonment"—the order does not state of what duration; it is wholly arbitrary—"whosoever shall try by coercion, by threats, by *persuasion*, or by any other means, to keep back from the execution of any work destined for the German authorities, persons disposed to perform this work, or contractors to whom the German authorities have confided the execution of this work."

As for the *régime of hostages*, it went on cruelly in all its rigour.

A monstrous specimen of despotism and cruelty is the proclamation placarded through the communes of Baine-Heusay, Grivignée, and Bois-de-Breux by Major Commandant Dieckmann, 8th September, 1914. Here is an extract:—

"From 7th September I shall allow persons belonging to the subjoined communes to return to their homes. To make sure that this permission will not be abused, the Burgomasters of Beyne-Heusay and of Grivignée must at once make out lists of important persons who will be held as hostages in the Fort de Fléron.

"The lives of these hostages will be taken if the population of the above named communes do not keep quiet under all circumstances.

"I shall indicate which individuals are to sojourn as hostages from noon on one day to noon on the next. If the hostage is not replaced punctually, he will remain another 24 hours in the Fort. If he

is not replaced after the second 24 hours, *the hostage incurs the pain of death. The list of hostages must begin with priests, burgomasters and other members of the administration.*"

3. *Under the Government of Baron von Bissing*, the violations of Article 52 were flagrant. Deeds that took place in the railway workshops at Luttre and Malines, as well as in many communes of Western Flanders, are revolting. Judge of them :—

At *Luttre* arsenal, the German authorities posted up on 23rd March, 1915, a notice demanding that work should be resumed. The 21st April they called for 200 workmen. The 27th April soldiers went to the homes of the workmen, requisitioned them and took them to the arsenal. In any case where the workmen were absent, a member of the family was arrested.

Nevertheless the workmen maintained their refusal to work, "because they would not co-operate in acts of war against their country."

The 30th April, the requisitioned workmen were not released, but shut up in railway carriages.

The 4th of May, 24 workmen kept in prison at Nivelles were judged at Mons by a council of war, "under accusation of belonging to a secret society having for its object to thwart the execution of German military measures." They were condemned to imprisonment.

The 14th May, 45 workmen were deported into Germany.

The 18th May, a fresh proclamation announced that the prisoners "would only have dry bread and water; warm food only every four days."

The 22nd May, three wagons containing 104 workmen were sent to Charleroi.

In spite of all, the patriotic dignity of the workmen finally gained the mastery over the pressure put upon them.

It was the same at *Malines*, where, by all kinds of intimidation, the German authorities tried to force the workmen of the arsenal to labour at railway material, as if it were not clear that this material would, sooner or later, become war material.

The 30th May, 1915, the Governor-General published that he would be obliged to punish the town of Malines and its suburbs, by stopping all economic traffic, if, on Wednesday, 2nd June, at 10 a.m., 500 arsenal workmen had not presented themselves for that work.

On Wednesday, 2nd June, not a single workman presented himself to work. Whereupon complete stoppage of all vehicular traffic within a radius of many kilométres round the town.

It was at this time that the Cardinal of Malines' walk to Eppegghem took place: a walk that cost the town of Malines a fine of 20,000 marks.

Many workmen were forcibly seized and kept at the arsenal for two or three days.

The suspension of traffic lasted ten days.

In June, the Commune of Sweveghem (Western Flanders) was punished, because the 350 workmen

at M. Bekaert's factory—a private factory—refused to make barbed iron wire for the German army.

Here is a placard that was posted up at Menin in July—August 1915: “Order: From to-day the town may no longer give succour—of any kind, even for the families, wives and children—except to those workmen who work *regularly* at *military works* and other prescribed labour. All the other workmen and their families will not be allowed henceforth to be assisted in any way whatever.”

Is this sufficiently odious?

Analogous measures were taken in October 1914 at Harlebeke-lez-Courtrai, at Bissighem, at Lokeren, at Mons. From Harlebeke 29 inhabitants were deported into Germany. At Mons, in M. Lenoir's manufactory, the managers, the principal foremen and 81 workmen were condemned to prison for refusing to work in the service of the German army: M. Lenoir for 5 years in prison; 5 managers for 1 year; 6 foremen for 6 months and 81 workmen for 8 weeks.

The Governor-General also had recourse to indirect means of coercion. He took possession of the Belgian Red Cross, confiscated its property and arbitrarily altered its purpose. He tried to make himself master of the *Bienfaisance Publique* and to exercise control over the National Relief and Food Committee.

If we quoted *in extenso* the decree of the Governor-General of 14th August, 1915, “concerning measures intended to ensure the execution of works in the

public interest," and that of the 15th August, 1915, "concerning the unemployed who out of idleness stop work," it would be seen by what subterfuges the occupying Power tried to injure, at one and the same time, both employers and workmen.

But it is on the supply front that scorn of the Hague Convention was carried to extremes.

The 12th October, 1915, the official Bulletin of Orders for the Supply Front published a decree of which these are a few salient passages:—

Art. 1. Whoever, without motive, refuses to undertake or to continue any work suitable to his profession, and in the execution of which *the Military Administration has an interest*—work ordered by one or more military commandants—will be liable to be punished by correctional imprisonment not exceeding one year. He may also be deported into Germany.

The fact that Belgian laws or even International Conventions are appealed to in opposition, does not in any way justify the refusal to work.

As to the legitimacy of the work demanded *the military commandant alone has the right to decide.*

Art. 2. Whoever, by coercion, threats, *persuasion* or other means, tries to influence another person to refuse work in violation of Article 1 is liable to be punished by imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Art. 3. Whoever knowingly, *by help or other means*, encourages those punishable for refusal to work, will be liable to a fine that may amount to 10,000 marks. He will, besides, be condemned to a year's imprisonment.

If communes or associations become guilty of such transgression, their chiefs will be punished in consequence.

Art. 4. Independently of the penalties threatened in Articles 1 and 3, the German authorities may, in case of need, impose upon communes where, without motive, the execution of any work has been refused, a contribution or other compulsory police-measures.

The above decree comes into force at once.

Der Etappen inspekteur,

VON HUGER, Lieutenant-General.

Ghent, 12th October, 1915.

The injustice and the despotism of this decree surpass everything that one has hitherto imagined. Forced labour, collective penalties, indefinite penalties, all are there. It is slavery, neither more nor less.

III. FRESH TAXES.

We must confine ourselves to noticing in a few words two taxes contrary to Articles 48, 49, 51 and 52 of the Hague Convention.

The first was decreed by an order of Governor-General Baron von Bissing dated 16th January, 1915.

It consists in striking the absent by an additional extraordinary tax, fixed at ten times the amount of the personal contribution. This tax does not come within any of the categories of existing taxes; it only strikes a class of citizens who legitimately made use of their right to remove before the occupation of the country. It is, therefore, contrary to Articles 48 and 51 of the Convention.

The second violation of the Convention is the famous contribution of 480 millions, imposed on the nine provinces on the 18th December, 1914.

The essential condition that, according to the Hague Convention, Article 52 makes this kind of contribution legitimate, is that it should be in proportion to the resources of the country.

Now in December 1914, Belgium was devastated; the war contributions imposed on the towns and innumerable requisitions in kind had exhausted it; most of the factories had stopped, and from those still working the enemy did not fail, contrary to all justice, to requisition the raw material.

It was from this impoverished Belgium, living on foreign charity, that the enemy demanded nearly half a milliard.

The order of 10th December, 1914, runs thus: "A war contribution of 40 million francs to be paid monthly, *during a whole year*, is imposed upon the Belgian people."

Well, this "duration of a whole year" has expired!

Now, at the moment these lines are penned, the

occupying Power claims to replace " during a whole year " by " during the whole war."

Poor little Belgium ! What then has she done to her rich and powerful neighbour Germany that she should be thus trampled on, tortured, culumniated, ground down by her ?

If we had to furnish a complete list of the orders and acts by which, to our knowledge, the occupying Power has contravened the Hague Convention, we might further quote the *abuses of requisitions in kind* contrary to Article 52 ; the *seizing* of funds belonging to private societies ; the requisition of railway rails over a distance of hundreds of kilomètres ; the seizure of arms deposited by order of the Belgian Government in communal houses, an abuse of Article 53 ; *ignoring*, especially in matters of penal law, the *laws in force in the country*, contrary to Article 43.

But it is impossible to say or to cite everything here.

If, however, any of the recipients of our correspondence wish for proof of the inculpations which are only indicated in the final paragraph, we shall be only too glad to supply them. Neither in our Letter, nor in these four additions to it, is there a single allegation of which we do not possess the proof among our papers.

FOR OUR SOLDIERS.

National Festival, 1916.

“Jerusalem has become the dwelling of strangers; her fête days are turned into days of mourning.”—I *Maccabees* i. 40-41.

My very dear Brothers,

We ought to meet here to celebrate the 85th anniversary of our national independence.

In fourteen years, on a like day, our restored cathedrals and our rebuilt churches will all be wide open; crowds will press into them; our King Albert, firm upon his throne, will voluntarily bow his unconquered head before the majesty of the King of kings; the Queen and the royal family will be round him; once more we shall hear the joyous peals of our bells from the Yser to the Meuse and from La Panne to Arlon; under the arched roofs of the temples, Belgians, hand in hand, will renew their oaths to their God, to their sovereign and to their liberties, while bishops and priests, interpreters of the national soul, will intone, in a common rapture of joyful gratitude, a triumphal *Te Deum*.

To-day the hymn of joy dies away on our lips.

The Jews, captive in Babylon, seated on the banks

of the Euphrates, watched, in tears, the waters of the river flowing by. Their mute harps hung on the willows by the shore. Who would have the courage to sing the songs of Sion in a strange land? "Native land of Jerusalem," cried the Psalmist, "if I do not remember thee, let my right hand forget her cunning! let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I cease to think of thee; if thou art no longer the first of my joys!"

The psalm ends with imprecatory passages: we do not allow ourselves to reproduce them: we do not belong to Old Testament days when the *lex talionis* was in force: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Our lips, purified by the fire of Christian charity, never give expression to words of hatred.

To hate is to make the injury of others our aim, and to take pleasure in it. Whatever our sufferings, we do not want hatred of those who inflict them upon us.

With us, national unity is allied to universal brotherhood.

But above the sentiment of universal brotherhood, we put respect for absolute Right, without which no intercourse is possible between individuals or nations.

And that is why, with S. Thomas Aquinas, the doctor of greatest authority on Christian theology, we declare that public vengeance is a virtue.

Crime, violation of justice, assaults on the public peace—whether coming from an individual or a body of persons—ought to be suppressed.

Consciences are troubled, worried, tortured, so long as the guilty are not, in the strong and true expression of ordinary speech, “put in their place.” To put men and things back in their place is to re-establish order, to restore equilibrium, to re-settle peace on the basis of justice.

Public vengeance, thus understood, may irritate the sensibility of a weak mind; none the less, says S. Thomas Aquinas, it is the expression of the purest law of charity and of the zeal which is the flame of charity.

It does not make a target of the sufferings of others, but an avenging arm of disregarded right.

How can you love order without hating disorder; intelligently wish for peace without expelling that which preys upon it; love a brother—that is to say, wish for his good—without wishing that, from choice or by force, his will should bend before the imprescriptible rigours of justice and of truth?

It is from these heights that war must be considered, to understand its grandeur.

Again, you will perhaps come across effeminate temperaments to whom war is only the explosion of mines, the bursting of shells, the killing of men, effusions of blood, heaped-up corpses; you will find low-minded politicians who see nothing at stake in

a battle but some momentary interest, the taking or re-taking of a territory or a province.

But no. If, in spite of its horrors, war—I mean righteous war—has so much austere beauty, it is because it is the disinterested enthusiasm of a whole people, who give, or are ready to give, what is most precious to them, life itself, for the defence or the vindication of something which cannot be weighed, which cannot be counted, which cannot be bought—Right, Honour, Peace, Liberty.

Have you not felt during the last two years that the war—the eager, sustained attention that, even from here, you give to it—purifies you, clears you from your dross, brings you together, makes you reach out to something better than yourselves?

It is towards the ideal of justice and of honour that you are climbing. Its magnet draws you on.

And because this ideal—if it be not a vain abstraction that will vanish like the fictions of a dream—must have its seat in an existing, living subject, I never tire of affirming the truth that keeps us under its yoke: God is revealing Himself as Master, the Guide of events as of our wills, the holy Master of the universal conscience.

Ah! if only we could fold in our arms our heroes fighting for us down there, or waiting, agitated, for their turn to go under fire; if we were permitted to catch the beating of their hearts, is not this what they would say to us: I am doing my duty; I am sacrificing myself for justice?

And you, wives and mothers, tell out to us, in

your turn, the beauty of these tragic thoughts. Wives, whose thoughts turn, sad yet resigned, towards the absent, to bear to him your aspirations, your long waiting, your prayers. Mothers, every moment of whose severed existence is consumed away in agony, you have given your sons, you will not recall them; wherefore every moment we stand before you breathless with admiration.

The head of one of our noblest families wrote to me: "Our son of the 7th line regiment has fallen: my wife and I are broken-hearted; all the same, were it necessary, we should give him up again."

A vicar of the capital has just been condemned to twelve years' hard labour. I was allowed to go to his cell to embrace and bless him. "I have three brothers at the front," he said; "I think I am here chiefly for having helped the youngest—he is seventeen—to join his elders; one of my sisters is in a neighbouring cell; but I thank God that my mother is not left alone; besides, she has sent word to us that she does not weep."

Do not our mothers make us think of the mother of the Maccabees?

What lessons of moral grandeur! The same spirit is here, and on the road to exile, and in the prisons, and in the concentration camps of Holland and Germany.

Do we think enough of what these brave men must suffer, these who since the beginning of the war, on the day after the defence of Liège and Namur or the retreat from Antwerp, have seen

their military career broken and now fret on the curb: these guardians of right or of our communal liberties, whom their valiance has reduced to inaction? There is courage in ardour; there is not less in holding it in. Sometimes, there is even more virtue in suffering than in action.

And think of these two years of calm submission to the inevitable undergone by the Belgian people; this profound tenacity which made a poor woman, before whom the chances of a speedy conclusion of peace were being discussed, say, "Oh, as for us, there is no need to hurry; we can still wait."

How fine all this is and how full of lessons for the generations to come!

This is what we must see, my brothers, the nation's magnanimity in sacrifice, our universal and persevering brotherhood in agony, in mourning, and in one invincible hope; this is what must be taken into account in order to estimate, at its proper value, the Belgian fatherland.

Now the prime builders of this moral greatness are our soldiers.

While awaiting their return to us, when grateful Belgium will applaud the living and crown with glory the memory of the dead, let us raise a permanent monument of religious gratitude to them in our hearts.

Let us pray for those who are no more. Do not let us exclude any one from our commiseration. The blood of Christ flowed for all. It is quite probable that it is your part to hasten the entry into Paradise

of those who in Purgatory are expiating the last traces of human weakness. Succour the distress of the poor, of the known poor, also of those who are fain to hide their poverty. Give of your superfluity to those who lack necessities. Be present at the Mass which is celebrated every week in your parish church for our dead soldiers; take your children to it; get them to communicate, and communicate with them.

Pray also for those who are in the firing line on the battlefields. Say to yourselves that, at the very time that I am speaking to you, some of them are dying: the prospect of eternity is right before them. Let us remember them; let us obtain for them a holy death.

“Our soldiers are our masters,” wrote a French Academician lately; “they are our superiors, our professors, our judges, our supporters, our real friends. Let us be worthy of them, let us imitate them; in order to pledge us not to do less than our duty, they are invariably ready to do more than theirs.”

The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck. Let us remain patient. Do not let our courage relax. Let us leave to the divine Providence the task of perfecting our national education.

Young women, young girls, let me ask you if you sufficiently realize the gravity of the present time. For heaven's sake, do not show yourselves strangers to the mourning of the fatherland!

There are certain ways of dressing, certain attitudes, which are an insult to sorrow.

For you, modesty is always a halo and a virtue ; to-day it is something more—a patriotic duty.

I ask you also, never to lose sight of the privations and endurance of our soldiers.

Let us all fathom the great law of life's austerity. "How earnestly," continues the patriot whom I have just quoted, "ought we—under relatively easy conditions, and in the less exposed regions where we are, and which cannot be called firing zones—to apply ourselves to restraint, to simplification, and like the soldiers, though in our own way, to concentrate ourselves with more direct energy ! Do not let us take a moment's distraction or relaxation. Do not let us spend a moment of our lives except for the magnificent issue for which our brothers are sacrificing theirs, *con amore*.

"And just as, at the front, our heroes show us the admirable and comforting picture of indissoluble union, of a military fraternity that nothing can break ; so in our ranks, less serried, and under laxer discipline, let us nevertheless have it at heart to preserve the same cohesion, the same patriotic concord. We will respect the truce imposed on our quarrels by the great Cause which alone ought to employ and absorb all our means of attack and combat ; and if some impious or wretched beings, understanding neither the urgency nor the beauty of the national requirements, insist, in spite of all, on entertaining and stirring up the passions, which

at other times divide us, we will turn away our heads, and will continue, without taking any notice of them, to remain faithful to the pact of solidarity, friendship, loyal and sound confidence that we have concluded with them—even in spite of themselves—under the mighty breath of war.”

The approaching date of the first centenary of our national independence ought to find us stronger, more intrepid, more united than ever. Let us prepare ourselves for it by work, by patience, by fraternity. When in 1930, we shall think over the gloomy years 1914-1916, they will appear to us the most luminous, the most majestic, and—on condition that from to-day we determine to will it—the happiest and most fruitful of our national history. *Per crucem ad lucem*: light springs from sacrifice.

THE BELGIAN BISHOPS' CRY OF ALARM TO PUBLIC OPINION.

Malines, 7th November, 1916.

Every day the military authorities deport thousands of inoffensive citizens from Belgium into Germany in order to employ them in forced labour.

As early as the 19th October we sent to the Governor-General a protest—of which a copy was transmitted to the representatives at Brussels of the Holy See, of Spain, of the United States and of Holland—but the Governor-General replied to us by a plea in bar.

At the date of our protest, the ordinances of the occupying Power only threatened the unemployed : to-day all valid men are carried off pell-mell, penned in wagons and deported, no one knows where, like a gang of slaves. The enemy proceeds by districts. We heard vaguely that arrests had been made in the market-places at Tournai, at Ghent and at Alost, but we did not know under what conditions. Between the 24th of October and the 2nd of November similar measures were taken in the district of Mons, Quievrain, Saint-Ghislain, and Jemappes, and from 800 to 1,200 men were swept off every day. To-morrow and the following days they are going to hurl themselves on the *arrondissement* of Nivelles.

Here is a specimen of the placard announcing the assault :

“ By order of the Kreischef, all persons of the male sex over seventeen years of age are ordered to present themselves on the Place Saint-Paul at Nivelles on the 8th of November, 1916, at 8 o'clock (Belgian time), at 9 o'clock (German time), furnished with their identification cards and contingently with their registration cards.

“ It is not permitted to bring anything more than a small hand-bag.

“ Any one not presenting himself will be forcibly deported into Germany, and will besides be liable to a heavy fine and a long imprisonment.

“ Ecclesiastics, doctors, lawyers, and teachers need not present themselves.

“ The Burgomasters will be made responsible for the proper execution of this order, which must immediately be made known to the inhabitants.”

There was an interval of twenty-four hours between the placarding and the deportation.

Under pretext of public works to be carried out on Belgian soil, the occupying Power tried to get out of the *communes* lists of unemployed workmen. Proudly the majority of the *communes* refused. Three orders of the General Government prepared the blow which strikes us to-day.

The 15th of August, 1915, a first decree imposed, under pain of imprisonment and fine, forced labour on the unemployed ; but declared that it was only a question of work to be carried out in Belgium, and

that transgressions would be judged by Belgian tribunals.

A second order, dated 2nd May, 1916, reserved to the German authorities the right to provide work for the unemployed, and threatened, with the penalty of three years' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 marks, whoever undertook work not authorized by the General Government.

By virtue of this order the competence hitherto recognized in the Belgian tribunals passed to German tribunals.

A third order, dated 13th May, 1916, "authorizes governors, military commandants, and *chefs d'arrondissement* to order that the unemployed be taken by force to the neighbourhoods where they are to work." Already it was forced labour, but in Belgium.

To-day, it is no longer a question of forced labour in Belgium, but in Germany for the profit of the Germans.

In order to give external plausibility to its violent measures, the occupying Power alleged in the German press, both of Germany and Belgium, two main pretexts: the unemployed are a danger to public order, and a charge upon official charity.

The letter we addressed on 16th October to the Governor-General, and to the head of his political department, replied to this: "You know perfectly well that external order is not threatened, and that if it were in danger all the moral and civil influences would spontaneously lend you their assistance.

“The unemployed are not a charge on official charity; the help given them does not come from your finances.”

In his reply, the Governor-General no longer invoked the two considerations mentioned above, but alleged that allocations to the unemployed, wherever they came from for the moment, would finally injure our finances, the burdens upon which it behoved a good administrator to lighten; he added that “the prolongation of unemployment would cause our workmen to lose their technical skill, and therefore, in the coming peace-time, they would be useless in industry.”

There were certainly other means of protecting our finances; we might have been spared war contributions which, up to now, have reached a milliard and are being increased at the rate of 40 millions a month; we might have been spared requisitions in kind, which are now valued at many milliards and have quite exhausted us.

There were also other means of providing for the preservation of the professional skill of our workmen; Belgian industry might have been left its machinery and accessories, raw material and manufactured goods which have all been taken from Belgium to Germany; and it is neither to the quarries nor to the lime-kilns, to which the Germans themselves declare that they will send the unemployed, that our specialists would go to perfect their professional education.

The bare truth is that every deported workman

means one more soldier for the German army. He takes the place of a German workman of whom they make a soldier.

So the situation that we denounce to the civilized world may be summed up in these terms: Four hundred thousand workmen, in spite of themselves, and mainly as the result of the occupation *régime*, are found reduced to unemployment. Sons, husbands, fathers, respecting public order, bear without complaining their unhappy fate; national fellowship provides for their most pressing needs; by means of excessive frugality and generous privations, they just escape extreme poverty, and wait with dignity, in a friendship made very intimate by the national mourning, the end of our common trial.

Squads of soldiers enter these peaceful homes by force, tear away young men from their parents, husbands from wives, fathers from children; they guard, at the point of the bayonet, outlets by which wives and mothers try to pass to bid a last farewell to those being carried off; they arrange the captives in groups of forty or fifty, hoist them forcibly into the wagons; the engine is kept under steam; as soon as the train is full, a superior officer gives the signal for departure. And lo! fresh thousands of Belgians reduced to slavery, and, without any preliminary trial, condemned to the severest penalty of the penal code, after death—deportation. They do not know where they are going, nor for how long. All they do know is that their work will be entirely for the profit of the enemy. From some,

by baits or threats, an engagement has been extorted which they dare to call "voluntary"!

Yes, they enroll the unemployed, that is true; but they also enlist a large number—in the proportion of a quarter, in the *arrondissement* of Mons—of men who have never been out of work and who belong to the most varied professions: butchers, bakers, master-tailors, working brewers, electricians, husbandmen; they even take young boys, pupils from colleges, universities, or other superior schools.

Yet two highly placed authorities of the German Empire had formally guaranteed the liberty of our fellow-countrymen.

The day after the capitulation of Antwerp, the shaken people asked what would become of those Belgians of age to bear arms, or who would attain this age before the end of the occupation. Baron von Huene, military governor of Antwerp, authorized me to reassure the agonized parents in his name. Nevertheless, as the rumour was circulating in Antwerp that at Liège, Namur and Charleroi, young men had been seized and forcibly taken to Germany, I begged Governor von Huene to be so good as to confirm in writing the verbal guarantees that he had given me. He replied that the rumours relating to deportation were without foundation, and without hesitation gave me the following written declaration, which was read in all the parish churches of the province of Antwerp on Sunday, 18th October, 1914: "Young men need

not have the least fear of being taken to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army or to be employed there in forced labour."

On the arrival of Baron von der Goltz, as Governor-General, at Brussels, I went to ask him to be so good as to ratify for the whole country, without any time limit, the guarantees granted by Governor von Huene for the province of Antwerp. The Governor-General retained my request in order to examine it at leisure. The next day, he was good enough to come to Malines in person, to bring me his approval, and, in presence of two aides-de-camp and of my private secretary, confirmed to me the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens should be respected.

In my letter of 16th October last, to Baron von Bissing, after having reminded him of the undertaking given by his predecessor, I concluded: "Your Excellency will readily understand how very painful to me the responsibility that I should bear in relation to all these families would be, if the confidence that they have placed in you, through my mediation, and at my earnest entreaty, proved to be most grievously mistaken."

The Governor-General replied: "The employment in Germany of Belgians out of work, only inaugurated after two years of war, differs essentially from taking into captivity men fit for military service. The measure has no relation with the conduct of

the war, properly speaking, but has arisen from social and economic causes."

As if the word of an honest man could be cancelled at the end of a year or two like the worthless pledge of a scullion!

As if the declaration agreed to in 1914 had not expressly excluded both operations of war and forced labour!

As if, finally, every Belgian workman taking the place of a German workman, did not provide means to fill a gap in the German army!

We, pastors of these flocks that brute force tears from us, agonized at the thought of the moral and religious isolation in which they will languish, powerless witnesses of the sorrows and the terror by which so many homes are ruined or threatened, we appeal to those who, believers or unbelievers, in allied or in neutral countries, or even in the enemy country, still preserve some respect for human dignity.

When Cardinal Lavigerie undertook his anti-slavery campaign, Pope Leo XIII, blessing his mission, said to him: "Opinion is, more than ever, queen of the world; it is upon that that you must work. You will only conquer by opinion."

May divine Providence inspire whoever has authority, whoever has the gift of tongue or pen, to rally round our humble Belgian flag for the abolition of European slavery!

May the human conscience triumph over all sophisms, keeping stubbornly faithful to the great saying of S. Ambrose : Honour above everything !

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

In the name of the Bishops of Belgium.¹

Shorthand Report of the Allocution of His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, pronounced in the Church of SS. Michel and Gudule, at Brussels, on Sunday, 26th November, 1916, at the votive mass of the Very Holy Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, celebrated on behalf of the Belgians forcibly deported by the Germans.

“ Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

My very dear Brothers,

The last four or five weeks through which we have just passed are perhaps the saddest in my life, certainly the most full of anguish of any in my episcopal career.

The fathers and mothers who are here, crowding round this pulpit, will understand me.

The episcopate is a spiritual paternity ; S. Paul calls it a maternity : “ When your souls are in danger,” he wrote to the Galatians, “ I suffer the pangs of childbirth.” Now I have seen hundreds of

¹ We have not been able to communicate with Monseigneur of Bruges.

my flock in peril and in tears. For three whole days, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday last, morning and evening, I was going through the districts whence the first workmen and artisans were forcibly dragged from my diocese to the land of exile. At Wavre, at Court-Saint-Etienne, at Nivelles, at Tubize, at Braine-l'Alleud, I went into over a hundred half-deserted homes. The husband was absent, the children were orphans, sisters were seated with lustreless eyes and inert arms beside their sewing machines ; a gloomy silence reigned in the cottages. One would have said there was a corpse in the house.

But hardly had we offered a word of sympathy to the mother, when there came an outburst of sobs, of lamentations, exhibitions of anger, with touches of magnificent pride.

The recollection of these heartrending scenes will never leave me.

I would like to hasten to Antwerp, to Tirlemont, to Aerschot, to Diest, everywhere where they are renewed, where there is grief to soothe, tears to dry, hearts to calm.

But it is impossible : my strength and my leisure disappoint my good will.

So I thought, my very dear brothers, that I would come to you in the centre of my diocese and of our country. You will make yourselves the propagators of my thought, the interpreters of my feelings.

Faithful to the salutation familiar to Bishops :
 "Peace be with you," I bring you a word of peace.

But peace is only possible in order, and order rests on justice and charity.

We wish for order, and it is for this reason that we have asked you, from the first day, not to oppose active resistance to the occupying Power, and to submit, without rebelling, to such regulations as do not violate either our Christian conscience or our patriotic dignity.

But the occupying Power also ought to wish for order, that is to say, respect for our rights and for its own pledges.

Man has a right to freedom in his work, he has a right to his own hearth. He has the right to reserve his services for his own country.

Regulations violating these rights can never bind conscience.

I tell you that, my brothers, without hatred or the spirit of reprisals. I tell you that because, disciple of Christ and minister of the Gospel, I owe you the truth. I should be unworthy of the episcopal ring which the Church has placed on my finger and of the cross which she has laid on my breast, if, yielding to human emotion, I trembled to proclaim that right violated is still right, that injustice resting upon force is none the less injustice.

Order claims justice ; it also demands charity.

Charity is union. For man, union is the law of life in the threefold domain of life where nature and

faith cause him to be born and to grow up—family, country, christian society.

Man owes himself to his family : the husband to the wife, the youth to his parents, the father to his children.

Man owes himself to his country : social classes ought to help each other in national solidarity.

The Christian owes himself to his diocese : he only attaches himself to his mother, the Catholic Church, by the mediation of his bishop.

And that is why, my brothers, at the present time, your bishops' hearts are broken. They have seen thousands of their sons torn from their pastoral solicitude, taken to the unknown, wandering sheep without a shepherd, prey to the perils of isolation, of impotent anger, perhaps of despair.

They are reminded of a great historic event. When Pope Pius XII was in captivity at Savona, he put his trust in his Mother in heaven, who, since the victory of Lepanto, had been called by all Europe "The Help of Christians." On the day after his liberation, the Holy Pontiff had it at heart to affirm, by the institution of an annual festival in honour of *Notre Dame Auxiliatrice*, his personal piety and the gratitude of Christendom.

We also, through the mediation of the Very Holy Virgin Mary, ask humbly of the Sovereign Master "Who reigns in the heavens and Who sets up all empires" soon to restore to us our captive workmen, to preserve our homes intact, awaiting the day when we shall be able in the peace of victory

to gather all together around the triumphal altar of *Marie Libératrice*.

Courage, my brothers, reverence the teachings of Christ, be faithful to the Belgian Fatherland.

From the bottom of my heart I give you my paternal benediction.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

*Archbishop's Palace, Malines,
Epiphany 1917.*

My very dear Colleagues,

My dear sons, My dear daughters,¹

The testimony of your filial piety, the assurance of your prayers on our behalf, and above all, the communion of our hearts in the sorrows of the present time, do me good: I must not delay to thank you.

It seems to me that I have never experienced so forcibly as in these tragic years the efficacy of the dogma of the Communion of Saints.

Sometimes I ask myself if I am not prodigal of my communications to you. But, on the other hand, I learn from your confidences that any token of sympathy on our part is welcome to you, and at certain times helps to raise or sustain you; and then, once more, I gladly listen to the

¹ Our idea in writing this letter is specially to address those souls who, whether in the priesthood or in the religious life, are consecrated to God. Among them are those who have brought or sent us their good wishes for Christmas and the New Year; others, under the force of circumstances, have been obliged to be satisfied with offering them to us from a distance in the silence of their retreats. To both, without distinction, and with the same affection, we send this expression of our gratitude and our prayers. We hope that these lines will cross the frontiers of our occupied provinces, and will make known to our priests, and to our monks and nuns, in Holland, in France, and in England that we do not forget them.

It sometimes occurs to us that certain communities, exiled in our country, do not receive either visitation or the papers that the diocesan authority intends for them. If you surmise that there are in your neighbourhood humble sisters who are hidden from your solicitude by a self-effacement perhaps excessive, let them know, I beg of you, of the present letter, and invite them to make known to us, in all simplicity, their address and the conditions of their isolation.

exhortations of S. Paul: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (for, in this manner, everything—trials and consolations—tend to the good of your souls). "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

Dominated by these sentiments of tenderness and strength—which S. Paul rejoiced to pour forth into the hearts of the faithful at Corinth, and which prescribe the law of our apostolic ministry—I feel a specially intense need of writing to you to-day. In good times one easily does without others: success makes egoism. But in misfortune, man feels the ground slipping away from under his feet, and calls for help. God and his neighbour become necessary to him.

I feel, besides, deep consolation in finding myself united more closely than ever to my flock, united to

you, my brothers in the Priesthood, to you, my sons and my daughters, religious *élite* of my diocese. Drawing inspiration from the venerable apostle S. John, I dare to say (after him) to you: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

The truth! That must take precedence of everything! Sincerity is the most essential of duties. We could not, without cowardice, let lying prevail.

We have protested against violence: you have protested with us for the restoration of disregarded Right.

We have protested against the calumnies by means of which the executioners and the guilty pose as victims; you have united with us in our efforts to re-establish the truth.

We have protested for the protection of domicile and labour, we have claimed respect for human dignity: you have remained faithful on our side.

Let us bless God for having given you to understand your duty so well; indeed, it is no less a thing than the fulfilment of the fundamental principle of Christianity.

I do not admit that under pretext of greater concentration or greater piety the Christian may isolate himself in disdainful detachment, and look at the war from outside, as if it only affected minds of inferior quality. The Christian Faith should

impregnate the whole life, the intercourse of individuals, of society. The events of history, great or small, far-echoing or hidden, are all at the service of that work *par excellence* of divine providence, the Church of Christ.

Now this Church, founded by Christ and animated by His Holy Spirit, what is it ?

The society of believers, which, by means of the episcopate united to our Holy Father the Pope, is closely attached to Christ. Your bishop, whatever his personality or origin, as soon as he has been chosen by the Holy Spirit and established in a diocese by the sovereign Pontiff to rule the Church of God, becomes the living bond by which each one of you is brought into community of life with Christ, and through Christ with God. Faith, hope, charity, all the treasures of supernatural grace descend from our Christ Jesus and from His vicar upon you, through your bishop ; and it is also by your bishop, united to the successor of Peter, that your beliefs, your aspirations, your obedience rise towards our Lord Jesus Christ and up to the throne of God. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life"—in what, asks S. John, is this mystery that we have just spoken of summed up ? Your fellowship with us, replies the inspired author—that is to say, with the apostles

or the bishops their successors—a Fellowship which attaches you to the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ.

There is then no more question of heathen or Jew, of slave or free man: all distinctions of race, language, social conditions are effaced: all baptized souls are found in the same association at once spiritual and visible, united to Christ and to God by the mediation of the Catholic and Roman episcopate.

Not, my brothers, that the episcopal dignity creates human privileges for him on whom it rests. Far from it. Whoever is put in authority becomes, by this headship, your servant. Certainly your bishop will not exempt you from showing respect and obedience; like Christ Jesus and in His name, he even claims them, and thanks you for assenting to pay them. But you have your rights over him. The day that the Vicar of Jesus Christ sends you a bishop; the day that your bishop, in his turn, sends you a parish priest, a college tutor, a hospital almoner, a director of a religious house, these men who are set in authority over you belong to you. Their thoughts, their affections, their work, their time, their prayers, above all their sufferings, belong to you, their subordinates, and you have the right to dispose of them. The good shepherd is known, said our Lord, by this twofold sign; that he does not desert his

flock in the hour of danger, nor exploit it for his profit like a hireling ; on the contrary, he puts his life at the disposal of his sheep.

And because there is nothing higher than giving one's life for others, the position of the pastor who pledges himself unreservedly and for ever to the service of God and of his brothers, is the most perfect of all.

As for you, religious souls, who make public profession of aspiration after Christian perfection, you are the principal and most powerful auxiliaries of the episcopal ministry. Moreover, it is in you, in your prayers, in your works, in your penances, that, after the grace of God, we chiefly place our christian confidence. Help us. I speak in my own name and in the name of my collaborators in the priesthood. Help us, gain us grace to be faithful to our sublime but redoubtable calling. Have pity on us. Atone for our unfaithfulness to grace. Supply our insufficiency. Following the example of our divine Saviour, sacrifice yourselves, sanctify yourselves for us.

May we all, bishops, priests, religious, make use of the great and hard lessons of the present time to strengthen our souls in the spirit of sacrifice.

We do not think enough of this. The world does not comprehend this truth, and we do not face it sufficiently : the work of the redemption of the world, in which we have the honour and the mission

to collaborate, is not only a work of labour and pious supplication ; it is, in the highest degree, a work of sacrifice. Certainly, one may imagine that our divine Saviour might have been made man and have come to take His delight among us, even if humanity had not sinned. But the historic fact, indubitably established, is that the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary to redeem, by His Passion and His death, guilty humanity.

This is not all. Suffering and dying on the cross to redeem us, our divine Saviour took upon Himself alone the weight of our transgressions. One sole theandric act was of infinite value, and was sufficient for the expiation of all our crimes.

Yet, once more, divine Providence has not willed it thus. And, God be thanked, noble souls will bless the designs of the Eternal Father for this. The sacrifice on Calvary is an example. " I have given you an example," said the Master, " that your acts should be modelled on Mine." The children of God, brothers of Christ, are invited to reproduce in their own lives this divine Model, and every one ought, in some measure, to imitate it. Our beloved Redeemer wished that in the Church, which is His Mystic Body, the Passion that He commenced in His mortal body should be continued to the end of time. S. Paul expressly said this : " I . . . rejoice in my sufferings for you," he writes to the Colossians, " and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of

Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister."

The Christian is not isolated, lost in the void, in a fleeting moment of time. He lives in the immortal life of the Church, to which he belongs, and in which he shares all the phases of birth, growth, struggle, death and resurrection. The work of the Church, the joint work of Christ and of His members, is the redemption of the world. And because institutions established by the providence of God prosper in proportion as they are in accord with the spirit of their Founder, we have to take the spirit of Christ, to open our hearts wide to the action of the Holy Spirit, to accept our share in the Passion of our divine Saviour, before having any pretension to the honour of sharing the triumph of His Resurrection, of His Ascension, of His reign at the right hand of the Father Eternal. Listen to this sentence from the author of *The Imitation of Christ*: "If you do not give up your soul to suffering without reservation; if you cannot await with firmness all the will of our God of love, do not say, and do not allow it to be said, that you love Him."

My dear colleagues in the priesthood, my dear sons and daughters consecrated to God, the war will work tremendous changes in European Society. Let it not be without effect upon our souls. Let us renew what is commonly called to-day our mentality, that is, the ruling ideas of our life.

Let us go back to the Gospel. Let us keep our eyes upon our divine Redeemer. Let us inquire of the Church and live her supernatural life. We were accustomed to work. We loved prayer. On certain days and at certain hours we did not neglect obligatory works of penance, or supererogatory deeds of mortification. But, let us confess it, renunciation, humiliation, suffering, appeared to us like noble accessories, a kind of ornament and grace of life. Now they are nothing of the sort. Christianity is essentially a death which leads to a life ; the death of the old man which gives birth to the new ; the decomposition in the earth of the grain of wheat from which is germinated a more plenteous life. Christianity is the work of Christ who acquired, by His death, the right to unite our souls to Him, to pour His own life into them, by means of the effusion of His Holy Spirit in us. It is, therefore, the sacrifice of Christ that our lives ought, above all, to show forth. This is the price of our personal sanctification and of the success of our apostleship. Herein lies the secret of the share of influence that we shall have in the redoubtable work of future reconstruction. Pondering deeply on this thought, we ought every morning, celebrants and assistants, to utter the liturgical prayer : " I will go up the steps of the altar of God, of the High Altar of the Divine Majesty, of the altar upon which the God-Man—with the

co-operation of the soul, lips, and hands of His priests—renews His sacrifice: I will go up even unto the God of my joy and gladness.” So, while we mutually wish each other a holy and a happy new year, we do not wish, either for ourselves or for those we love, a life of comfort exempt from privations, from cares, from grief, from humiliations, but grace to welcome and to run a race as similiar as possible to that which Our Lord Jesus Christ inaugurated and ran before us, marking each step with tears, with sweat, with drops of His blood. Let us keep our eyes constantly fixed on our Jesus, who, according to S. Paul, was made “author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

We mutually ask for each other grace to imitate more closely our divine Model, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, Virgin and Mother, to whom we owe the possession in ourselves of the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

THE PASTORAL VIRTUES OF THE PRESENT HOUR.

“ *Allocution addressed to the Deans on the occasion of their Annual Reunion at the Archbishop’s Palace, 29th Jan., 1917, day of the Festival of S. François de Sales.*”

Dear Deans,

It seems to us that in the troublous times through which we are passing, no day is more suitable for an exchange of views and feelings with our closest collaborators, than the festival of that great bishop whose disposition and teaching trace so clearly the way to christian spirituality and to pastoral work—S. François de Sales.

Mgr. de Ségur reminds us that in the Middle Ages every doctor had his special appellation: S. Thomas Aquinas was called *The Angelic Doctor*; S. Bonaventura, *The Seraphic Doctor*; Duns Scotus, *The Subtle Doctor*; now, he adds, we are sure that Pope Pius IX would have said, if the great bishop of Geneva were one day placed by the Church in the ranks of the doctors, that he ought to be called *The Infallible Doctor*, so sure, so evangelical, so luminous, so sound is his spiritual teaching.

Certainly, the saints whom the Church places upon

her altars¹ have all practised virtue to an heroic degree, and she holds them up for our imitation; yet each one, having his special character, reflects with greater distinctness than another, one of the features—inimitable in their supreme ideality—of the most holy face of our Lord Jesus Christ. The custom of meditating on the saints adjusts our eyes to the contemplation of the divine-human character of our Christ Jesus.

Now S. François de Sales lived, struggled, spent himself in the agitated days of the heathen Renaissance and of rising Protestantism (1567–1622). His labours, his worries, his conflicts recall S. Paul, S. Athanasius, S. Augustine: we cannot study a better model. Morally, and even physically if we may judge from the portraits we have of him, his very aspect is a light and an encouragement to us.

Let us look, my dear colleagues, a little closer at this noble face. One of my old colleagues and friends at the university, the much loved and regretted Mgr. Cartuyvels, was pleased to say that a man, at forty, is responsible for his countenance. S. François de Sales fashioned his during nearly half a century of ceaseless labour. Ardent, even choleric by temperament, he became a model of *gentleness*, so much so indeed that people are accustomed to speak of him as “the gentle

¹This refers to the names of saints on the Diptychs.

S. François de Sales " Let no one be under any misapprehension ; his gentleness is not the spontaneous grace of a soft or timid nature : it is the conquest made by a will accustomed to dominate its emotions, and to establish itself in a firmness of mind that nothing can dishearten, that nothing can make flinch.

Our *amour propre* is pleased to think that the saints were kneaded out of different clay from ourselves. Nothing is more deceptive, more weakening than this presumption. " No, no," replies S. Ambrose, " let us be assured the saints were not of a nature superior to ours ; they were more courageous than we are ; that is the truth ; evil passions were not unknown to them, but they applied themselves to triumphing over them."

The *force of character* of the holy bishop of Geneva sprang from his *charity* ; he had for his brothers, for every one, but specially for those who naturally had least attraction for him, an overflowing charity. " He made himself all things to all men, in order to save souls," says the prayer of the Mass and of the liturgical office for to-day.

And the varied virtues of this chosen soul are fused in so delicate a harmony, are settled in such perfect equilibrium, that they give to whoever studies the physiognomy of the saint an impression of rest, of order, of *serenity*.

Let us apply to ourselves, my very dear colleagues,

the counsel of the holy bishop of Geneva : “ Read,” he says in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, “ the stories and lives of the Saints, in which, as in a mirror, you see portrayed the Christian life, and copy their deeds for your own improvement according to your vocation.”

Let us consider, one after the other, each of the four virtues characteristic of this Saint : gentleness, force of mind, charity, serenity. Let us study them in order to adapt them to our lives ; let us have the ambition to be inspired by them in the present exercise of our ministry.

GENTLENESS.

Many are the priests, curés or vicars employed on Food-relief Committees ; this work of bodily mercy, which should always bring you the thanks of those whom you help, does in reality produce a great deal of discontent and ingratitude. Be patient, my friends ; guard against your natural temper ; do not yield to the temptation to say : “ Ah ! if I am to be treated like this, I shall throw it up.” Do not throw the helve after the hatchet. What would you have ? You must take our poor humanity as it is. Was it not Beernaert, our former minister, who defined gratitude as “ the thought of favours to come ” ? Disinterested affection is not common. Do not we experience this in all our relations with the good

God? The greater part of the time, is it for His sake that we love Him or for our own?

Let the ingratitude around us teach us to uplift our purposes into the supernatural. When our divine Saviour recommends brotherly charity to us, He calls it a new commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Not, surely, that love of one's neighbour was not obligatory before the coming of the Messiah; but it lacked the twofold characteristics of universality and completeness that Christian faith and charity alone can inspire and sustain.

Following the example of Christ, it is every one, without distinction of persons, that we must love.

"If ye love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even publicans the same?" We must imitate our heavenly Father, who sends His warm sun and His beneficent rain on the evil as on the good. In every unfortunate man whom you assist, do not in future see the man himself with his faults and his wrongs, but the Christ of whom he is a suffering member; and then "as ye have done—in the spirit of your Master—to the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Compassion, which fulfils itself in this spirit, goes as far as the gift of oneself; following the example of Him who gave His life for those whom

He loved. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Charity thus interpreted is new to history: it dates from Christ and His Church. Fill yourselves, my dear friends, with this charity, and you will be humble of heart and you will be gentle. You will not act inopportunately, you will not be pretentious, nor take dominating airs; you will not get angry, you will know how to suffer everything, to accept everything, to expect everything, to bear everything. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; . . . is not easily provoked . . . charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

STRENGTH OF MIND.

Nevertheless, you must not identify gentleness with desertion of duty, nor moderation with abdication. The support of gentleness is patience, a virtue which is a constituent of strength of mind, *fortitudo*.

If on committees—food or other committees—one sees members treating their subordinates with temper, sometimes with arrogance, one also sees—and often they are the same persons—those who retire fuming before their contradictors, who fret themselves in silence, and finally withdraw from their task, leaving the field free to the adversary.

These lack *sang froid* and courage. Certainly, in face of the common enemy, good patriots ought to close their ranks more narrowly than ever round their King and the Public Authorities. Inevitably there will be, after the war, a truce—of which no one, I think, will be able to fix the duration—during which politicians of all parties ought to give the support of their talents and their influence to the restoration of our ruins and the reconstitution of public order. The foreshadowing of this truce, which the Belgian Government has already inaugurated by admitting into its midst, at Havre, the leaders of the Liberal and of the Socialist parties, has inspired in the *Headquarters of the National Committee for Food and Help* a spirit of neutrality in benevolence to which we are glad to pay homage. We are obeying a feeling of loyalty in stating that the National Central Committee has given us, under many circumstances, something better than verbal declarations—effective proofs of its anxiety to be impartial. But just as, under our legitimate Government, politicians brave authority and sometimes make a game of eluding the laws, so, to-day, certain individuals, whom a member of the Central Committee called “people of inferior mentality,” seem to be incapable of withdrawing themselves from their sectarianism, and show themselves to be more preoccupied with their future electoral influence than with our patriotic

union. We must not capitulate to them. If it be a question of education, of charity, of religion, defend, not weakly but persistently, the souls of the children, the interests of the poor, the rights of Catholic families. True courage, the *fortitudo christiana*, is seen in such acts. Calmly, unyieldingly, maintain your right; go and plead your cause, if need be, before the Central Committee, and when you have exhausted in vain every means of resistance, if necessary come to us; we shall leave no stone unturned to help you to make the justice of our common cause prevail. The interests that you direct are not yours, but those of God and His Church: of these you have not the right to abandon the care and defence. Listen to what Jeanne de Chantal, who knew the gentle S. François so intimately, says of him: "Our very dear Father was the soul of courage; he was the strongest and most magnanimous soul that could possibly be met in bearing burdens and labours, and in pursuing the enterprises with which God inspired him; he never relaxed his hold, and said that when our Lord commits any matter to us it must never be given up, but one must have the courage to overcome all difficulties."

My dear Colleagues, following the example of the great bishop under whose patronage we have met, be *gentle* and lowly of heart, but do not be either mawkish or timid, be *strong*.

One of the deepest reasons of the relative sterility of many lives is that both priests and faithful do not have a sufficiently lively realization of the resources that the Christian soul and priestly zeal have at their disposal. Do not confuse pride with fearlessness, nor cowardice with humility. S. Paul says, "Not he that commendeth himself is approved"; but elsewhere he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." God has given you grace to live at the most tragic period of our history. Beat out for yourselves a manly soul. Courage, like all other virtues, is acquired, and developed by exercise. You have weighty responsibilities; do not quail before them. "When God lays a ten-pound burden on a man," says an English writer, "He gives him strength to carry twenty." The essential thing is that you should walk in dependence upon your God. His arm will uphold you every moment to the level of your task. "Commit thy way unto the Lord," says the Psalmist, "and put thy trust in Him: and He shall bring it to pass."

CHARITY.

Gentleness and humility, patience and courage, have their roots in charity. Following the example of S. François de Sales—the emulator of the apostle S. Paul—consummate all your energies

in charity : make yourselves all things to all men. " O God, for the sake of the salvation of souls, Thou didst will that the blessed François, your Confessor and your Pontiff, should make himself all things to all men : have pity on us, and deign to inform us with this same grace of charity."

To-day, the general law of charity ought specially to regulate our attitude towards those who have become our enemies ; our attitude towards certain too greatly self-seeking fellow-citizens who compromise the general unity ; our attitude towards the country.

(1) *Charity towards those who have become our enemies.*

Catholics abroad, who did not find in their hearts one word of reprobation for the German armies when they massacred our innocent people at Dinant, at Virton, at Andenne, at Tamines, at Aerschot, at Louvain ; when they shot our priests, burned our open towns and our defenceless villages ; Catholics who, in their own land, propagated or allowed to be propagated calumnies which attempted to make criminals appear innocent, by transforming the victims into the guilty ; Catholics who, for nearly three years, have watched with crossed arms, closed lips, and unmoved faces the tortures of a people (formerly friendly) who had never wished anything but good to Germany—these same Catholics to-day find pathetic tones in which to chant hymns to

Christian brotherhood, to forgetting the past, and to peace.

Confused notions are floating in the air on the subject of our relations of justice and charity towards the enemy of the Belgian country: this is a suitable occasion to recall to mind certain points of the teaching of that master *par excellence* of Christian philosophy and theology, S. Thomas Aquinas.

There are, in the heart of man, two deep propensities—one to enjoyment, the other to anger. The first has for its object the possession of a good: enjoyment is the fruit of this possession. The second has for its object the removal of an evil, or revolt against evil when it bursts upon us.

These two propensities are found in animals and in ourselves: in animals as a condition of need or passion; in ourselves too as a condition of need or passion, but also as a condition of reasonable inclination.

The inclination for pleasure, sensible or supra-sensible, is foreign to the question that now concerns us; it is the inclination to anger and vengeance—animal passion or disposition of the reasonable will—that here engages our attention.

S. Thomas defines anger as an appetite for vengeance. This appetite may have its seat in the sensible part of our nature, or in our suprasensible will. What is to be said of it from the moral point of view?

It can be good or bad, replies S. Thomas ; it can beget an act of virtue or a sin, according as the object of the avenging will is just, in the moral order or not. "To have *the will* to avenge evil, while respecting the order of justice, is to perform a virtuous act. To desire the reparation of moral evil, within the limits of Right, is to be stirred up against evil, to be zealous, to act well."

"But wildly to long for vengeance, whether carried beyond the limits of justice, or putting the extermination of the guilty in the foreground and the repression of evil in the background, is to act unworthily: in the latter case, in fact, the aim of vengeance is the suffering of one's neighbour."

And how must the share of *passion* in this avenging anger be estimated? Does ethics demand that the wish to take vengeance on evil should be impassible?

No, replies S. Thomas, quite the contrary. Doubtless passion is dangerous at the time when a man has to decide on the morality of an act to be performed: it is then liable to upset the serenity of his judgment. But from the moment when the justice of a repressive act becomes apparent, and the morality of that repression has been settled, the passion of anger becomes the auxiliary of the will, and it gives greater vigour and promptitude to the accomplishment of justice: the passions, thus

kept in their place, are, says S. Thomas, aids to virtue, "*utiles virtuti.*"¹

* * *

The application of these principles to the position in which we find ourselves is easy. The injustice of the violation of our territory is flagrant, confessed moreover by those who were the authors of it. The contempt shown for our rights, from the fatal days of the invasion of our country up to the present time, is incontestable. The repression of these iniquities is therefore a manifest right, and, for those who have the means, it is a duty. To wish that this duty should be performed, that order should be re-established and the abettors of disorder punished and reduced to impotence to injure; to wish that inoffensive persons should be allowed to live in peace; that the last word should belong to Right and to the honour of the God of justice; to wish this with all the energy of our will and with all the passionate ardour of which our human nature is capable—this is to respond to the will for justice, this is to perform an act of virtue.

But, objects some one, this is to hate, and charity excludes hatred.

Certainly charity excludes hatred; hatred is its opposite; charity and hatred exclude each other like

¹ The above lines are extracts, almost word for word, from passages of that superb little work by S. Thomas, *de Malo*.

water and fire ; it is impossible for them to co-exist in the same individual.

But what is hatred ? It is to wish evil for evil, to wish that one's neighbour should suffer for the sake of suffering, to make his suffering our aim, an aim upon which our will fastens with pleasure. Such a disposition of mind would be seriously guilty.

On the other hand, to wish physical suffering for some one who has perpetrated an injustice and persists in it—not as the aim but as the means in view of an ulterior moral result ; to wish that the guilty should suffer, in order that under pressure of suffering a change of heart that he refused to make of his own accord should take place—this is not to hate, but on the contrary it is to love rationally.

“ As I live,” saith the Lord, “ I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” We copy our God : we do not wish that our enemies should be shut out of Paradise ; we wish that they should become worthy of entering into it.

“ Who loves well, punishes well,” says the proverb. Love of vindicative justice may perhaps be carried to excess and degenerate into cruelty ; but it is equally possible to sin by default ; by not inflicting on the guilty the punishment that they deserve.

Virtue lies in the golden mean. For the wish to

bring vengeance upon wickedness is properly a virtue. S. Thomas considers it a special virtue which completes in each one of us the natural repulsion that we have for all that is injurious, which makes us resist wrong when it threatens us and incites us to avenge ourselves when it touches us.

What would you say of one who, under the pretext of gentleness, closed the prisons and suppressed the penal code?

The collective crime of a nation that violates the rights of another nation is incomparably graver than that of an individual whom society sends to the convict prison or to the guillotine.

That any one, doubtful as to the justice of his cause, should endeavour to see nothing in the war but subjects of pity or of horror, we can understand. But for us, war is the means of making honour respected, of causing Right to triumph, of re-establishing on the heights the truth and the worship of God who is Truth. And this is why this war has such grandeur and justifies such sacrifice!

Let no one, then, confuse hatred—a vice—with the spirit of righteous vengeance which is a virtue.

Hatred is inspired by the instinct for destruction.

The virtue of vengeance is inspired by charity. Bravery prepares the way for it by banishing terror from the heart: the King, the Government, the People of Belgium felt this strength of soul

when, at midnight on 2nd August, they dared the insolence of the military colossus that hurled itself upon us.

Terror banished, the upright soul looked its duty in the face: the wrong done to truth, to justice, to God, it held to be done to itself; the peril of its brothers became its own peril: the flame of the twofold love of God and of humanity was lighted; the immolation of self was accepted: anything, rather than abdication with dishonour.

This is charity and the zeal of which it is the flame.

And to this splendid act of charity the Belgian people assented: they remain faithful to it; their tears, their strength, their fortune, their blood do not seem to them too heavy a price to pay for the triumph of Right and for the preservation of their independence.

* * *

You will perhaps say: You have appealed for strict justice and that we understand; but there is another point of view, that of Christian perfection. Is not returning good for evil the more perfect way? Should not the Christian know how to forgive?

Return good for evil, so be it, if it be only a question of individual wrongs suffered in private.

But, as a matter of fact, dear colleagues, you have

in the parishes of your deaneries hundreds of homes ravaged, pillaged, burnt; the absent—military or civilian prisoners, or deported—are legion. Is it to avenge these personal wrongs that your people claim justice? From my own experience and certain of yours, I dare to reply: “No!”

It is the wrong done to the nation which has aroused general indignation and which demands reparation. Assaults on public order cannot remain unpunished. The prince who systematically employs clemency towards malefactors, compromises social security. The peoples who amnesty injustice are not worthy of liberty.

It is true the Gospel disposes to forgiveness. But the Church knows on what conditions it may be granted. Let us imitate her. She demands from the guilty the confession of his fault; repentance; the promise not to relapse, and, if the fault be an injustice, the promise of restitution,—following the well-known declaration of S. Augustine: *Non remittetur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum*,—the acceptance of a penance which satisfies the penalties due for sins committed.

As soon as our enemies fulfil these conditions, the hour of pity for them will have struck.

* * *

Certain sentimentalists are disquieted sometimes when they remember the words of the Gospel,

“ Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

But if you wish to understand perfectly the meaning of this evangelical precept, consult, says S. Augustine, the example of our Lord Himself. While our Divine Master was submitting to examination by Caiaphas, an officer dared to strike Him in the face. Our gentle Saviour did not reply “ Here is the other cheek.” He confronted the offender with this dilemma: “ If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me? ”

The apostle S. Paul also, S. Augustine notes, one day received blows in public, by order of Ananias, the high priest. Did the accused man receive them without saying a word? “ God shall smite thee, thou whited wall,” he replied, “ for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? ” To this *riposte* the apostle added a fine and biting irony [cf. Acts xxiii. 5].

The words of the Gospel, therefore, should not be taken according to the letter. What the Gospel really says is that it is necessary, whatever happens, to preserve one's self-control, to keep one's inner patience. As for external conduct, that will depend on circumstances. “ Benevolence, properly understood, often requires the use of harshness towards one's neighbour; one must be ready to correct him in spite

of himself, and to have regard to his real interest rather than to his preferences."

* * *

Moreover, did not the Lord say, in Deuteronomy, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay"? And does not S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, repeat the same doctrine? "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves. Leave justice to God who has said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay to every one what is due to him.'"

Evidently, these inspired texts do not signify that God reserves, for His own immediate action, *all* exercise of repressive justice, seeing that, in this same Epistle to the Romans, from which these texts are taken, the Apostle S. Paul expressly says that "the representatives of public authority bear the sword to take vengeance on evil in the name of God."

"Here," says S. Thomas, "is the meaning of these words of Scripture: 'External offences come under the repressive jurisdiction of the public authorities, but the judgment and punishment of hidden faults I reserve to myself. And you, Christians, do not give premature judgments: judge nothing before the time.'"

"Or again," says the saintly Doctor, "the texts might have this other meaning: 'The crimes of men offend God. Therefore, it is to God that justice and reparation are due. To take upon

oneself the function of justice is to usurp a divine prerogative.' ”

* * *

Now comes the last question: Is it within the province of the clergy to take part in the conflicts produced by the war and the occupation? Are not the bishop and his priests charged exclusively with the spiritual needs of souls?

The Church is not an invisible society of pure spirits. The faithful are exposed to the needs and perils of the body as well as of the soul, of time as well as of eternity. The solicitude of pastors ought to embrace all these interests. Listen once more to S. Thomas Aquinas: “The Pastors of the Church cannot rest content with fighting the wolves who kill their flocks spiritually; they must also stand up against the tyrants and ravishers who cause them bodily suffering. Not that the representatives of ecclesiastical authority ought to handle material weapons themselves, but they ought to make use of their spiritual arms, that is to say, address salutary warnings to the guilty, pray fervently, strike obstinate rebels with excommunication.”

The ambiguities that we are trying to make clear in this rapid sketch of charity towards the enemy, originate in an inadequate conception of charity.

The virtues, in the eyes of many persons ill-informed in the Christian religion, are like so many threads arranged in parallel lines. These threads may be of unequal quality; charity is held to be of a superior quality; very well; but it does not follow from that that it any the less takes its place with the other threads in the weaver's warp.

One can understand that in this way the mind forms an idea of a charity without justice, and that then one tries to think of some means of bringing them into agreement.

But in reality it is not like this: charity is the woof which, out of all the threads of our christian virtues, makes one fabric.

All things considered, there is only one rule: To love God, and for love of God, to love one's neighbour.

Radically there is only one virtue: love of God, for Himself, and love of one's neighbour out of love to God.

The Christian ought to be temperate, courageous, just, prudent, but through charity; he ought to believe in God, to hope in Him, but through charity; he ought to practice charity, but through charity. Charity is the unique inspiration and guide of the whole moral and religious life.

There can be no christian justice without charity.

There can be no charity without justice. And, vindicative justice being a part of the virtue of justice, there can be no charity without vindicative

justice. To be able, under pretence of heroism in charity, to shut one's eyes to injustice, to grant impunity to the crimes of the enemy because he is the enemy, is to misunderstand the sovereign necessary empery of charity in the organization of moral, individual and social life, and of christianized humanity.

To flatter, or affect not to see the faults of a refractory child is not to love it, but to spoil it. We must not spoil either our friends or our enemies.

Charity is one, but the form in which it is exercised varies according to the object to which it is applied. To love the soul of a righteous man is to wish for his perseverance ; to love the soul of a sinner is to wish for his conversion.

Let us imitate our Mother the Holy Church ; on Good Friday she prays for her faithful children ; she also prays for heretics and schismatics, for the descendants of the deicides, and for the heathen : but for the one she asks holiness and progress ; for the others she wishes repentance and the opening of their eyes to the light of truth.

Preaching and spiritual direction—this is a good opportunity to make this comment—neglect too much this law of the contexture of Christian virtues in the tissue of life.

This results in the formation of fragmentary souls who only know good under partial aspects, or of devout souls—the world calls them bigots—who

practice charity towards God under the form of ritual exercises, but who do not make this leading virtue the soul of their morality and of their piety.

It is not enough, in seeking after goodness, to control the attractions of pleasure (*temperance*); to brave the obstacles opposed to the acquisition or possession of moral good (*strength of mind, courage, fortitude*); it is not enough to practice good and resist evil, in such a way as not to injure the rights of others (*justice*); the virtues must be exercised within reasonable limits, without either excess or weakness, with *prudence*.¹

Prudence establishes in the perfect practice of goodness a primary unity: it enables men who do good to do it well: *bonum bene facere*.

Now the primary law of prudence is to lead man to his true end, therefore to his supernatural, christian end; for man has no other: which brings us back to the fact that the sovereign law of prudence is to be filled with charity. *Charity*, poured into the soul by the Holy Spirit Who is given to us at baptism, at first, directs the will towards our true end, towards the God whom faith reveals to us and whom hope leads us to look upon as our supreme good. Then, upon supernaturalized prudence, she lays the duty of subordinating to God, as so many means of achieving their end, all good things other than God. Thoughts, desires, resolutions, works,

¹All moral virtues are, of course, attached to the four cardinal or fundamental virtues that have just been mentioned.

moral virtues, the theological virtues of faith and hope are thus all placed at the service of charity, *par excellence* the unifying principle of the whole moral and religious life of man, of humanity.

From this elevated point of view—the only complete, the only true one in all the fulness of the word—“particularism,” moral or religious, is unknown to the christian life. The opposition of patriotism to justice, or of justice to charity, is void of meaning.

Under the form of “habits,” that is to say, fundamental dispositions, the christian virtues are born, increase or decrease, fall into decay.

Have you thought enough about this unit of organization in the christian life, its amplitude, its harmony, the resplendence of order in the private conscience and in social intercourse, in a word, the beauty of charity?

Have you insisted sufficiently on the “compensation” of the virtues by the love of God; sufficiently caused the elevation and fecundity of christian ethics to be admired? How is it that so many souls lower Christianity to the level of naturalism? Directors of souls question yourselves, and reply.

(2) *Charity towards our Fellow Citizens.*

You are not ignorant of the dissensions that have raged between country people and townfolk,

between tradesmen and customers, through the rise in prices of clothes and provisions. It is not easy, in these matters, to define the responsibility of every one. Justice and charity are both involved in these complex problems.

On the question of justice, I gave you, on the day of the meeting, a note containing some general indications which would be useful to you, especially in the confessional and in your private conversations with those affected.

But it must not be forgotten that one may sin in other ways besides being unjust in matters of exchange; charity towards private persons, and legal justice—that is, respect for the common welfare—also make demands upon the conscience, gravely, in a grave matter.

In the pulpit and in the confessional, insist on the practice of charity; on the odiousness of seeing exorbitant profits made to the detriment of those in embarrassment and poverty; on the obligation to avoid everything that provokes hatred, jealousy and ill-will.

(3) *Charity towards our Native Land.*

The Regulation concerning the laws and customs of war on land annexed to the Hague Convention of 18th October, 1907, stipulated in Art 43: "Legal authority having actually passed into the hands

of the occupant, the latter will take all the measures in his power with a view to re-establish and assure order as far as at all possible in public life by *respecting, absolute impediment excepted, the laws in force in the country.*"

It is very interesting to note that the scheme of International Convention presented by Russia to the Brussels Conference in 1874 gave the occupant permission "to maintain the laws in force, to modify them, or to suppress them entirely, according to the exigencies of war, with due regard to the public interest"; but the Brussels Conference set aside this scheme and insisted on more restrictive terms; it only allowed the occupant to modify or suspend the laws in force, "*if it were necessary.*"

The Regulation annexed to the Hague Convention of 29th July, 1899, and that annexed to the Hague Convention of 18th October, 1907, are yet more rigorous: they interdict any modification whatever, "*absolute impediment excepted.*"

The successive changes in the wording clearly show the ripened, imperious determination of the signatories to impose upon the occupant respect for the laws as they are in force in the occupied country.

The German delegates were the first signatories of Art. 43 of the Regulation annexed to the Convention.

Now the occupying Government claims to over-

turn the general administration of our country ; it seems to have taken for its motto *divide et impera*. The creation of the so-called University of Ghent ; the administrative separation that has been at work for a long time in certain departments and which a recent order has just made general ; public or clandestine encouragement given exclusively to the papers and meetings—as many of empty-headed Walloons as of disordered Flemings—which urge on the antagonism of the two races traditionally united under the Belgian flag, these all represent so many attempts, happily sterile, to dismember our national union.

Whoever should second these equivocal proceedings would be traitors to the country. Questions of Belgium's internal policy only concern Belgians, can only be solved by the Belgian Chambers, by the Belgian Government, by the Belgian King.

Dear deans, keep your eyes open. Turn away our faithful from lectures or meetings of disintegrating tendency. Watch over and hinder the attempts of the perfidious who make common cause with the enemy ; watch the snares laid for the young. The nation has faced violence, let it guard against seduction. Patriotic piety is a virtue : you are, by the obligation of your position, guardians and preachers of virtue.

SERENITY.

“What first struck me in my blessed Father,” said S. Chantal, “was a gift of very perfect faith. I always saw this blessed one eagerly long for and only breathe the one desire to live according to the truths of the Faith and the maxims of the Gospel. He said that the real way of serving God was to follow Him and to walk after Him, on the keen edge of the soul, without any support from consolation, from feeling, or from light other than that of naked and simple faith. That is why he loved inward destitution, abandonment, desolation.”¹

“If I only want pure water, what does it matter to me,” said S. François de Sales, “whether it is brought to me in a golden vase or in a glass? I even prefer it in a glass, because it has no other colour whatever but that of the water itself. Besides, in the glass I see it much better. What does it matter to me whether the will of God be set before me in tribulation or in consolation, since in neither the one nor the other do I wish or seek anything but the Divine will, which in either is so much the better, because in neither is there any beauty whatever but that of the most holy and eternal Good Pleasure.”²

The pious Elisabeth de la Trinité, Carmelite of Dijon, said that the Christian does not deal with secondary causes, but with God alone.

¹ Letter from S. Chantal to Père Jean de Saint-François de Sales.

² *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu.*

And does not the holy Gospel say, "If thine eye be single"—fixed by faith on God—"thy whole body shall be full of light."

Look thy God full in the face; He it is Who is sovereign master of events. He and none other than He. Love Him, for He loves thee; He is essentially Love; He has made thee His son in His only Son, in Whom centres all His good pleasure. He is thy Father: be to Him a son. Love Him, and—while waiting till it be granted thee to apprehend His living personality in glory—worship Him in the manifestations of His Divine will: lay hold on them one and all, while chanting the eternal hymn of thy filial acquiescence—"Our Father which art in heaven . . . Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

How far should this abandonment to the Divine Love be carried?

The holy bishop will tell us. He brings on to the stage the little Child Jesus and His very holy Mother. The dialogue of the saint with the Divine Child is a sublime lesson in spirituality.

First of all we have a preliminary glimpse of the idea of perfect abandonment.

"We others, little children of the Heavenly Father, we can go with Him in two ways: we can go, firstly, stepping out by our own will, conforming it to His, the hand of our obedience always clasping that of His divine intention, and following it where-

ever it leads us. But we can also go with our Lord without having any will of our own, simply letting ourselves be led on at His divine Good Pleasure, like a little child in the arms of its mother, by a certain kind of admirable assent, which might be called union, or rather unity, of our will with that of God. And this is the manner in which we should try to comport ourselves in the will of the divine Good Pleasure, inasmuch as the effects of the will of the Good Pleasure proceed entirely from His providence, and reach us without our having had any part in producing them."

"It is true that we might well desire that events should happen according to the will of God, and this disposition is very good; but we also might well accept events from the heavenly Good Pleasure by a very simple passiveness of our will, which, not desiring anything whatever, simply acquiesces in everything that God wills to be done in us, to us and by us."

It is very difficult, says the saintly doctor some pages farther on, to express clearly this extreme indifference of the human will thus brought under, and "dead" in, the will of God. It is not really "acquiescence," for that is a mental act involving consent. It is not "acceptation," for accepting, receiving, are certain actions by which we embrace and take what happens to us. It is not "permission," for permitting evinces a certain

idleness of will, which does not do anything, but, all the same, lets things be done. "It therefore seems to me rather that the soul which is in this indifference, and which wills nothing, but leaves it to God to do what best pleases Him, may be said *to have the will in a state of simple and general waiting*—loving waiting—inasmuch as to wait is not to do or to act, but to remain ready for any event. And if you look at it carefully, *the waiting of the soul is really voluntary*, yet it is not an action, but a *simple disposition to receive what may happen*. When the events have taken place and been received, *waiting is changed into consent or acquiescence*; but before the events happen, the soul is truly simply in a state of waiting, indifferent to everything that it shall please the divine will to ordain."

These preliminaries laid down, there follows the pious dialogue of the saint with the Child Jesus.

"If any one had asked the gentle Child Jesus, being carried in the arms of His Mother, where He was going, would He not have been right in replying: I am not going, it is my Mother who is going for me."

"And if He had been asked: But at least are you not going with your Mother? Would He not have been right in saying: No, I am not going at all, or if I do go to the place where my Mother carries me, I do not go there with her, nor by my

own steps, but I go there by the steps of my Mother, by her and in her."

"And if it were replied: But at least, O most dear divine Child, you are so good as to allow yourself to be carried by your gentle Mother? Certainly not, He might have said, I have nothing whatever to do with it; but, as my very good Mother walks for me, she also wills for me: I leave to her equally the trouble of going and of willing to go for me wherever it may seem good to her; and as I only walk by her steps, so I only desire by her will, and as soon as I find myself in her arms, I have no other consideration either to will or not to will, leaving every other care to my Mother except that of being on her breast, of sucking her milk and of holding very close to her dear neck to kiss it lovingly with the kisses of my mouth . . . Wherefore as her walking suffices both for her and for me without my taking any step at all, so her will suffices both for her and for me without my having any will as to going or coming. So I take no care whatever as to whether she goes quickly or quite gently, whether she goes on one side or the other, nor do I ever inquire where she is going, being quite content that, whatever may happen, I am always in her arms. . . . O divine Child of Mary, bestow on my puny soul this enthusiasm of love! Go, then, O dear and most kind little Child, or rather do not go, but remain always thus piously

clasped to the breast of your gentle Mother ; go always in her and by her, or with her, and never go without her while you remain a child. O how blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps that Thou hast sucked ! ”

After having pointed out that the Saviour of our souls had the use of reason from the moment of His conception, and was therefore able to make the speeches which have just been attributed to Him, S. François returns to his disciple Théotime and continues :

“ Théotime, we ought to be like that, to make ourselves pliable and tractable to the divine Good Pleasure, as if we were wax, not ever amusing ourselves with willing or wishing for things, but letting God will and do them for us, just as it pleases Him, *casting all our care upon Him, all the more because He cares for us*, as the holy Apostle says. And notice that He says *all our care*, that is to say, as much the care that we have in accepting events as that we have in willing or not willing them ; for *He will take care* of the success of our affairs and also will take care to will for us that which will be best.

“ Meanwhile, following the example of Job, let us lovingly employ our care in blessing God for all that He may do, saying : *the Lord gave me much, the Lord has taken it away, blessed be the name of the Lord*. No, Lord, I do not wish any event, for

I leave you to will for me entirely as you please : but instead of willing events I will bless you for having willed them. O Théotime, how excellent is the occupation of our will, when it leaves the care of willing and choosing the results of the divine Good Pleasure, for the joy of praising and thanking the Good Pleasure for such results."

CONCLUSION.

My very dear colleagues, let us take inspiration from this noble teaching. Let us climb higher than our experiences, higher than our reasonings and our conjectures, above the clouds which enfold our poor human conceptions, into that serene sphere where the soul, detached from its passions and from itself, finds itself free, in the presence of divine Good Pleasure.

For every day its trouble. The application of the moral virtues varies with events. At the present time, *gentleness, strength of mind, serenity* in a warm atmosphere of *charity* are specially necessary for us. Our divine mission is to sustain and encourage our people. Whatever may be our human motives for confidence in the future—and you know well that they are, more than ever, convincing—let us seek something better. Following the example of Moses, who, according to the testimony of the Epistle to the Hebrews, had as certain a faith in God as if he had seen Him with

his own eyes, let us make a filial surrender of our whole souls to our God. May this faith inspire our judgment, temper our wills. Inflexible ourselves, we shall sustain our brothers. The Belgian people have not flinched; by the grace of God they will not flinch. To the very end of their long and heavy trial, unchanged, their serenity will go to console our absent, to thank our benefactors, to smile on our soldiers, to bless our dear allies, to bow before His Majesty King Albert; to the very end it will be our challenge to the oppressor, our daily act of patriotism, the homage of Belgium to the wisdom and the kindness, the justice and the compassion of divine Providence.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

LIBERATION OF THE PRISONERS.

Malines, 17th October, 1918.

My very dear Brothers,

Our hearts are hopeful. Peace is not signed. The events that are taking place are so sudden, so disconcerting, that no one to-day would dare to say that peace is won.

We do, however, discern the dawn of it.

We bring you a fresh incident as its harbinger.

To-day, Thursday 17th, October, the head of the German Political Department came, in the name of the Governor-General of Brussels and of the Berlin Government, to tell me that the Belgian political prisoners, whether interned in Belgium or in Germany, and the Belgians deported into Germany, would be set at liberty as soon as the evacuation of Belgium could be carried out. The release of prisoners interned in the prisons of occupied Belgium beyond the military lines will begin on Monday, the 21st of this month.

Here also is the written declaration that the delegate of the German Government has left in my hands. Influenced by a personal feeling that you will understand, I hesitated to give you the complete text. But, after reflection, I decide to do so. Here it is, then :

“ For us you are the incarnation of occupied Belgium, whose revered and heeded pastor you are. So it is to you that the Governor-General and my Government have sent me to announce that when we evacuate your soil, we shall spontaneously and of our own free-will send back to you the deported Belgians and the political prisoners. They will be free to return to their homes, some of them as soon as Monday next, the 21st inst. As this declaration will rejoice your heart, I am happy to come and make it to you, all the more as it has not been possible to live four years among Belgians without esteeming them and without appreciating their patriotism at its true value.”

You see, my very dear brothers, that the good God is with us. Your ardent appeals to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Mary Mediatrix, have been heard.

Persevere unanimously in prayer.

Remain calm and dignified.

The hour of definite liberation and of victorious peace is near. Courage and confidence!

Sacred heart of Jesus, I confide in you.

Sacred heart of Jesus, protect Belgium.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Mary Mediatrix, pray for us.

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

HOMAGE TO THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

Malines, 15th November, 1918.

My very dear Brothers,

At last Belgium has reconquered its independence.

The German plenipotentiaries have gone, under the protection of the white flag, to beg the generalissimo of our armies to be so good as to dictate to them his conditions for armistice.

These conditions our enemies have signed.

Their pride is humiliated.

After four years of arrogance, injustice, cruelty, perfidy, they are in the dust.

Monday, the 11th of November, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, all the bells in the town of Malines were exulting, as they chanted a hymn of victory.

Monday, the 11th of November at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the National Flag was flying from the top of the tower of S. Rombaut, flinging out its folds towards Termonde and Ghent, calling into the midst of us the King and his soldiers.

And the announcement has now come to us that on Tuesday next, 19th of November, 1918, Albert the Magnanimous will re-enter his capital as conqueror.

The triumph of Justice is complete. The public conscience is satisfied.

“Lord, Lord,” it is said in the Book of Esther, “your arm is more powerful than all the forces of the world. There is nothing that does not submit to your sway: nothing is capable of resisting You when You have decided to save Israel.”

Be thanked, O my Divine Master, for having blessed our arms, saved our country, accepted our expiations, sanctified our sufferings.

We know, O my God, that Thou lovedst Belgium; to-day there is no one who does not realize this.

Glory to God, Sovereign Master of events! Glory to the friendly nations, potent artificers of victory! Glory to our King, to our army, to our military and civil prisoners, to the victims of deportation and of tyranny, to our heroes living and dead—glory to all the champions of national unity, to all the men and women who were consolers of public misery, glory to the Belgian fatherland re-born in its sacrifice.

The time will come to pay homage to each one of our glories and to define the form under which we shall ask you to express your grateful devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

To-day I have only one thought expressing your first impulse: in your name I wish to proclaim the justice of God.

Does the remembrance come back to you, my

very dear brothers, of those last days of August and the first days of September 1914? We were then under the scourge of an invasion which with the fury of a cyclone had burst over our provinces, from Virton and Dinant to Louvain, Aerschot, Diest, Haelen and Limburg; our Government had retired to Antwerp, the French Government to Bordeaux; General von Kluck's army was only a few kilomètres from Paris.

To the enthusiasm aroused in the national conscience by the King's reply to the huckster propositions of the invader—"No, you shall not pass!"—there succeeded a sombre disquietude which, in many instances, took the form of murmuring against divine Providence: If God were just, said the impatient, would He allow the perjured invader to triumph and the innocent invaded to be martyred.

And, strangely enough, those who called most imperiously upon the supreme God to grant them a miracle that would make justice instantly stand out resplendent, were the very ones who most insolently deny miracles every time that it pleases the divine Providence to produce them.

No, my brothers, God is not impatient as we are. He operates mightily yet gently. He generally lets the natural play of secondary causes develop itself; He even allows men to abuse their liberty up to a certain point, because He knows

that in His own time He will draw good out of evil and that iniquity itself will eventually bear witness in favour of His unfailing justice.

Suppose that in the early days, at Maubeuge or S. Quentin, for example, Germany had been beaten and forced to make peace, would her crime have been avenged?

Obviously not. In ten or twenty years she would have taken her revenge, and, still more haughty and cruel, she would have renewed the scenes of carnage upon our sons.

The blood of our heroes, the tears of our mothers would have steeped our soil without making it fruitful.

The issue might have lacked that educative power which will have made of our youth a strong and healthy generation fit to undertake the moral and economic reconstruction of the morrow.

The solemn chastisement due to the invader might also have been lacking.

There might also have been lacking, to Europe and to the world, the incontrovertible spectacle of divine Omnipotence dominating peoples, rulers and empires. We might not have been able to repeat the celebrated saying which incessantly has risen in my heart and to my lips during the last few weeks: God alone is great, my brothers.

Yes, God is great, and He acts greatly!

The Prussian military caste was pleased to offer

this defiance: "We struggle alone, against a world of enemies, but we are the conquerors!" For a short time it spurned its allies, in order not to share with any one the final glory, and to be able to say to the astounded universe: "I alone, and that was sufficient!"

And there it is alone, the vainglorious! Quite alone is the military caste!

One after another, Bulgaria, Turkey, Austro-Hungary, the German people itself detached themselves from it.

It is alone, but this time face to face with its conquerors. Defeated, flattened out, reduced to nothing!

The barbarous motto "Might is Right" has received its *coup de grâce*.

The Pangerman dreams of domination are dissipated like an asphyxiating gas borne away by a gust of wind.

Right alone is in the place of honour; Right, restorer of Belgium, one, free and independent; repairer of the integrity of the marvellous French nation, which has held the world in admiration before the irradicable tenacity of its Christian faith, before its gallantry and its genius during the whole course of the Great War; recompenser of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, to whom history will award the aureole for moral grandeur and knightly virtues.

King David, persecuted by Saul, cried to God :

“ Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger,

“ Arise, to avenge the excesses of mine enemies.

“ Awake, O my God, and come to avenge me !

“ Do me justice, according to my righteousness
and my innocence !

“ My God is my shield.

“ He saves those who are true of heart.

“ Mine enemy travaileth with an unjust
purpose, he brings forth nothing.

“ He hath graven and digged out a pit.

“ He hath fallen into the ditch that he hath
digged.

“ His wickedness returns on his own head,

“ And his violence descends on his own
forehead.

“ I will pay homage to the Lord, and I will
celebrate His justice.

“ The name of Jehovah the Most High, will be
the subject of my songs of thanksgiving.”

Glory to God, my very dear brothers, glory to
His Justice ! May the Belgian people, may
conquerors and conquered, remember this for ever !

✠D. J., Card. MERCIER, Arch. of Malines.

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