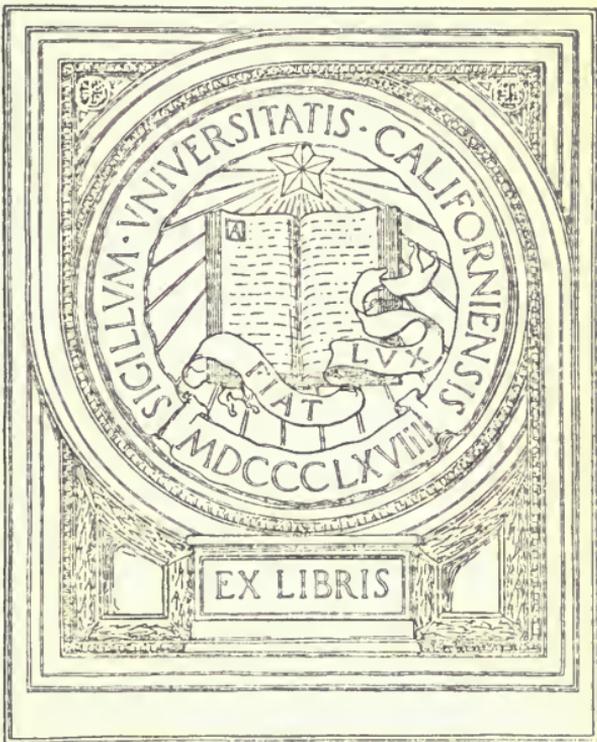


# BACK FROM BELGIUM

Father Jean de Ville

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



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# BACK FROM BELGIUM







A facsimile of an etching of His Eminence, D. J. Cardinal Mercier.

# BACK FROM BELGIUM

A Secret History of Three Years  
Within the German Lines

By Father Jean B. DeVille  
Cardinal Mercier's Personal Delegate  
to America

Illustrated



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To  
*His Eminence*  
*D. J. Cardinal Mercier,*  
*Archbishop of Malines*



## CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I HOW I WENT TO BELGIUM.....	11
II FIRST IMPRESSIONS .....	24
III EARLY WORK IN BELGIUM.....	39
IV BRUXELLES .....	59
V FURTHER MISSIONS .....	72
VI WHERE THE HUNS HAVE PASSED.....	94
VII DINANT .....	117
VIII CHARLEROI .....	129
IX LOUVAIN .....	155
X CARDINAL MERCIER .....	175
XI THE DEPORTATIONS .....	186
XII THE CLANDESTINE PRESS IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM .....	207
XIII FLEMISH AND WALLOONS .....	220
XIV AMERICA DECLARES WAR .....	234
XV FAREWELL TO BELGIUM .....	246
XVI HOW AMERICA HELPS .....	257



# BACK FROM BELGIUM

## CHAPTER I.

### HOW I WENT TO BELGIUM.

It is a long step back to those first mad days of the Great War. Treaties became but scraps of paper and horror followed horror in such rapidity that the neutral world stood aghast. What must the first days have meant to those with loved ones caught in the whirlpool of the Kaiser's wrath!

The invasion of Belgium had barely begun before thousands of Belgians who had found new homes in America sought a means of communicating with their relatives in the invaded territory, and of bringing them if possible to safety across the Atlantic. The conquerors of the little country which had gallantly refused to serve as a thoroughfare to their insane ambitions were allowing no messages to cross the borders, and many a dis-

tracted Belgian in America was living in terrible anxiety at the possible fate of the loved ones at home.

A meeting was therefore called of the Executive Committee of the Belgian-American Alliance, and its President, Mr. Felix J. Streyckmans, was given full authority to take any steps that might prove of help under the circumstances. The Department of State had already been appealed to, and through the Consular Staff in Belgium it had succeeded in locating some of the Belgians about whom inquiries had been made, but beyond that point diplomatic efforts had been powerless, and the German Foreign Office had steadfastly turned a deaf ear to the requests of the American Government.

There remained but one chance of success. If a delegate were sent to Holland he might manage to enter Belgium and persuade the German authorities to consent to such departures of Belgians as could be of no possible military disadvantage, while relieving considerable suffering. Our own Department of State had no objection to this plan, although it did not attempt to conceal its doubts as to the

possible fulfillment of it. For my part, it was with a complete appreciation of the obstacles which I would encounter that I undertook the mission when it was offered to me.

The question of ways and means took weeks of consideration, and many persons of influence and wealth were approached for assistance, but none considered the plan practical and none would believe that I should ever manage to enter Belgium and bring out some of her inhabitants.

Someone finally suggested appealing to one of the leading newspapers, and the proposition was submitted to the Chicago Herald which promptly agreed to support it, and to enable me to proceed as joint representative of that newspaper and of the Belgian-American Alliance.

Again the State Department was approached, and credentials were obtained introducing me to American representatives in Holland and Belgium. The German Embassy at Washington was advised of the plan, and consultations held with both the German Ambassador, Baron Von Bernstoff, and with the German Consul at Chicago, Baron Von Reis-

witz. Their endorsement of our ideas was lukewarm, but no definite refusal was encountered. At the same time every possible requirement of the German military authorities was anticipated, the letters received from persons imploring aid in rescuing their relatives were properly classified with records of the name, address, age and occupation of each person sought. Altogether I was entrusted with appeals from 187 families, and as in some instances there were as many as ten persons to be brought back the total number of those I was in search of amounted to over five hundred.

I sailed from New York on the 30th of August, 1915, to Rotterdam, and on my arrival in Holland I called on Mr. Henry Van Dyke, American Minister to the Netherlands. Mr. Van Dyke readily agreed that my mission was laudable, but held out no encouragement as to its accomplishment, and courteously expressed regrets at the little help he could offer me in view of Germany's objections to any traveling into Belgium.

It was explained to me in great detail that the American legation had been instrumental

in obtaining passports for quite a number of Americans who had wanted to enter Belgium but who, on coming out, had invariably circulated sensational reports about conditions in the invaded country. Because of this, Mr. Van Dyke informed me the German government had come to regard with disfavor any attempt he made to procure passage across the frontier.

“ Besides,” he stated, “ I have aided a number of persons to enter Belgium who assured me that they had pressing, legitimate business there, but it later developed that they made the journey solely out of curiosity.”

“ But,” I pleaded, “ I am not asking for a passport to go on a sightseeing tour. I want to enter Belgium for a worthy cause.”

“ I am not doubting your good intentions,” Mr. Van Dyke replied, “ but I am powerless to help you. The experience of the Legation has made it necessary for us to establish a rule and it cannot be broken.”

I then thought of going to Berlin, and personally presenting my request to the German Foreign Office. In this purpose I again met obstacles, as my American passport covered

only the Department of State's permission to enter Holland and Belgium, but was valueless in aiding me to get into Germany.

However, I called at the German Embassy, and asked for the First Secretary, Baron Von Stumm, who speaks excellent English and has, I believe, an American wife. I asked him to give me a passport for Cologne.

"That is one of the most difficult places to get to," he answered. "because it is a fortified town. What is your reason for desiring to go there?"

"I wish to see His Eminence, Cardinal Von Hartmann," I said.

The Cardinal's name seemed to impress Von Stumm. "Does the Cardinal know you?" he asked.

"Not personally, but I have important business to transact with him—business in which he is greatly interested."

Finally I was told that my application would be considered, and after a week of continued pleadings I received the precious document allowing me to proceed.

There were very few passengers on the train which bore me eastward, mostly German

merchants returning from business trips to Holland where they had bought everything they could obtain—and in those days Holland was still a great source of supplies for Germany. At the frontier I was thoroughly searched from head to foot, and every document I possessed, including my credentials and even my breviary had to be left behind. The officials noted my intended address in Cologne, the Dom Hotel, and told me that all these documents would be forwarded there in a few days, after thorough examination.

After the frontier was crossed, officers and soldiers began to appear on the train, while everywhere I could see women, children and old men working in the fields as substitutes for those who were gone to war. At every station groups of soldiers appeared, waiting for some train to take them to the front, and several times we passed troop trains loaded with men, some of whom sang popular tunes while others seemed to sulk quietly.

Even then I noticed what impressed me so much in all my experience with the German army, the total absence of any intermingling between the officers and their men, and the

haughty contempt with which the former addressed their subordinates.

I had left Holland in the early morning, and it was about five of the same afternoon that I reached Cologne. Before being allowed to register at the Dom Hotel I had to sign a long statement in triplicate showing who I was, my reason for coming to the city, how long I intended staying, and innumerable other details. I had then to present myself to the chief of police for that district who questioned me closely. A mistake had been made in my passport, where my birth date was shown in September whereas it should have been written December. I forgot about this, and gave the correct date with the result that I was stormed at by the official. My knowledge of German being rudimentary at best, I found it difficult to explain matters.

“A fine priest you must be,” sneered my questioner, “if you don’t even know your age.” And I was given a little lecture on the idiocy of all non-Germans in general, and myself in particular, before being curtly dismissed.

The next day was one of the Feasts of the

Virgin, and as I left my hotel crowds were wending their way towards the big Gothic Cathedral. Wounded soldiers and mourning women were conspicuous, and there seemed to be an atmosphere of gloom over everyone. Many remained to pray after the service, the greatest number being grouped around the statue of the Sorrowful Mother who bears the inert form of the Crucified One.

In the afternoon I went to see Cardinal Von Hartmann, passing on my way a monstrous statue of Michael, patron of old rural Germany. It was partly covered with nails which had been driven in by generous citizens, some of whom were in the act of driving in a few more from the top of a ladder. I forget what exact amount had to be contributed to the War Fund for the privilege of driving a nail into the statue, but the same idea seemed to have been followed all over Germany.

On reaching the Cardinal's palace I learned, to my great disappointment, that he was absent from the city and would not return for ten days. I was gloomily returning to the hotel when I met a monsignor whom I saluted. He looked at me curiously as we

passed, so that I was seized with an impulse to speak to him. Turning, I found that he had also turned and stopped to look at me.

“An American priest?” he asked, coming towards me. “I thought so. I love the United States which I have visited several times, and I have a number of friends there. Would you mind walking along with me, and if you have time come into my house?”

I assured him that I would be honored to visit him, and found he was no other than Monsignor Richen, the German ecclesiastical commissary for the Holy Land, and an astronomer of repute. His house was spacious and exquisitely furnished, with a beautiful garden in the back. Monsignor spoke English perfectly, and offered me the hospitality of his home, but I explained the reasons which had brought me to Cologne, and I asked him if he could not help me secure permission to go to Berlin as soon as possible. He was most kind, and spent the remainder of the afternoon and evening getting my passport altered and securing accommodations for me on the Berlin train.

Monsignor Richen and I dined together at

the Dom Hotel, and after dinner he wrote a letter of introduction for me to the Dean of the Berlin district.

The Berlin train was filled with more officers than I had seen as yet, and many were angrily protesting because they were unable to secure a berth. One of them tried to get into my section, but the conductor who had been lavishly tipped in advance kept him out. Although the section was mine I felt like sharing it with him, but his manners and language were so abusive that I could not bring myself to it.

We arrived in Berlin the next morning, and I took a cab at once to the Hotel Aldon where I had to fill out the same kind of forms as in Cologne before registering. There were several American newspaper correspondents stopping at this hotel, as well as several American doctors and nurses on their way back from Serbia where they had served with the Red Cross.

I called the same afternoon on Ambassador James W. Gerard, and told him of my wish to go to Belgium. He looked over my credentials, and shook his head. "I advise you not

to waste any time on this mission," he said, "because you will never be able to carry it out. Return home as soon as you can. I should like to help you, but I am powerless to enable you to get into Belgium." He then invited me to attend a reception at the American Embassy that night.

Next day I had an interview with the Dean for whom I had a letter, and he in turn gave me one for Count Montgelas of the German Foreign Office.

Strangely enough, the greeting of Count Montgelas proved the most cordial I had yet received from any official. He entertained me very kindly but did not conceal how difficult it was for anyone outside of the army or civil service to enter Belgium. He told me that many Germans of prominence were repeatedly refused the permission for which I asked, that they were usually kept waiting for months after making their application, and that even then a refusal was most frequent. He would however, make a special effort on my behalf, and I should be advised as soon as possible.

For two long weeks I waited, most of the time in the hotel for fear of being absent if a

messenger should come for me. Regiments were constantly marching by, the people waving handkerchiefs and cheering loudly as they passed; otherwise the city showed little signs of animation, and I was getting very worried over the delay when I finally got word to call at the Foreign Office for my passport. Count Montgelas there informed me that he had experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining it, as the German Secret Service had reported that I was a correspondent of the New York Herald, a newspaper much in disfavor with the German Government. I explained the error, and after being instructed to send no communications out of Belgium except through the local censor who would forward them to Count Montgelas, I was at last allowed to proceed.

## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

I went from Berlin to Bruxelles via Liege, Louvain and many other towns whose ruins were gaunt monuments to German Kultur. I was to become better acquainted with most of these places later on, but this first glimpse of the country gave me general impressions rather than separate and distinct pictures.

Bruxelles did not offer the same picture of desolation as some of the cities of which I had had fleeting glimpses from the train. No charred walls stood gauntly there as sole reminders of a former normal life, and I could see that many of the city's inhabitants apparently still moved and lived almost as they moved and lived before the great tragedy. Cardinal Mercier, whom I was so anxious to see, would still be found in the capital, and I should myself be able to live there in comparative comfort.

Yet even in Bruxelles I could not escape the oppression which I had felt since entering Belgium, the oppression that the whole country is a vast prison. And every town, every hamlet of Belgium is a prison within a prison. The oppressive feeling of confinement is such that it seems natural that all along the Dutch frontier there should be a barbed-wire barrier, double in places, charged with high voltage of electricity and guarded day and night by sentries.

As soon as a young Belgian is of military age, if he has red blood flowing through his veins, he will make his way to the frontier and try to pass over that barrier into Holland to join later the army of Belgium, either by bribing the sentries or by braving the perils of the wire. During the first two years of the occupation nearly 25,000 young Belgians thus regained their liberty, chiefly by bribery. The German authorities, however, investigated the reason of such laxity at the frontier and soon discovered that many of the Landsturmiers on duty there had fought and bled for the Fatherland not once or twice, but repeatedly, and knew that as soon as they had fully recovered

their health they would be sent back to the front; they were tired of it all and were glad to accept a bribe and desert by crossing over into Holland. These conditions no longer exist at the frontier. During the past year and a half the sentries have been carefully selected from men having influential relations and vast estates in the Fatherland, who cannot be easily induced to desert. To escape from Belgium has, therefore, become more difficult, but attempts continue to be made and hardly a day passes without the discovery of a few inanimate Belgian forms dangling from the wires where they have been electrocuted in an unsuccessful effort towards freedom. While I was in Belgium a young man of my acquaintance learnt that the current had been temporarily shut off and decided to escape. When night fell he took his pet dog to a spot where the guard was not particularly strong, and to test the wire he sent his dog through it. The dog got safely across, but fate was against my friend, for while he was following the current was turned on again, and he was instantly killed.

The realization that in Belgium one is in

a prison is increased by the difficulties of communication, not only with the free outside world but even within Belgium itself. Wherever a Belgian goes, he is called upon to present his Identification Card which has been issued by the authorities of the district to which he belongs, and which lacks nothing in the way of information. It bears the owner's photograph, place and date of birth, parentage, height, weight, color of hair, complexion, business—every possible detail that might be of interest. If he happens to be a man of military age, between seventeen and fifty-five, he is required to carry a military card showing that he was present at the last muster conducted each week by the German authorities.

In a few provinces of Belgium under the jurisdiction of the Governor General, you may communicate with your friends by open letter, but there is absolutely no communication between this part of Belgium, or the part of Belgium under the jurisdiction of the German Government, and Flanders, and absolutely no communication is possible in Flanders. A father or mother may be lying at the point

of death within a fraction of a mile of the town where their child lives, but the child cannot go there. The only thing allowed is to make an application for a passport, stating the reason it is requested. These passports are very seldom granted, and the Belgians apply for them out of sheer despair to assure themselves that they have left nothing untried to reach their dying relatives. The Pass Bureaus are usually located in the municipal government buildings of Belgium, and it irritates Belgians to have to go there for favors. Instead of meeting polite officials, the applicant is yelled at, pushed from side to side and insulted in every way. People go there as early as three or four o'clock in the morning in order to have the opportunity of signing an application for a passport the next day, and you usually meet hundreds of them congregated for that purpose. They may have to go back day after day, until they have the opportunity of signing an application. That does not mean that they will receive the passport; usually they wait for days and weeks and months, only to be notified that their

friend or relative has died, and there is no longer any necessity for the journey.

In order to appreciate the extent of the Belgians' sufferings one should have been in Belgium before the war and have known the country as it was then, the most prosperous in the world, the per capita wealth of its people the highest. Then the life was that of a happy industrious people, but now almost at every turn of the street you meet a funeral procession winding its way slowly, dismally to the cemetery, carrying either the small body of a child that has died of malnutrition or the larger coffin of a man or woman who has died of starvation or a broken heart. In all quarters of the cities, in all sorts of weather, winter or summer, you find hundreds and thousands of people waiting before a building in order to receive at the stated hour their daily quota from some of the Alimentation Committees. These people are not recruited from the peasant or laboring classes alone. You will find there the erstwhile prosperous merchant, the artisan, the artist, professional man, and even the patrician. God only knows how many of them have passed away quietly

in their beds, dying of sheer starvation rather than join the bread lines. But gradually they were forced to join them and according to the latest reports almost two thirds of the Belgian population is dependent in some way or other upon the charity of the world. Starvation is more or less general. In the words of the Bishop of Namur, the people are just receiving enough food to prevent them from dying, and not enough to live on. Even those who have a few hundred or a few thousand francs laid by are starving themselves, because they do not know how long the war is going to last. Who can afford to buy potatoes at twenty cents a pound, butter or meat of the worst kind at several dollars a pound? If the Belgians could only have beans or rice or other nourishing food, they would deem themselves happy indeed, but such articles of diet are practically unobtainable. The only kind of bread that can be had to the extent of two hundred and fifty or three hundred grams a day is the so-called war bread, a bad black mixture, filled with bits of straw which must be baked for twenty-four hours before distribution or else it becomes fatal to health.

A silent testimony to the pillage of the Hun is supplied by the million chimneys without smoke' silhouetted against the Belgian sky. Nowhere did I hear the hum of machinery. Every factory had been robbed of its equipment, and Belgium, it must be remembered, was one of the world's greatest industrial countries before the war. "Why shouldn't we confiscate their machinery?" a German officer said to me one day. "We can use it to make bullets and other war materials!"

The same reason, the insatiable appetite of the battlefront, has stripped Belgium bare. Literally she is a country left naked before the world. Of course it was inevitable that news of the pillage should penetrate the frontiers, leaving humanity aghast at its cruelty, but not even the mind of the eyewitness could grasp the extent of the robbery, the systematic sacking with which the army of occupation had laid its brutal hand upon King Albert's domain. Here for once, unquestionable proof seemed unbelievable.

Though Belgium is a country of coal the last winter I spent over there people with money were offering as high as fifty dollars per ton,

and they could not obtain a supply even at this fabulous price, while the poor people, especially the children, had to remain under the bed covers continuously in order to keep warm. That in itself was no easy task because all the woolen materials had been requisitioned. Where did the coal go? The coal was sold by Germany to Switzerland and Holland and Sweden and other neutral countries in exchange for food—not food for the Belgians but food for themselves.

So, to the misery of hunger was added the horror of freezing. I myself, during some of my visits to Belgium, suffered bitterly from the lack of fuel, but this privation, which I could endure, proved too great for many of the emaciated natives. Thus “frozen to death” was added to the list of explanations for the many funeral processions which daily could be seen wending their way to the cemeteries.

People stayed in bed continuously, day and night, in order to keep warm. Schools were closed, though a child was no warmer in his home than he would have been in the school-room. On mild winter days endless streams

of people, baskets on their arms, would hopelessly tramp from one place to another in their quest for coal. A few of the rich were able to obtain a handful of pieces in exchange for a fabulous price but the poor got nothing.

During my last mission to Belgium, in a winter season which was the coldest in twenty-five years, the coal scarcity was accentuated by the freezing of the canals. Practically all horses had been requisitioned by the Germans, and the tying up of the barges left the Belgians without means of fuel transportation. No help was to be had from the railroads, for they were almost exclusively engaged in carrying supplies to the front. On many occasions I saw a dozen or more Belgians, men and women, people of wealth and refinement hauling heavy coal-laden trucks along country roads and through city streets, stopping here and there to deliver small portions of their burden at their various homes.

But, although this coal seizure was a monstrous horror it lacked the fiendishness that robbed Belgium of her wood, stripped bare her splendid forests. The coal supply could hardly be hopelessly depleted, but in the cut-

ting down of acre after acre of trees not the slightest heed was given to the country's future needs.

Little of this wood was used for fuel. Most of it was sent to the front to be used in the construction of lines of defense—some of them by Belgium prisoners! Under the German axe the beautiful forests of Belgium disappeared one by one. During the earlier period of invasion the control and management of the forests were left to the Belgian Government's Department of Forestry. However, as their military needs increased, the Germans began to treat this guarantee with the same contempt they had shown for any treaty whose observance interfered with their military needs.

In the Hertogenwald, in the Province of Liege, timber to the value of three million francs was sacrificed to Hun pillage. In Dolhain, in the same Province, not one oak or poplar was left standing. The splendid forest of Fumay, one of the glories of Belgian natural resources, was completely denuded. I could mention countless similar evidences of forest devastation—it was the same story

throughout the length and breadth of the land. Nature had been systematically murdered, laid low under Hun butchery.

Before the war the Grobbendonck canal, in the Province of Antwerp, was lined with stately rows of trees. The last time I saw those canal banks they were stripped bare. The forest of Aulier, where the best saplings in Belgium could be found, was entirely denuded. Numerous saw-mills were erected in the splendid Forest de Soignes, to the South of Bruxelles, and Russian prisoners of war were set to cutting down the trees and turning them into timber. Not a saw ceased buzzing until the forest was a memory. A vast stretch of stumps was all that was left to tell what it had once been.

It was after witnessing some of these evidences of Hun robbery that I asked a prominent citizen of Bruxelles a question that had persisted in recurring to my mind.

“Tell me,” I said, “do you Belgians regret that you did not allow the Germans to pass through your country unmolested? Are you not so tired and weak from hunger and persecution that you desire peace at any cost?”

“ We would be curs if we regretted having fought to uphold our honor,” was the answer. “ As for peace, let every tree in our beloved country disappear; let every home be burnt and pillaged; let every life be destroyed rather than consent to conclude peace with a victorious Germany! ”

Even while we were talking, every home in every corner of Belgium was being searched by the “ green devils,” a name given to German gendarmes because of the color of their uniform. Orders had gone out demanding that every scrap of aluminum, tin and leather in the country be yielded up. Another order commanded the people, already robbed of their gold, to deliver every piece of zinc or nickel money to the Banque Nationale or its agencies. The bank, so the order stated with characteristic lack of humor, could redeem the money with paper, holding the metal at the disposal of the Governor-General. Despite the penalty of a heavy fine, which was to be levied if this order was disregarded, not a single Belgian obeyed. If there was any zinc or nickel currency in Belgium at the time, the people had concealed it.

Financially the country was drained almost dry shortly after the invasion occurred. Fines of hundreds of millions were levied for no other reason than the Belgians' resistance, and these fines were continued at the rate of \$8,000-000 per month.

Every expression of patriotism by the Belgians was seized as an excuse for levying fines. The slightest infraction of the imposed laws of the invaders had to be paid for with an exorbitant money tribute. The commune of Zele, in East Flanders, was for instance, fined 80,000 marks because some of its inhabitants took food and cigarettes from their scanty store and distributed them among some English prisoners who were passing through on their way to Germany. Other cases of iniquitous wholesale fines occurred in every part of Belgium.

The tragic result of German rule is shown by the mortality among the Belgian civilian population.

Consider the vital statistics of Bruxelles and its suburbs for the first six months of 1913, the year before the war. Then the mortality records showed 4,926 deaths as against 6,417

births. The corresponding period in 1917 showed 3,311 births as against 7,272 deaths. A prominent physician of Bruxelles informed me that Belgian's capital had suffered a frightful increase of tuberculosis and rheumatism cases among its children and young people between 1914 and 1916, an increase that had reached the appalling result of 40% above the figures of 1913. This, he stated, was directly due to lowered resistance caused by lack of nourishment.

“ Benevolent rule ” in Belgium gave Antwerp in 1917 a death rate which almost doubled its birth rate. In Liege, during the period of the first nine months of 1917 there were 1,123 births and 2,350 deaths. Germany, always boasting of its life-saving science, must stand at the bar of eternal Justice, accused of murder, confronted by these records of victims starved to death that it might quaff the cup of military domination.

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY WORK IN BELGIUM.

On my arrival in Bruxelles I had presented my credentials at the Headquarters of Governor-General Von Bissing, together with a list of the Belgians whom I desired to locate and take out of the country. From the very outset of my mission obstacles arose to retard its progress. The Governor General's Office had jurisdiction only over the Provinces of Antwerp, Brabant, Liege, Namur, Limbourg, Charleroi and Luxembourg, so that it could not grant permission to travel in any other part of the country. Other localities which I must visit were under the jurisdiction of Kommandanturs depending directly from the military authorities in the zone of operations, and they were inaccessible to all persons not connected with the army.

By the greatest stroke of good luck I managed to obtain a passport to Flanders. It

was for three days only, but after I reached there I managed to have it extended, three days at a time, until my visit had covered twenty-one days. The restrictions of martial law made it extremely difficult for me to travel in this section of the country, but I managed to visit a number of towns and reach most of the people I was searching for.

These people were of every class, and the way they received me varied greatly. While some were profuse in their gratitude, others, poor souls, were suspicious of my motives. In the discharge of my duties I was naturally compelled to keep in touch with the German authorities, but some of the Belgians could not understand or forgive my being polite to the tyrant. Many evidently considered me pro-German, but others gave me their full confidence. Sometimes as many as seventy-five Belgians would call on me in one day in connection with my mission. Many of them gave me letters for friends or relatives in America, and so immune was I from military suspicion that I accepted these letters under the very noses of the German officers living at the hotel. Practically all the rooms in



A snapshot of Father De Ville, his interpreters and guards, taken in Bruxelles.



the Palace Hotel, where I stayed in Brussels, were occupied by attachés of the military government, and yet there was not a day of my stay there when my desk drawers and trunks were not bulging with clandestine correspondence and literature. My boldness was my salvation and the best means I could have employed to divert suspicion from myself and from those I was helping. Had I been living in a purely Belgian hotel, German secret service men would have found out what I was doing, and soon put an end to my activities and freedom, if not to my life. As a matter of fact, I was doing—quite incidently because it was not part of my original undertaking—a great deal of smuggling of correspondence out of Belgium, and at the same time I was constantly called upon to intercede with the military authorities on behalf of some of my Belgian friends accused of offending in one way or another.

One case that interested me greatly was that of a priest, Father McGuire, a splendid type of Catholic Irish missionary. He had arrived in Belgium shortly before the war, but had now received word in some way or

other that his mother lay dying in Chicago. He had made extraordinary efforts to obtain a passport for the United States, but all entreaties had been in vain. Finally he came to me for help, and I wrote to authorities on his behalf, urging that he be allowed to leave Belgium. A few days later I was asked to call at the Pass Bureau.

“ We cannot allow Father McGuire to leave the country.” I was told, “ because he is a native of Ireland, and therefore a British subject.”

“ But,” I pleaded, playing upon the Germans’ vaunted sympathy for Ireland, “ is it his fault that he is a subject of Great Britain? Have not his ancestors been endeavoring for generations to free their country from English rule? ”

The stolid German mind was capable of only one answer: “ We know, but we cannot overlook the fact that he is a subject of Great Britain.”

I did not give up hope. I tried many channels, and at last through the intercession of the German Chaplain-General, Dr. Middendorf, the passport was obtained. It was, alas, too

late; when Father McGuire reached Chicago his mother was dead, and he could but visit her grave.

As for the Belgians whose letters I smuggled out of the country, and for whom I succeeded in obtaining favors, many thought it was some great and mysterious influence with the Germans that enabled me to accomplish what I did. I could not explain that I enjoyed no special prerogative, and neither could I explain my methods of smuggling letters; the danger was too great, and I was not the only one involved.

Many of the German officials did not show much eagerness to aid me in my mission. Here and there I encountered an officer whose assistance proved that he took some interest in my success, but more often the answer would be: "How can you expect us to bother with anything so foreign to strategy when we are fighting for our existence?"

When I seemed doomed to fail to obtain passports for the people whom I wished to take to America, the Duke of Wurtemberg, Commander in Chief of the Fourth Army, arrived at the hotel where I was stopping. I

tried to reach him, but it was impossible to do so except through his staff, and that proved a hopeless task. They refused absolutely to "trouble him with such matters."

In desperation I approached the head waiter of the hotel, and got him to agree to help me . . . for a price. It was part of his duties to serve the Duke, who took his meals alone in the main dining room, and he promised to hand the royal guest a letter which I had written, requesting an audience. I did not state in it the details of my mission, but merely implored the opportunity to present a petition.

Two long, weary days went by without any indication that my request was to be granted, and during that time I never left the hotel for a moment lest I be sent for in my absence. My heart sank with despair when the third day arrived and the report was circulated that the Duke was preparing to depart.

It appeared that my request was to be ignored, but at the last moment I was summoned and asked to state my business. The Duke's first answer was a blunt refusal to entertain the petition, but for half an

hour I pleaded, advancing every argument I could think of, appealing to his pride, flattering his vanity until I won the day and left his presence with the assurance that my request would be granted and that my people in Flanders would be allowed to proceed with me to their relatives in the United States.

My work in the Provinces under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General was attended with less difficulties, but even there many obstacles had to be overcome. Some of the people I was endeavoring to locate had moved from the address given me, some had died, and others had been deported or had fled to Holland in the early exodus of refugees. Grandparents having children in their custody frequently refused to give them up, either from fear of possibly worse fate or because they could not face the anguish of parting. Most pitiful of all were the cases of some girls who refused to join their fiancés in America because they considered themselves no longer worthy to become a good man's wife since the coming of the Hun; some had become unwilling mothers

and could only ask for oblivion in their martyrdom.

Most of the people I sought, however, were overjoyed at the prospect of being soon reunited to their dear ones. They thanked me profusely for my efforts in their behalf, but their childish eagerness added considerably to my work.

My final instructions in every case would be for my charges to meet at the Pass Bureau on a certain day at a certain hour, each of them bearing his Identification Card and three small photographs similar to the one attached to the Identification Card. Some of them forgot one thing and some forgot another; some brought one or two photographs instead of three, and all of them were invariably late for the reason that they kept the appointment by Belgian time whereas I had set it by German time which was two hours earlier.

As my most important engagements were made with the German officials, and as I frequently rode on trains, all of which were run on German time, I found it necessary to set my watch according to that time. The

Belgians, however, had flatly and firmly refused to accustom themselves to this difference in time, as I repeatedly found out to my inconvenience. I tried the plan of telling them to meet me at the Pass Bureau at a certain hour "German time." They would look at me contemptuously, and though they might say nothing I could be sure that they would not be on hand at the hour specified. After a while I found that the best method was to set the appointment according to Belgian time, figuring the difference myself, but what with other instructions and the necessity of carrying on many conversations through an interpreter I was beset with constant difficulties.

At the Pass Bureau the preparation of the passports always seemed to take much longer than was really necessary, but nothing could be gained by complaining. At the first evidence of irritation the Germans would slow up their work, or else the anxiety would arouse suspicions. Finally, after everyone had been located, I would purchase tickets for the entire group, check their baggage and move them all to Antwerp where we would remain over-

night. There, in order to keep all together, I would lodge everyone in a Belgian Refuge, the Winnipeg Hotel, managed as a war institution by a Mr. Obussier, and his sister, prominent citizens of Antwerp who were always extremely kind and helpful.

In the morning, after again checking the trunks and submitting all passports for examination, I would pilot my charges aboard a train for Esschen, a Dutch frontier station. The long process of examining every person's baggage, clothes and even body for smuggled articles took place there. All travellers arriving at the frontier were ordered to leave the train, carrying their own baggage to a waiting room in the station. Doors were locked and windows carefully guarded while every piece of baggage was placed on a long bench which ran all around the room, and inspected by soldiers. All written or printed material, even a Testament and visiting cards, was confiscated, and all cigars or cigarettes were barred, experience having taught the German authorities that the paper and tobacco wrappers could be made to conceal messages.

The search did not stop at the baggage. The most minute examination was made of each person. The men were taken, one at a time, into a private room and examined by soldiers who were experts at such work. When I crossed the Holland border I had to remove every stitch of clothing that I wore, my body was scrutinized for code marks, the soles of my shoes were examined to see if they contained messages of any kind, and for the same reason the lining of my clothes and my hat band underwent a thorough scrutiny. The contents of my purse, especially such bills as I had, were closely examined. Gold, being considered contraband, was confiscated and German money given in its place.

Women and children fared no better than the men, being examined by matrons as thoroughly as the men, the hair of the women being particularly searched for hidden messages. The trimming was removed from their hats, the heels from their shoes, and their gold jewelry was confiscated.

Although I always gave explicit instructions to my charges not to bring any printed

or written matter, many of them could not resist the temptation to carry letters, newspapers or postcards. Some of these people had so much written or printed matter stored away in their trunks that only by repeated entreaties was I able to save them from being turned back.

One good woman had her trunk more than half filled with the cheapest grade of cotton. She told me that someone had informed her that cotton was very scarce, and consequently very expensive, in America, and she hoped to make a little money by selling her meagre supply. Another one had her entire trunk filled with the cheapest chinaware, each piece carefully wrapped in tissue paper and cloth. As her baggage was examined—and each piece had to be unwrapped—the floor of the station became strewn with crockery, rags and paper. The shrieking color and horrible design of the china irritated me, and I walked over to protest with her.

“My dear woman,” I said, “I told you not to bring any useless things. Don’t you see the delay and inconvenience you are

causing? Why did you burden yourself with a lot of stuff that isn't worth anything?"

She looked at me sadly, with reproachful eyes.

"They are not worthless to me," she answered. "For many years they have occupied the place of honor in our home. We used them for wedding feasts and when our children were baptised, and we treasured them so much that I could not leave them behind."

Following the personal search came the examination of passports. This was done by three officers, one of whom inspected the form to make sure that it was not a forgery, while another consulted the records in case there might be instructions to detain the passport's owner, and the third officer compared the photograph and description on the passport with the appearance of the person who presented it. Only after all these formalities were we allowed to proceed into Holland, and it was with a profound sigh of relief that I crossed the frontier.

We reached the Hague about four o'clock in the afternoon, only to find that the steamer sailed that night at eight and that, des-

pite my cabled request to the United States, the passage fare and expenses of my party had not been received.

There I was, almost penniless, custodian of more than four hundred helpless Belgians who, like myself, were without funds. My temper was ruffled for I had had no end of trouble getting my charges across the frontier; I was loaded down with baggage and bundles belonging to some of the unattached children in the crowd, and I had gone the entire day without food. A feeling of despair came over me; my mind refused to work, and, for a moment I felt like abandoning the entire undertaking.

But—there were those sorrowful, appealing eyes turned upon me, so I pulled myself together and started out to find the Director-General of the Holland-American line and see if I could not persuade him into allowing my party to make the trip and collect the fares at the termination of the voyage.

“I am sorry,” he said in answer to my entreaties. “the granting of your request is out of the question.”

“But think what your refusal means,” I pleaded. “If I cannot get these poor people out of Holland your government will intern them in refugee camps; they will be scattered here and there, and it will take weeks to reassemble them. My work will be practically undone.”

“I appreciate that,” he answered, “but I cannot assume responsibility for the passage of so many. If it were a question of guaranteeing the expenses of fifteen or twenty, I would advance the necessary funds myself. Your crowd is too large; I could not give them passage without the consent of the Board of Directors of the line.”

“Can you not convene the Board?” I asked.

“The time is too short,” was the answer. “Barely three hours remain between now and sailing time.”

I rushed from the Director-General's office bewildered. My charges, suspecting something had gone wrong, crowded about me, alarmed and nervous, some of them weeping. One look at them, and I made up my mind to move heaven and earth before I

would abandon the hope of getting them on the steamer that night.

I summoned a taxi and ordered the driver to take me to the residence of a Dutch baron, a friend, who I was sure would help me. But, alas, when I arrived at his home I was told that he had gone to Amsterdam on a matter of business and would not be back for several days. There was but one thing left for me to do and that was appeal to the American Minister, Mr. Van Dyke, whom I had not seen since he had declined to aid me in getting a passport into Belgium. With mingled determination and misgiving I ordered the chauffeur to take me to the American legation.

Mr. Van Dyke received me at once.

“I have more than four hundred Belgian women and children at the office of the Holland-American line,” I announced abruptly,” and I cannot get them out of the country because their passage money has not yet arrived.”

“Four hundred Belgians!” he exclaimed. “Where did you get them?”

“In Belgium.”

“But how did you get into Belgium?” he asked.

“Through the German Foreign Office in Berlin,” I explained, and then, with a feeling of pride which I could not entirely conceal, I added: “The German Government has endorsed my mission and has given me considerable assistance in its discharge.”

“Well, well, you are to be congratulated,” exclaimed Mr. Van Dyke, with a sincerity that swept away all resentment and made me his friend at once. “I didn’t believe it could be done. Now what can I do to help you?”

I related my experiences of the day, and when I had finished Mr. Van Dyke called up the Director-General of the Holland-American line. He pleaded with him for an hour, refusing to hang up the telephone receiver until the coveted permission had been granted. In the end, when all arguments and explanations had proved futile, Mr. Van Dyke personally guaranteed the passage money, and I hurried back to my precious cargo at the steamship office.

“Well,” I said to myself when I had seen

the last of my charges safely tucked away aboard the boat, "now the troubles of this trip are at an end."

As a matter of fact they had just begun. Many Polish Jews had taken passage on the same steamer, and as they all spoke German the members of my party immediately classified them as their enemies. Try as I might I could not satisfactorily explain that their language did not necessarily make them subjects of the Kaiser.

"They speak German and they must be Germans," was the ultimatum that greeted my every argument.

After many pleas and much trouble the boat steward finally managed to separate the Belgians from the Jews so that they occupied different sections of the steerage quarters, but, even so, they were forced to mingle more or less, and scarcely an hour passed that I was not called upon to adjust some factional quarrel.

To make matters worse, measles broke out among the members of my party and the disease quickly spread to the Jews. Then Israel stormed my stateroom, showering re-

proaches upon my helpless shoulders and begging me to bid my charges keep their illness to themselves. In vain I tried to explain my impotence to eradicate the cause of their troubles, that it was through no fault of mine that measles were contagious. They would have none of my excuses; either I must make myself master of their comfort and the captain of their health, or else openly proclaim myself their enemy.

But matters were soon balanced by a fate which, though unkind to my accusers, brought at least temporary relief to me. Within a few days chickenpox broke out among the Jews and spread to the Belgians. Then I became the victim of censure at the hands of my own party, though of course their case had been weakened by their own epidemic of measles.

Eventually the voyage came to an end, as all voyages must, and with its termination all petty troubles faded into nothingness. I had brought about four hundred persons to safety, and, looking back, I realize that it was through the experiences of this first mission that I learned to conquer many of the diffi-

culties of my subsequent labor in Belgium.

My charges were greeted on arrival by their anxious relatives, and all the way from New York to their homes they met little kindnesses which would bring tears to their eyes. At stations where changes were made people seemed only too glad to assist in taking care of the wants of the women and children. At one place at least a hotel keeper offered the best rooms in the house and all meals free if some of the children could be permitted to rest there over night.

Lucky little children, how their fate would be envied by the millions of little ones still waiting for freedom behind the German prison bars.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BRUXELLES.

During the first year of the war, life seemed almost normal in the capital, except for the crowds of soldiers to be seen everywhere. Such conditions, however, were only apparent, and visitors soon noticed how many houses seemed closed and deserted, how many stores had their shutters drawn down. Their owners had too evidently fled at the enemy's approach, or locked up their homes while they joined King Albert's army.

Of the finest houses, most are now occupied by German officers while the beautiful buildings of the Belgian government are used by the invaders for their innumerable "Bureaux"; in one of them they even house a small force to handle the colonial affairs of Germany.

As time wore on, a great change was grad-

ually wrought upon the population of Bruxelles. The bread line kept increasing in size, many of the people in it being evidently persons of refinement. Threadbare coats, battered hats and wornout shoes could no longer be concealed. Few could afford to buy a new suit of clothes or a new pair of shoes at the fabulous prices that prevailed, and the windows of the remaining stores gradually grew empty. Some stores are still open to accomodate customers, but few of the owners are making a living from their business. Tobacco stores, some of the cafés and a few of the stationery and souvenir stores are an exception, because of the patronage extended to them by the Germans.

A few theatres are still open for the entertainment of the officers, the soldiers and a host of German civilians who infest the city. Most of these civilians are connected with the multitude of "Zentralen" established by the Government of occupation in order to systematically rob Belgium of all it possessed. There is an Oil Zentrale, a Coal Zentrale, a Leather Zentrale, a Wool Zentrale, a Potato Zentrale, etc. At the head of

each is a German expert in that particular branch of commerce or industry, assisted by hundreds of other men similarly drawn from the Fatherland, and the business of all is to scour the land in every direction for what they may steal. Their work is efficient and ruthless, and little is left to the poor Belgians after the German officials have seized everything in sight.

Inevitably there are a few Belgians who give help to the invader for the sake of personal profit, but such Belgians are despised beyond words by the patriots and marked for after-the-war punishment.

Hardly a day passes by without some new orders being issued to the population of Bruxelles by means of varicolored posters. It may be an injunction to be inside their homes by eight o'clock in the evening under pain of fine or imprisonment, it may be the requisition of something previously overlooked by the German master-thieves, or it may be the red poster announcing the execution of a few Belgian patriots.

Prisoners and wounded are constantly passing through Bruxelles on their way to

Germany, but the trains go through chiefly at night and without stopping. When a train loaded with prisoners or wounded passes a train that carries civilians, all windows and shutters of both trains are closed. In the early days troop trains could be distinguished by the singing of the men, but now they are silent and war-weary. When a regiment marches through the town there is still "regulation singing," but even then a note of hopelessness is apparent.

Occasionally, military bands give a concert in one of the public squares—usually after some German victory. In fine weather these places are normally filled with the inhabitants of Bruxelles, but as soon as the first note is sounded the people hurry off in all directions, and within a few minutes the spot is empty of Belgians.

I was in Bruxelles when Miss Cavell's sentence was announed. I had spent the entire day at the Bruxelles Pass Bureau, obtaining passports for three hundred Belgians I was to take out of Belgium the following day. Shortly after sundown I left the Pass Bureau and started for my hotel.

Coming down the hill at the end of the Jardin Botanique I observed an immense crowd congregated at the corner of the Rue Neuve and as I drew nearer I saw that they were reading what I surmised to be the latest affiche.

“It must be the bulletin of some great battle or a new sensational order of the military authorities,” I said to myself as I joined the crowd. I waited a good half hour before I could get near enough to read the poster; those in the front ranks were loath to make way for their neighbors; the yellow sheet of paper with its black hieroglyphics seemed to exert some strange fascination.

Although there were several hundred persons in the crowd the most religious silence prevailed. I had noticed that it was always thus when Belgians deigned to read the decrees of the government of occupation. The prevalence of spies made it dangerous for them to indulge in comment. On this particular occasion, however, it was very apparent that the Belgians were under high tension of feeling; their fists were clenched, their lips compressed. As I gradually made

my way through the gathering I saw that the eyes of some were moist, while others flashed glances of cold scorn. Finally, when I had managed to draw near enough to the affiche to read its message I saw that it announced the acquittal of eight persons accused of treason, sentence of imprisonment for from two to eight years for seventeen others, sentences of ten and fifteen years at hard labor for five others, and death sentences for five. Included in these last five sentences was the name of Edith Cavell. The name was strange to me; that was the first time I had heard of Miss Cavell.

The next day I went to Holland where I remained for a week, completing arrangements for the passage of my charges. Meanwhile the news of the execution reached the outside world, with the result now so well known. I was besieged with inquiries about the case, and I could scarcely wait for my return to Belgium to learn the details.

I talked with many persons who knew Miss Cavell intimately, and without exception they spoke of her as a saint, a great beautiful soul housed behind rather plain features.

Among those with whom I discussed the trial and execution was a nurse who had been attached to Miss Cavell's institute, a place which had originally been a training school for nurses but which was transformed shortly after war broke out into a hospital for sick and wounded soldiers. This nurse gave me the last letter written by Miss Cavell, a missive penned during her imprisonment in the jail of St. Gilles. It is herewith reproduced. It—better than any statement I could make—bespeaks the character of its author.

I had it, upon the word of those who were acquainted with each detail of Edith Cavell's trial, that it was not her conviction of the charge for which she was arrested that caused the death sentence to be passed. It was the things she revealed, *of which the military authorities had known nothing*, that led to her execution. Hun pride was wounded; the Government of occupation was furious that a woman had been able to outwit its elaborate system of espionage, and nothing less than its feminine opponent's life would soothe its outraged vanity.

In reviewing the Cavell trial and execution it must not be forgotten that by virtue of her vocation Miss Cavell was, theoretically at least, protected by international law. Nurses are immune from many of the war time restrictions imposed upon civilians and, by a strict interpretation of the letter of the law, Edith Cavell took advantage of the immunity she enjoyed to bring consternation to the government which was extending her immunity. By the same strict interpretation it must be remembered that her sex did not mitigate the result of her offense. But her execution left humanity aghast because the German military authorities showed themselves incapable of being moved by the spirit of the law under which she was tried. In her sentence barbarism ruled unbridled.

The impetus thus given to Hun lust made itself further evident in the attempted persecution of Maitre Gaston de Laval, attorney to the American legation in Bruxelles, who was chiefly instrumental in announcing the execution to the world. M. de Laval was assigned by Minister Whitlock to act as Miss

Cavell's counsel and he, more than anyone else connected with the American Legation, knew the details of the case.

The German government, immediately it was confronted with the storm of condemnation caused by the execution, insisted that M. de Laval, being a Belgian, was unfriendly to the Germans and must leave the official family of the American Legation. M. de Laval quite as promptly refused to leave unless ordered to do so by Washington. The German Government then threatened him with arrest.

Minister Whitlock made a personal appeal to the military authorities to abandon their proposed action, and they acquiesced with a promptitude that was nothing if not amazing. But there was method in their seeming leniency, for they immediately announced that M. de Laval would not be arrested providing he severed his connection with the American Legation.

• “When this decision was conveyed to me,” said M. de Laval, “I was momentarily at a loss to understand the unexpected outburst of German generosity. Then I real-

ized the motive that lay behind the offer of immunity, and flatly refused to accept the terms by which my liberty was to be granted. The attempted trick of the enemy was transparent; few days would have passed after my severance from the American Legation before the military authorities would have found some pretext to seize me and condemn me to imprisonment or perhaps death.

“My answer was that I refused to resign unless the German government granted safe conduct to myself and family across the Holland frontier. This request was refused, as I had anticipated. Minister Whitlock then cabled the State Department at Washington, asking that it make a formal request of Germany that I be granted safe conduct into Holland. Washington made the request immediately and, as Berlin could advance no good reason for its refusal, I was permitted to leave Belgium.”

The Cavell case only revealed to the world one example of the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice which women have shown in all crises of history, and of which I have seen many humbler but equally heroic examples

during my stay in Belgium.

The famous Burgomaster of Bruxelles, Adolphe Max, comes only second to the King himself in the affections of the people of that city. On August 19th, 1914, the day preceding the entry of German troops into Bruxelles, Mr. Max was feverishly preparing the defence of the city, but at the last moment, the King, in order to spare Bruxelles, ordered its surrender. During the trying days that followed, Mr. Max courageously and unceasingly championed the cause of his fellow-citizens, and defied the invaders who were breaking every international law as well as every law of moral decency. He was not afraid to publicly give the lie to the German Governor, and some of the posters signed by Mr. Max will remain historical documents as long as the German crime of 1914 is remembered. He was soon removed by the Germans and sent to a fortress, from which grave reports filtered out concerning the state of his health.

In spite of the harsh German rules, or perhaps because of them, patriotism in Bruxelles is growing greater and stronger every

day. Proscribed from school and street and theatre, Belgium's national anthem, the Brabanconne, has taken refuge in the churches where it is often sung at the end of the services. The priests deliver patriotic addresses in more or less veiled form, and I have listened often to splendid sermons dealing on the surface with some theme from the Gospels, but having a hidden metaphorical meaning which every person present understood. Several ministers of various denominations have been arrested and punished for this at various times, but their spirit of courage has influenced those who were left.

The anniversary of Belgian Independence is celebrated on July 21st, and on that day of 1915 Bruxelles presented a sad sight indeed to the stranger. It was a day of general protest, and the people walked through the streets or parks dressed in mourning. The Belgian tricolor being forbidden, they wore ivy leaves as emblems of eternal faithfulness. The shutters of all houses and shops were closed.

A year later the Huns sought to kill mem-

ories of past liberty by forbidding the wearing of ivy leaves and by ordering all public places to keep open. Many people disobeyed, and cheerfully paid heavy fines or went to prison. The shops that were open had empty windows and plainly showed that customers were not desired, while some groceries displayed the national colors in their windows by a careful grouping of yellow lemons, red tomatoes and black grapes. As a substitute for the forbidden ivy leaf, green ribbons—the color of hope,—were seen in every buttonhole, on every hat and even on the dogs and horses of defiant Bruxelles. The forbidden Belgian flag was replaced by American Stars and Stripes as an emblem of freedom, and as America was neutral the furious Germans could not forbid the display of its colors.

## CHAPTER V.

### FURTHER MISSIONS.

The result of my first trip so encouraged the hopes of the many Belgians scattered throughtout the United States and Canada that hundreds of letters poured into the office of the Belgian-American Alliance. Classifying these requests, communicating with their authors and arranging the thousand and one incidental details soon became a task of such magnitude that Mr. Streyckmans, President of the Alliance, asked Father Stillemans, Director of the Belgian Bureau of New York, to undertake the work and give it the benefit of his experience and knowledge of all matters pertaining to Belgium. Father Stillemans gladly undertook the task, with the result that when time came for me to depart upon my second mission I was in possession of a splendidly compiled list of over 1500 names.

Applications had come from almost every state in the Union, but most of them had originated in Oregon, Nebraska, Illinois and Indiana, while a considerable number came from Canada. Many were from husbands imploring us to liberate their wives and children from the yoke of the Hun; anxious sons begged us to locate their parents and bring them to a home prepared for them; lovers beseeched us to find the maid whom they had left behind when coming to build their fortunes across the ocean.

One case which I often remember is of two lovers who had grown up together in a picturesque Belgian village. They had lived in adjoining cottages, gone to school hand in hand and played their childhood games under the sycamore trees that lined the dark waters of the canal. They had worshipped side by side in the same little village church as side by side they had worked in the fields, and because they were inexperienced and so wrapped in one another they had loved not wisely but too well. The young man, too poor to marry the maid, had left for America, vowing that he would send for his be-

loved as soon as he could provide a home for her. A few months after his departure she gave birth to twins. Patiently she bore the denunciation of her parents, the snubs of her friends, the sneers of the hypocritical villagers. She did not mind the isolation to which her sin had condemned her; simple and primitive soul that she was, to her it did not seem a sin. She had her babies—*their* babies—and her love for them and for their father filled her life completely.

At first the letters from the new world came with regularity; later long intervals of terrifying silence intervened. But always the letters narrated the odyssey of the young immigrant, his disappointments and difficulties, his hopes and his achievements in the new country. Then the war came, and for more than a year the silence was unbroken. During this time her hope never faltered, and when I found her and she learned that I had come to take her to America and her beloved, she fell on her knees and wept tears of joy, crying aloud that I was a heaven-sent messenger.

During the long, trying journey home I

often had occasion to admire her patience and passionate love for the children. Every time I caressed them she would say, as tears swelled to her eyes: "The little angels will at last know their father, and as they grow older I shall teach them to pray for you daily and love you because you have been our benefactor." They were going to *him*, the husband and father, to live with *him*—what else mattered? What were the long delays, the many inconveniences, the seasickness and the measles with which they were seized? They were going to *him*, and nothing else counted. After having waited for three long years she could afford to bear a few more burdens and wait a little longer.

The reunion was so touching that all who witnessed it were visibly affected. There was the happy father, a child on each arm, two pairs of little arms about his neck and a baby cheek held close to each of his, with a radiant mother embracing the group, her lips pressed close to those of the father in a long, happy kiss. It was a picture worthy of the brush of a master. I waited at Ellis

Island until Father Stillemans had united the happy parents and then, with many protestations of gratitude, they bade me good-bye.

A few days later I learned that the mother and children were dead. The husband had been obliged to leave his family a few hours one evening, and the mother, after putting the children to bed, had sat down to write me a letter. Christmas was approaching, and she had wanted to send me the greetings of the season and tell me how happy she was in her new home. Evidently she had become drowsy before the letter was finished and after blowing out the gas, about the use of which the husband had forgotten to instruct her, she had laid down beside the children. The husband, returning home, found them asphyxiated. Some time later, he sent me a picture of the children and the mother's unfinished letter; they are among the prized mementos of my second voyage.

I had to bring back many unattached children, and the care of these added to my difficulties. I have had as many as sixty unattached little ones at a time, ranging from two to nine years of age. After many frights

caused by the temporary loss of some youngsters who persisted in wandering off by themselves, I hit upon the plan of distributing them among the women of the party. If a woman was accompanied by one child of her own, I would entrust her with the supervision of two or three of the unattached children. Women who had two or three children were given one other one to look after. In nearly every case, of course the mothers were only too willing to look after these additional little charges.

One of the waifs who became a great friend of mine was Jean. Little Jean had known no parents. He was an illegitimate child, who on the day of his birth had been left with a Belgian institution for abandoned children. Several years later his mother went to America and married. No children were sent to bless this union, and the mother's thoughts were constantly turning to the little lad in her far away native country. She told me that sometimes the pangs of remorse seemed more than she could endure; her heart cried out for her little son's love, and she yearned to feel his arms around her

neck, his lips pressed close to hers. She appealed to me, implored me, to bring him back to America on my next trip, but this I refused to do until she had obtained her husband's consent.

She shrank from doing this, but I told her that her request could not be entertained until such a step was taken. No one will ever know the anguish and misgivings that tortured her mind before she could bring herself to broach the subject to her husband, but the good man, much to her relief, acquiesced readily in her plans. Thus I came to be entrusted with the task of locating little Jean and restoring him to his mother.

I found him in the Home where she had left him, a miserable little specimen of humanity, his eyes dull with sadness, his little frame emaciated from privation, his lips strangers to kisses and smiles. The head of the institution was willing to have me take him, but no amount of arguing or persuasion would move the Pass Bureau to issue a passport for him. Being an illegitimate child he had no Identification Card and that barred him from consideration.

“But, Mr. Officer,” I pleaded. “he came into the world without one. He was abandoned when an infant, and the institution where he has lived has only the vaguest knowledge of the identity of his parents. His mother has only recently revealed herself.”

“No passport can be given without the Identification Card,” was the reply. “It is the rule.”

I went to the head officer of the Pass Bureau, and from him I received the same ultimatum. Then I went still higher, to one of the attachés of the Governor-General’s office, taking Jean along with me as mute witness to his own inoffensiveness. I begged and implored for a deviation from the established rule.

“Look at the lad,” I beseeched, as Jean stood by, the picture of utter dejection in his ill-fitting clothes. “Please make an exception in his case.”

“How do you know that the woman who has sent for him is his mother?” I was asked.

“Who but his mother would claim him?”  
I replied.

A faint smile stole about the attachés mouth, and I knew that I had won the day.

So little Jean came back with me. His eyes seemed to brighten almost from the moment our journey began. He was a very shy child and, although he seemed to know instinctively that I was helping him in some way, he never uttered a word. During the first few days of the journey he kept very much to himself, and when I would speak to him he would move away in silence. As the voyage progressed, some of his reticence dissappeared and occasionally he would permit me to caress him. Sometimes he would draw away when I touched him, like a frightened dumb animal, but a little later, when he thought that I was not observing him, he would slowly make his way to my side and look up at me timidly, wistfully, his sad eyes begging me to caress him again.

Of all the little charges I brought to America on my various trips, there was none I was quite so loath to part from as little Jean. But when that voyage ended I turned

him over to his mother to be born again I hoped, into a world where little children could find happiness as well as sorrow.

In the gallery of my memory are many other pictures, tender or pathetic, but there are also a few amusing ones. A constant source of amusement on my various trips to Belgium was the persistence with which I was tracked by patriotic enthusiasts and by spies. I was kept busy dodging them on the steamer, in railway carriages, in hotels and even on the streets. After a brief greeting they would launch forth into their one subject, the war. Some, of course, were pro-Ally, others violently pro-German, and many were undoubtedly "agents provocateurs" whose business it was to take up cudgels for the cause to which they were opposed in order to discover the trend of their companion's sympathy. If I listened to their arguments without comment and with no sign of approval or disapproval I could be sure they would end by bluntly asking: "And where do you stand?"

Desiring to steer my ship cautiously, I usually answered that I didn't feel like com-

mitting myself to either side, that I knew nothing about international politics, that I felt sorry for all of the people involved in the terrible conflict and that, as an American, I wished to remain neutral. My companions would immediately flare up and declare that there was no such thing as absolute neutrality, taxing me with being an enemy of their faction because I did not openly and loudly agree with them.

Holland, most specially The Hague, was a hotbed of spies, and every newcomer was approached, spied upon, and followed by agents of all the governments at war. Secret service men supplied their local embassies with a record of each individual's movements and the embassies, in turn, transmitted the information to their respective home offices. One could never be sure that hotel clerks and porters were not in the pay of the agents of foreign governments. I know of one enterprising hotel clerk who was taking money from representatives of two opposing nations at the same time. The trunks in one's room, even though locked, were not safe from secret investigation as

I discovered in my own case on more than one occasion.

One could not be sure that one's name was not on the black list of several contending governments. For instance, while I was at The Hague, I had legitimate business with, and consequently visited, the German, Belgian and British embassies. I am sure that my visits were promptly reported to the authorities of those three countries. Though I exercised the utmost prudence, never discussing the war with anyone save my most intimate friends, and even then guardedly, I was held up by the British authorities at Falmouth when I crossed the last time, and my effects were submitted to the closest scrutiny. Someone in the United States, I afterwards learned, had cabled the British Foreign Office to look out for me as I was suspected of being pro-German, and my name had been duly recorded upon the British black list. The same person, bent on making trouble for me one way or another, had informed the German government that I was pro-Ally.

On one occasion when I crossed the Bel-

gian border into Holland, I learned that the Belgian Government had issued orders to its embassy at The Hague to warn all Belgians against me as I was engaged in unpatriotic work, taking Belgians to America and abandoning them to their own devices. Of course I knew that the accusation was absurd, but, nevertheless, I had to prove my sincerity to the proper authorities. I submitted my credentials and a complete report of my work to the first secretary of the Belgian Embassy, Prince de Ligne, who took the trouble to immediately inform his Government regarding my aims and accomplishments.

In Belgium the secret service or spy system was fearful and wonderful in its organization and wide ramifications. *The Questure*, that is, the secret service council, was the highest tribunal of both the civil and military authorities. Even the military authorities themselves, both officers and soldiers, were constantly watched and spied upon. Some of the cleverest of the spies were attractive demi-mondaines. They were to be frequently seen in the hotels dining

with officers who often learned later, to their sorrow, that they had been lavishing money upon informers in the pay of their own government. Another dangerous spy for the officer was a radical socialist. It was a clever idea that led to this state of affairs. The socialist, of course, hated all officers, and the higher the rank of his prey, or the more illustrious his family name, the greater were the spy's efforts to find him guilty of treason and denounce him.

I was summoned before the police authorities on two occasions. The first time I had arrived in Bruxelles from a trip to Flanders late in the evening and I was very tired. My Flanders passport had expired that day and, according to the military regulations, I should have returned it to the Pass Bureau immediately upon my arrival and obtained a receipt for it. But in a moment of fatigue I decided that I would postpone my call to the Pass Bureau until morning, and went to my hotel and to bed. I was awakened from my first sleep by a secret service agent and summoned to the Police Headquarters immediately. There the matter was adjusted,

but not before I had received a severe lecture which made me vow not to repeat that particular offence.

Another time I was ordered to report at Police Headquarters without delay, and when I arrived there I was submitted to a long interrogation. "Who are you?" I was asked. "How long have you been in Belgium?" How did you get into the country? How many times have you been here? What are you doing here? Why are you doing it? Whom do you know here?"

After awhile I became impatient and answered. "I came here by permission of the German Government, which knows all about my work. I am well known at the Politische Abteilung and there you can find out all you want to know."

I imagined this answer would mollify, if not crush, my questioner. The shadow of a smile crossed his features and he said, with unmistakable firmness:

"Never mind the Politische Abteilung; you are dealing with the Police now."

More questions followed. "Do you know anyone in Flanders? Do you attempt any

correspondence with them? ”

And then the reason for my cross-examination came out. The news that I was in Belgium, looking up families of Belgians in America, had somehow spread throughout the entire country, and many needy people, having relatives in the United States, had tried to reach me to give me messages for them. Some succeeded and others did not, and it was as a result of one of these foiled attempts that I had been haled before the Police. That very day a man from Roulers had been caught with a letter on his person addressed to me in which he asked me to locate his people in Oregon and tell them his family was in great distress. When I convinced the Police authorities that I knew nothing about the man,—and that was no easy task—I was dismissed, but not before I had signed a lengthy document in which my entire examination had been recorded.

On another occasion I was summoned to the Censor's office. I had written a letter in French to a lady living in Charleroi, asking her to be in Bruxelles at the Pass Bureau at a certain hour. In my haste I had

used the past tense instead of the future, and this gave umbrage to the Censor who thought that it might be a pre-arranged secret code. I explained the mistake but I was not released until I had signed a statement to the effect that my error was due to my imperfect knowledge of French.

Thus the machinery of German efficiency operated unceasingly, yet I managed to smuggle thousands of letters and many volumes of clandestine literature across the Dutch frontier. How I accomplished this I cannot divulge, but considering the eternal vigilance of the military authorities and spies it will be evident to the reader that I trusted in the passive cooperation of someone connected with the German Government. The individual to whom I owe my liberty, if not my life, was not cognizant of the extent of what I was doing; he may have suspected my guilt, but I am convinced that he did not realize the measure of it. To his honor let it be said that he was lenient solely because he sympathized with the purpose of my undertaking. He loved children, and I think he helped me because he realized that I was

restoring many little Belgians to their parents. He looked upon me as the godfather of the little citizens of unhappy Belgium and believed that whatever I was doing was being done primarily for them. To say more than this might incriminate him and bring unnecessary sorrow to his family.

No one else connived with me, no one else connected with the Government of occupation knew or suspected what I was doing, not even my interpreter, Mr. Bayer, a fine, sympathetic old German, whose wife was a Belgian and whose children were naturalized citizens of their mother's country. Mr. Bayer had been an officer in the German army and had fought in the war of '66, remaining a German in Allegiance even after settling in Belgium. He was tall, distinguished in appearance and very alert in spite of his seventy odd years. Although he did not realize it himself, his mere appearance helped me out of many uncomfortable situations. I am convinced that many of the lesser military authorities thought, after examining his passport, which revealed him as an ex-officer, that he was a companion officially detailed to accompany me on my travels.

He did not realize this, but I did, and made the most of it.

I must state, however, that I never jeopardized my interpreter's liberty by carrying political messages; I never once allowed myself to become a subservient tool for political activities. I merely wished to do what I could to alleviate the suffering of the Belgian people,—nothing more—and so whenever a letter was given to me to smuggle out of the country or into another commune, I would read it carefully, and if its contents were obscure or savored of a code system I invariably asked the writer to take it back and give me another letter instead. *I never allowed these letters to be addressed or signed*, depending on a code I had invented so that if they were discovered in my possession I would be the only sufferer.

Once, when going from Ghent to Bruxelles alone, I carried more than *four hundred* clandestine letters. The train on which I was traveling was packed with soldiers; I was the only civilian among its passengers. Almost immediately after it started an officer came through the cars, inspecting passports and

baggage. Besides my valise I had five small bundles wrapped in paper which I had tucked away in the rack above my seat. Four of the packages contained small antiques which I had purchased in Ghent, and the fifth contained the letters. Some of these letters were from Belgians whom the war had reduced to beggary, people who were asking assistance of friends or relatives in America. Others were for Belgians who lived in the Provinces of the Governor-General. For even one of these innocent missives to have been discovered among my effects would have meant a military trial, and, undoubtedly imprisonment; perhaps even the death penalty.

When the officer arrived at my seat I made a great fuss over the obstinacy of the lock on my valise. I fumed and fretted at its failure to promptly respond to the key treatment. Finally I managed to get it open, only to reveal that its contents consisted of a few articles of clothing. Once these were inspected and replaced, I locked the valise, placed it under the seat and started to settle down as though I felt relieved that the annoying inspection had been completed.

“Come, come,” said the officer, pointing to my packages in the rack above, “what about those? ”

“I have some antiques,” I answered, laboriously rising and reaching for one of the bundles.

One by one I took them down, opening each package, exhibiting the contents and extolling upon their beauty at great length. I was hoping that a view of the contents of one or two of the bundles would appease the curiosity of the officer, and so I carefully left the package of the letters for the last. I had successfully followed this procedure on previous trips, but this officer was the personification of efficiency and insisted upon seeing all of my baggage.

With the opening of the fourth package my heart began to beat a lively tattoo against my waistcoat, though I strove to remain outwardly calm. Finally I climbed upon the seat and reached for the fifth package, but luck was with me and just at that moment the train pulled into a station and the officer was obliged to leave.

“It is all right,” he said brusquely as he turned away, leaving me to settle down to a prayer of gratitude for my narrow escape. It was the nearest I ever came to being caught.

## CHAPTER VI.

### WHERE THE HUNS HAVE PASSED.

In the course of my search for the people whom I was to bring to America I visited many cities whose gaping wounds were mute testimonials of their martyrdom, while under the debris lay the bodies of thousands of innocent victims, men, women and children slain wantonly.

From what I was able to learn—and I frequently conversed with Belgian civilians and German officers or soldiers—I am convinced that the German military authorities decided to establish a system of terrorism before they even entered the country. They must have decided it as soon as they learnt that free passage would be denied to their troops. The few feeble efforts at resistance made by civilian Belgians would be a ridiculous explanation for the destruction that followed in the wake

of the invading army. Belgium was burned down and wrecked for the example it would give the world of the punishment meted out to whoever resisted the Kaiser's hosts.

Advance patrols of Uhlans were shot at in many cases by detachments of the regular Belgian army sent forward to await the enemy in concealment, and because the shooting soldiers were concealed, word was passed through the German ranks that Belgian civilians had fired on the troops. It was a sufficient excuse to put the system of terrorism into execution. Within a few days after the entry of the Huns into Belgium, German newspapers were filled with details of imaginary atrocities committed by Belgian civilians, even by women, children and priests, upon wounded German soldiers. Many of these stories were undoubtedly issued with the official seal of the German War Office while others were elaborations of letters sent by German soldiers to their relatives at home. In view of the drunkenness and debauchery practised by some of the invaders it is natural that they should send home such imaginary accounts which infuriated German civilians.

Among the effects found on a wounded soldier was a letter from his father in Germany who wrote: "Do not let any civilians come near you. Fire upon any who approach you."

Eyewitnesses told me that on various occasions in the confusion caused by drunken revelries or by mere accident, German troops fired upon their own comrades as they came toward each other from different directions. In every case Belgian civilians were blamed, upon the assumption that they were franc-tireurs. Then, without even a pretence of investigation, they were mercilessly massacred and their town pillaged and burned.

One of the most common accusations by the Germans was that of "gouging out eyes" by priests. It may have originated in the disordered brain of the Hun, but it seems to me that its origin can be traced to the fact that Belgian priests could be seen everywhere, kneeling beside wounded German soldiers just as they knelt beside their own fallen countrymen, administering Extreme Unction, part of which is to touch the eyes with the Holy Oil for the Infirm.

One day I was discussing the accusations against the clergy with a prominent anti-clerical lawyer of Bruxelles, a man whose professional activities before the war had shown him to be far from partial to the clerical fraternity.

“Tell me something,” I said, “about the participation of priests in the reported sniping on the German troops—especially from the heights of church towers.”

“That is one of the favorite lies of those damned Prussians,” he answered with vehemence. “I was everywhere during those first trying days and I have talked with everyone worth talking to, and from what I saw and from what I heard I know there is not a shred of truth in all of their assertions.

“The populace was terror-stricken as soon as they heard the Germans were coming, even before the first troops put in an appearance. As for the priests, I do not need to tell you how meek and timid they are. The discipline of religious colleges and seminaries, the canons which rule their daily lives, the constant wearing of the cassock, all these things combine to make the priest anything but a belli-

cose man. Why, in some instances they were even pro-German, such as the Curé of Battice, who, by the irony of fate, was the first victim of the invasion.

“ But what was the attitude of the Belgian government toward the supposed uprisings of civilians.” I asked. “ *Entre nous*, would it not have been natural for the government to foment resistance? ”

“ It would not only have been an inconsiderate act,” came the emphatic answer, “ but a positively criminal one on the part of our authorities, had they tried to do so. It would have been supreme folly for the civilian population to oppose any resistance. Remember, they possessed practically no arms. Our people are not fools; they were conscious of their feebleness and knew very well that the German armies were formidable.”

To verify his statements my informant led me into his library, and from a desk took out a bundle of papers which he placed before me. They were circulars issued by Government authorities and the mayors of the different towns, urging civilians to bring such weapons as they had to the Hotel de Ville

and remain quiet. Some of these circulars are reproduced in these pages. Their messages conform to the following translations:

TO THE CIVILIANS.

The Minister of the Interior urges the following line of conduct on all civilians, in case the enemy appears in their region:

1. Not to fight.
2. Not to utter threats or insults.
3. To remain indoors, and to close windows so as not to give the enemy the pretext to say that there has been any provocation.
4. If our soldiers occupy a house or an isolated hamlet in order to defend themselves, it should be evacuated at once so that the enemy may not say that civilians have fired.
5. Any act of violence committed by a citizen is a crime which the law punishes because it might serve as the pretext for a bloody repression, or for pillage and the massacre of an

innocent population, the massacre of women and children.

M. BERRYER,  
Minister of the Interior.

Bruxelles, August 4, 1914.

This notice was printed daily, in large characters and in a conspicuous place, in every newspaper in Belgium.

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#### FIRE-ARMS.

The international law of war does not permit civilians to take part in hostilities, and all infractions of this rule may bring about serious reprisals. Many of our fellow-citizens have commendably expressed the desire to voluntarily give up whatever weapons they possess. Such may be brought to the Commissioner of Police where a receipt will be duly given for each piece. The arms will be placed in the central Arsenal at Antwerp and given back at the end of the war.

ADOLPHE MAX,  
Burgomaster.

Bruxelles, Aug. 12, 1914.

Similar warnings were issued by the mayor of every important city and town throughout Belgium.

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Methodical pillage, incendiarism and the slaying of civilians constituted the order of the day in those localities where the German armies met with resistance on the part of Belgian or French troops, and sometimes in towns where there was no opposition to their advance.

The excuse for this was always the same. A shot is heard, and immediately, without any investigation, the orgy of blood begins. "Die Zivilisten haben geschossen," the civilians have fired! Who fired that shot? A timid sentinel, a drunken soldier, or was it done purposely by someone in authority, and for too obvious a purpose? Little does the answer matter, bring the benzine torch and fire the houses while the troops laugh as they shoot the fleeing inhabitants.

Let me draw a picture of what occurred at Acoz, a picturesque little village of some

1300 inhabitants, lying at the eastern extremity of the province of Hainaut.

It is dusk. The Germans are crossing the Sambre at Chatelet. Earlier in the day—this is August 22nd, 1914—the French military authorities through the Burgomaster and rural guard request the inhabitants to evacuate the town and save their lives. Word has already been received that the Germans are forcing civilians to march ahead of them to cover their advance, so the villagers, with less than a score of exceptions, gather what few belongings they can carry and flee the town. Finally the invading troops arrive, and shortly afterward smoke and flames make a lurid picture of the erstwhile peaceful landscape. The Convent of the French Sisters, the Post Office, the Town Hall, the Municipal School and other public buildings are the first targets for the torch. In vain the Burgomaster protests.

“The inhabitants have fired upon us from almost every house,” says an officer of the Tenth German Army Corps.”

“But the inhabitants had fled before you arrived,” pleads the Burgomaster.

“ Man hat geschossen,” is the uncompromising reply, and the torch continues its frightful work.

In the granary attached to the parsonage are found the Curé, L'Abbé Druet, a septuagenarian clergyman, and two civilians, M. Archange and Joseph Bourbou. They are trembling with fear. When the Germans question them they can only answer with gestures because they do not understand the tongue of the invader and the Germans know no French. So they are condemned to be shot. In vain do they beg for mercy, protesting their innocence; in vain does the aged priest show the ribbon of the Red Cross encircling his arm. No mercy is shown; they are the chosen victims and they must die. So the trio is blindfolded and shot while the crackling of the devouring fire and the falling of charred timbers sound their death dirge.

Another locality I visited was Battice. Here lived on August 4th, 1914, a little over three thousand souls. On that day the first German soldiers are arriving, and some of the Belgian Lancers who had left the village in

the morning are now returning, their horses galloping furiously. Shots rain on them from all sides, and several saddles are emptied. The parish priest, Abbé Voisin, moves from one wounded man to another, offering the last comforts of religion. The people have fled to a neighboring hamlet, and the invaders penetrate the houses, breaking doors and windows in their haste to procure food and drink. With no apparent reason some soldiers amuse themselves by breaking up the furniture while others are content to fall asleep as soon as they have drunk their fill.

For awhile life seems safe enough, and the population begins to return, when in the afternoon three men are arrested and without pretence of trial shot on the sidewalk in front of the Christiane residence. "I am sure they were innocent" said Father Voisin, who had himself been arrested and compelled to witness the execution. "They were timid peasants, and were arrested while conversing in the middle of the street. To the best of my knowledge not a single German soldier was killed or wounded in Battice."

Father Voisin spent the greater part of



In Holland no railway station or public building near the frontier was without its hundreds of Belgian refugees glad to sleep on the bare floors.



the night standing up against a wall, his hands tied, guarded by sentries who continually threatened him with their bayonets. His ecclesiastical garb seemed to excite their anger, for they neglected his two companions, Municipal Councilors Browers and Iserentant. Meanwhile, the nearby forts of Liege were spitting fire at the German troops whose resentment could only be vented on the innocent civilians.

“At two o’clock in the morning,” says Father Voisin, “we were started towards Liege under escort of soldiers who repeatedly struck us with their rifles or kicked us while we staggered with our arms still tightly bound. At Hervé, however, an officer gave the order to set us free as no time could be wasted on us, and shortly after a lively engagement had started between our captors and some Belgian troops. We returned to Battice and found that some inhabitants were still there.”

Wednesday passed quietly, but Thursday saw numerous German soldiers pour into the town. They seemed exhausted, and refreshment was provided for them. Suddenly a sharp report was heard, followed by a num-

ber of others in rapid succession. Everywhere soldiers began to shoot rapidly through doors and windows. Men and women were killed as they talked or worked. Jacques Halleux died as he tried to cover his fiancée by whose side he sat. Six farmers on the road to La Minerie were shot within sight of their homes, and a little further three bewildered laborers were executed for no earthly reason. In a cellar they found the unfortunate Iserentant who had been a fellow prisoner of Father Voisin two days before. With him were his infirm brother-in-law, Mr. Garcon, a young servant girl and a Mr. Hendrick. They were terrified and begged for mercy, but all were slain. In the next farm house were two young girls who were shot as they fled.

Emile Liegeois, with his two sisters, a brother-in-law and the latter's two children had sought refuge in the cellar of their homes. At dusk he came up to look around and see if it was safe to flee, but as soon as he appeared on the threshold he was shot down and died without having time to utter even a word. His sister Mary was close upon his heels, and was struck on the forehead by two

spent bullets. She fell on the spot and, hearing some one approach, feigned death. Several soldiers surrounded her and one of them stooped to examine her body. He did so very hastily and rising said, "she's dead too!" Later that night, however, her brother-in-law carried her on a wheel-barrow to the convent of the Sisters of Providence at Hervé, and she is now quite recovered.

While these murders, and many others, were going on, the village was looted and then set on fire. Two days later it was still burning, all but a few houses in the neighborhood of the station which had been spared because they were needed for the soldiers who guarded the railway.

Tamines was still another happy little community of about six hundred inhabitants. Of its wanton destruction for some imaginary crime the *Kolnische Zeitung* of September 10th, 1914 wrote: "Not being able to apprehend those who had fired, the rage of our troops turned against the city. Without mercy it was set on fire and turned into ruins."

One needs to know but part of the story of Tamines to appreciate the truth of those

words "without mercy." A small detachment of Belgian troops had offered heroic though futile resistance to the invasion of the town, and as a result the Germans inaugurated a massacre of the civilians. On Saturday, August 22nd, at seven in the morning, several hundred male citizens were assembled in the Place St. Martin, along which flows the Sambre. These civilians were lined up as human targets for the rifles of German soldiers.

The order to fire is given. All of the victims fall to the ground, some killed, some wounded, others feigning death or helpless from fright. Those who have escaped death are ordered to stand up again. They are fired upon a second time, and then some of those who have escaped injury fling themselves into the Sambre and try to swim to safety. The German soldiers rush to the bank of the river and attempt to pick them off with their rifles, and as a result but few escaped. A little while later a detachment of German soldiers make a tour of inspection among the fallen dead and wounded, despatching with bullets and bayonets those who are still alive. Tam-

ines' death toll numbered upwards of five hundred civilians; nearly two hundred houses were completely destroyed by fire and five hundred more were sacked and pillaged.

The same story, with variations of cruelty, is told in the martyrdom of Andenne. Lying between Namur and Huy, on the right bank of the Meuse, Andenne was a town of 7,800 souls. A bridge connected it with the village of Teilles on the left bank of the river.

When a detachment of Uhlans arrived on the morning of August 1st they discovered that the retreating Belgian troops had destroyed the bridge, and they were furious. They offered all sorts of insults to the civilians of Andenne, and especially to Dr. Camus, the Burgomaster, who had taken extraordinary precautions to prevent the civilians from interfering with the enemy's advance. At the Burgomaster's request all weapons had been deposited in the Hotel de Ville.

In the afternoon of the same day large bodies of German troops arrived and began to crowd the town's cafés, drinking freely and becoming more offensive as their intoxication developed. There was no serious outbreak,

however, until six o'clock in the evening when a shot was heard. No one knew who had fired it, but immediately the cry was raised: "Man hat geschossen!"

Andenne witnessed the same mode of pillage, incendiarism and massacre that had befallen so many other towns, a procedure which proves nothing if it does not prove a premeditated plan of intimidation. Houses were entered into and pillaged. Fire was started in various sections of the town, and citizens were executed without even the mockery of a military trial.

On Friday, August 21st, all of Andenne's citizens were driven out of their homes and into the streets where they were forced to line up, their hands held high above their heads. Those who hesitated in obeying orders were knocked down with bayonets and butts of rifles. Those who tried to escape were shot. Dr. Camus, the Burgomaster, was shot down without the slightest provocation. One man, a watchmaker, emerged from his dwelling carrying his father-in-law, an old man of eighty years. He was ordered to hold up his hands but could not obey because of his

human burden. An infuriated German soldier rushed at him and with a blow from a hatchet almost severed his head from the body. He fell dying upon his doorstep.

The entire population, old, infirm and infants, as well as the able-bodied, were driven to the center of the town and there searched, but to the eternal guilt of the Germans let it be set down that not a single weapon was found on anyone. Still barbarism was determined to have its holiday, and so the defenseless creatures were killed right and left, some by shooting and some with hatchets. One little child was literally chopped out of its mother's arms.

At noon all of the surviving men, about eight hundred in number, were taken as hostages and locked in three small houses, packed in so that there was not room left for even one to sit down. Some time later their women folks were allowed to bring them some food, but they were not permitted to converse with them.

And to the question: "Why was Andenne sacrificed?" the only answer is found in the proclamation of General von Bulow, which

decorated the walls of Liege: "It was with my consent that the entire city of Andenne was burned and its citizens shot. I bring these facts to the attention of the city of Liege in order that its inhabitants may know the fate which threatens them." And back of this answer? The real reason was the terrorizing of Liege. Andenne was to be its warning, just as Dinant was made to serve as an example to Namur, Malines to Antwerp, Louvain to Bruxelles, Tirmonde to Ghent.

As for Aerschot! Who can tell the story of Aerschot? I heard the sickening tale from one of its women, a woman whom I found weeping over the grave of her martyred son and husband, in a little cemetery just outside the town.

"On the morning of August 19th there was fighting between our soldiers and the Germans, but the Germans were victors and took the town. Then their soldiers began to rush through our streets. They were arriving all day, and at about eight o'clock in the evening there was much firing. Heavy wagons seemed to be rushing in all directions, and we could

hear the sound of firing and the crashing of glass.

“ We were hiding in the kitchen, my little family and I, when the window panes were shattered and the bullets whistled past us and stuck in the plaster of the walls. My husband and son rushed out of the house to see whether there was a chance for us to escape. I begged them not to go but they would not listen to me. After they had gone I went into the cellar. I must have stayed there for two hours or more, and then I could not stand the anxiety any longer and I came upstairs. I looked through a window and saw that the town was burning. In a few minutes three German soldiers rushed into the house and ordered me to get out. One of them carried a torch and told me to leave at once or they would burn down my dwelling.

“ When I asked them what I had done to be treated thus they told me that their Colonel had been killed and that our town must perish. One of the soldiers took me by the arm and pushed me toward the door. I asked them to allow me to take a few things, but they told me the only thing I needed was a shroud.

Then they shoved me into the street. Soldiers were rushing in all directions, driving the the men of the town ahead of them.

“I had not gone far when I met one of our old priests. I stopped him and asked him whether he had seen my Jean and my Pierre. For a few minutes he did not seem to recognize me and then, when he realized who was talking to him, he took hold of my hands and told me that I must have courage and trust in the will of God.

“What do you mean?” I cried, “Are they dead?”

“Then he told me that he had just left my loved ones and that I would find them near the outskirts of the town, beside a burning building. I flew to the spot he had mentioned; I don't know how I got there or why I was not shot on the way. And my son, my husband! . . . How can I tell you? . . . I found the body of my dear boy so burnt that I could hardly recognize it. It was stretched across the center of the road, half buried in cinders. Bodies of men were lying all around and I began to search for my poor husband. After a while I found him . . .

dead, too . . . and I dragged him out beside my boy. That was the last I remembered until the next morning when I awoke in the home of some Belgians in another town. I had fainted and was picked up by some of my neighbors who were fleeing from Aerschot."

So many reputable witnesses have told me of the intoxicated condition of German troops who set out upon their missions of murder and incendiarism, and so much testimony under oath has been gathered to this effect that it is evidently alcoholic madness which started most of these crimes.

As a matter of fact, evidence of **this** is to be found even in the diaries taken from German soldiers killed or captured in the invasion. To quote only one, the diary of Corporal Kase, Second Regiment of Uhlans, 7th Corps, 14th Infantry Division, contained the following:

"August 8, 1914—Crossed Belgian frontier and rested 1 kilometre from Salem where a country seat was completely robbed of its wine."

"August 11, 1914—We lay in the barracks and did not know what to do for sheer high

spirits . . .” we had a continuous supply of wine and champagne . . .”

“ August 26, 1914— . . .” As invariably, the surrounding houses were immediately plundered. We drank eleven bottles of champagne, four bottles of wine and six bottles of liqueur.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### DINANT.

In a little inn not far from Vilvorde I sat at the end of a dull and rainy day talking with a chance companion; he was a man of about forty-five, quietly dressed, but with the white hands of a man unused to manual labor. He informed me that he was a native of Dinant.

“Have you visited Dinant since its invasion?” I asked.

“Yes, on several occasions. When I returned the first time, a few weeks after the massacre, seven hundred bodies had already been exhumed from the ruins. That was my first glimpse of Dinant—a cemetery. Many of the dead were relatives of mine, others were old friends, and you may wonder that I returned to a place so fraught with painful memories. I could not resist the longing to go back; I was drawn to the place by

an irresistible desire to see it, bleeding and disfigured as it was, the same desire, I presume, that prompts the exile to return to the land where his forefathers bled and died. I seemed to find solace in prowling around in the debris of my home . . . I was like a lost soul . . . My father, mother, wife and children—all gave their lives there; sacrificed on the alter of barbarity.”

“How did it happen,” I asked after a brief silence, “that you escaped the fate suffered by the other members of your family?”

“I am trying to forget,” he said wearily. “Every time I recall the horrible catastrophe that befell us, the wounds of my soul are reopened and I live again through the agony of those first days of war.”

“Pardon my request,” I said. “We Americans find it difficult to imagine the extent of the atrocities visited upon Belgium. It is only when we hear details from personal sufferers that we can bring ourselves to accept the horrible truth. Forget my request if it pains you to relate your experience.”

“No, no, no!” my companion answered quickly. “I want to tell you all. The Ameri-

cans have been so generous in succoring my unhappy country that I must not let an opportunity pass to prove that their generosity has not been misdirected\* \* \*

“ Belgian troops were occupying both banks of the Meuse when some German cavalymen appeared at Auseremme, which, although forming a distinct Commune, is practically part of Dinant. That was on August 6th. One of the Germans was wounded by the Belgian Chasseurs, and he and one of his companions, whose horse had been killed, were taken prisoners. Between that day and August 17th, 1914, the Germans made several unsuccessful efforts to force a passage of the Meuse.

“ Here is a picture of the situation . . . Cannons are roaring from both sides of the river. A number of our buildings have been damaged. The Germans are furious; they fight like demons. Finally our brave allies, the French, are obliged to abandon the right bank of the river and the Huns, in small detachments, commence to descend into the city.

“ Some time during the night of August 21st, the inhabitants of the town are awak-

ened by sounds of rapid firing coming from the neighborhood of the Rue St. Jacques. Doors of buildings in that thoroughfare are broken down, and three civilians are seriously wounded. The Germans dash through the street in automobiles, soldiers firing from them through shuttered windows. Fifteen houses are set on fire.

“Very early on the morning of August 23rd, furious fighting takes place between the opposing troops, and Dinant’s panic-stricken citizens seek refuge in the cellars of their homes. At sunrise, the city is entered into simultaneously from four different roads, and the carnage begins. Helmeted fiends force their way into private homes, murdering some inhabitants, ejecting others and setting fire to the buildings. There is no prescribed order of barbarity; the Huns proceed as the spirit of lust moves them.

“In the quarter known as Fonds de Leffe barely a dozen men escape alive from the massacre. Some men are murdered in the presence of their wives and children. M. Himmer, director of the local factory, is murdered together with more than a hundred

of his employees. Women and children are locked in the Abbey of the Premontres and their church is pillaged. The same fate befalls the Monastery. German soldiers dressed in the stolen garb of monks, strut about the streets, making obscene gestures.

“Flames are consuming every quarter of the town. The massive doors of our beautiful gothic church resist their fire, so the Germans, in order to make their fiendish work complete, apply the torch to the tower and roof. Hundreds of men, women and children are driven to the banks of the Meuse where they are lined up and ordered to raise their arms, while German troops pass behind the living barrier . . .

“I was in this crowd. I had left my home early in the morning to see if there appeared to be a chance for my family to flee, but I had not gone far when I was taken into custody by some German soldiers . . .

“When the French saw that we were being used as a shield to protect the German troops they ceased firing. About two hours later we were taken to prison. Almost immediately we were joined by other citizens of

the town, and from their terrified expressions we knew that they had passed through some ordeal more frightful than that which had claimed us for its victims. After a while I had a chance to ask one of the members of this second party what had befallen them. He was an old man, and, unlike his companions, he appeared to be composed.

“ ‘Why were we ordered to give up our arms before the monster came?’ he said in answer to my inquiry. ‘As long as death was to be our fate we might at least have been given the opportunity to send the craven souls of some of these barbarians to hell.

“ ‘I was gathered in with this crowd,’ he went on after a pause, ‘We were taken to a point opposite the house of M. Franquinet, the architect, and there the younger men were taken from our midst and lined up against a wall, four rows deep. One of the officers said something in German which none of us understood, and a firing squad came forward and shot down these young men . . . shot them down in cold blood before our very eyes.’ ”

“ I could scarcely credit what my fellow prisoner had told me, it seemed too frightful to be true, but I was soon to learn that his experience was as nothing compared to other calamities that had overtaken our beautiful city.

“ In one section of the town between eighty and ninety men, women and children were herded together, driven against a wall and shot. Later in the day the Germans found that not all of their victims were dead and these,—many of them seriously wounded and weak from loss of blood—were made to dig a deep trench as a grave for their murdered comrades. Many of our citizens were burned alive in their homes . . . Sometimes I feel sure that it was thus that my own dear ones perished . . . One aged woman, a friend of my wife, was a paralytic. She was known to be alone in her home at the time the Germans applied the torch to it. Some of her neighbors begged permission to carry her to safety, but instead of the request being granted they were forced to stand in front of the house and watch its destruction.

“ I was in a crowd of four hundred men

who were deported to Germany. We were taken to the heights of Dinant and there we were kept for one whole day without food. When we asked our guards what they intended doing with us they answered that we were to be sent to Germany and shot. In the evening we were given some straw on which to sleep, and the next morning at about ten o'clock we were given a little soup. Then we were taken down into the city, under armed escort, and ordered to search among the smouldering ruins for empty cans and other small utensils which we were told to keep for our needs until our arrival in Germany. Our escorts continuously threatened us with death.

“ Finally we started on our Calvary. We were marched in rows four deep, with soldiers back of each row. We passed many companies of German troops coming from the opposite direction, and almost without exception they would shout abuse at us. Some of these soldiers gave us to understand by their gestures that we were to be hung or shot. Many of them hurled handfuls of dirt at us.

“ Late in the afternoon we were given a

scanty ration of weak soup and a few biscuits, and then at nightfall, when we were near the village of Geryoux, we were told that we could sleep in the damp grass of a large field. We were told that if anyone attempted to speak or rise during the night he would be immediately shot.

“The next day we were driven forward on our journey. By this time many were suffering acute pain; they had traveled a long distance in house slippers, and they were footsore; most of us had walked bareheaded for two days under the August sun. At Marche we were packed into a building scarcely large enough to accommodate one fourth of our number, and there we were forced to spend the night standing, although we were at the point of fainting from fatigue. In the morning the inhabitants of Marche were allowed to give us food and clothing, and then we were taken on to the station of Melveux where we were herded into cattle trains. The trains which had neither benches nor straw had but recently given up their cargo of cattle, and the odor of offal was sickening. After a wait of about two hours we

were en route for Germany.

“ At each station along our journey in Germany we were exhibited to crowds that had gathered to see the terrible franc-tireurs of Belgium! Soldiers and officers vied with civilians in hurling vile imprecations and threats at us. Very early on the morning of August 28 we arrived at Cassel; the journey had lasted thirty-five hours and in that time we had been given food and drink only once! We were literally dumped out of the cattle cars and driven through the streets of the town, through crowds of people who, despite the early hour, were waiting to greet us with yells and curses.

“ Our final destination was a jail into which we were herded, three and four of us to each tiny cell. We had no beds to sleep upon, and our only resting place was a pile of vile smelling straw which was not changed until six weeks after our arrival! Such food as we were given was either tasteless or horribly offensive in odor. The most prominent men of Dinant were included in our ranks—the Burgomaster, the Procurator of the King, the Judge, lawyers, doctors, clergy-

men—and yet all were treated in the same manner. It was late in November when we were released and allowed to return home, released without a word of explanation. We were not subjected to trial, and our dismissal was just as unwarranted, as unreasonable and mysterious as our arrest had been.”

It was my almost invariable custom, when I heard such tales in Belgium, to ask my informers whether the Germans had not been provoked by the sniping of francs-tireurs.

“Is it possible,” I asked after a pause, “that some injudicious and over-zealous patriots of Dinant were guilty of sniping, thus precipitating the catastrophe that befell the town?”

“No!” my companion protested with heat, “such was not the case, whatever the Germans may say. I did not see a single civilian handling a weapon of any kind. But, suppose a handful of foolish ones had offered armed resistance; how long would it have taken the mighty German army to apprehend and punish them? As early as the morning of August 16th our Burgomaster had warned

posted all over the city, ordering us to bring all weapons to the Hotel de Ville. And in order to insure obedience of this order our police searched every home where inhabitants were suspected of having retained their weapons.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHARLEROI.

My good friend, Father Larsimont, often spoke to me of what he had seen in Charleroi at the end of that fateful August 1914. I have taken down his testimony because of its interest and unquestionable authority, and will quote his own words.

During the first days of the war, the resistance of Liege had produced enthusiasm all over Belgium, and everybody was speaking of the exploits of the heroic troops who had stopped the first advance of the Germans.

By and by, however, unrest took the place of enthusiasm. The help that our allies had promised to send us did not arrive as soon as we had expected. On August 12th, the rumor was circulated that Liege had been taken, that the Belgian army was retreating towards Louvain and Antwerp, and that the Germans

were approaching Namur. On the 15th of August the French had succeeded in coming to Dinant and won there a brilliant victory. Five more days of increasing uncertainty followed. News about the German advance and the French movements were contradictory. On August 19th and 20th Charleroi applauded relatively important groups of French soldiers who took position around the city. In the afternoon of the 20th a first patrol of Uhlans was made prisoner on the Grand Place of the city, but notwithstanding this fact, most of the inhabitants believed that the German army had not passed Namur, about 25 miles to the east of Charleroi, and that the Uhlans were only a small patrol which had got lost during the preceding night. The Belgian newspapers had probably received the order not to inform the public about the prevailing condition, in order not to scare the population. On Friday, August 21st, we read in the last editions of the newspapers that there was no reason to be alarmed, and that the situation was good. But open columns in those newspapers indicated the hand of the censor and gave us pessimistic feelings, which

increased considerably when the sound of the cannon made itself heard in the distance. That same evening we saw the French, who had taken position in our suburb of Montigny-sur-Sambre (East of Charleroi) retire towards, the South, and during the night other soldiers passed by. They were returning from the battle line, exhausted, but they barely were allowed to rest for five minutes. They told us that the Germans were coming in numbers and that the French were taking up more favorable positions for the next day. Most of them eventually occupied positions upon the southern shores of the Sambre, placing by so doing the valley of the Sambre between them and the enemy.

It was during the same night that the German army covered a distance of about 25 miles and enveloped the French army in the triangle Dinant, Namur, Charleroi, called the Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse. Next morning, Saturday 22nd, at 3 o'clock, the sound of the cannons unexpectedly rumbled very near by. It was the beginning of the fighting to the west of Charleroi and the east of Chatelet. Towards 9 o'clock in the morning the French

evacuated the city of Charleroi; there was not much fighting in the city of Charleroi itself, and only a few losses on either side.

The Germans immediately took possession of the houses on both sides of the boulevard and the main street of the "Ville Haute". They claimed that the reason for doing so was to protect themselves against the danger of the francs-tireurs.

By eleven o'clock the French had evacuated the position of Chatelet east of the suburb. I could follow the movements of both armies from the summit of a little hill formed by the refuse of one of our coal quarries, and watched the last French troops placed at Montigny-sur-Sambre retire towards noon in the direction of the south and take position in woods covering the hills of the right shore of the Sambre. From that point the advance of the Germans could easily be observed. As the shooting had temporarily ceased, I hurried home.

At half past one that afternoon, I could see from the windows of my house, located in a small, deserted street, the first Germans descending towards the river Sambre through the

principal street. This was the order of their columns:

- 1) Cyclists at a slow pace, the rifle held under the arm;
- 2) Infantry, rows distanced about 10 meters from each other with their rifles ready to fire.
- 3) A group of about a hundred civilian prisoners, all men;
- 4) Three or four infantry companies;
- 5) Automobiles of which several were pulled by horses (these automobiles did not belong to the German army);
- 6) Field artillery of different caliber;
- 7) Another group of about 300 prisoners kept together by a long rope held by those forming the ends of the group;
- 8) The rest of the army corps, infantry, cavalry, artillery, munition, and interminable convoys of provisions, and finally ambulances.

A part of the infantry stopped on the shores of the Sambre and all along the principal street. They piled their guns, deposited their

equipment, and by and by the street was filled with soldiers, some sitting, some lying down, inspecting the houses or going for water.

The inhabitants at first did not leave their dwellings, but seeing that the soldiers were calm, they gradually came out to offer them water, soap, towels, cigars, bread, butter etc. The soldiers accepted with thanks and advised our people to remain inside and not to leave their houses, giving the reason that there was not much good to be expected from the soldiers who were to follow them.

In the meantime, I chose as an observation post the tower of the church dominating the valley, so as to be able to see when and how the battle would start, if the last French soldiers intended to defend the passage of the Sambre.

Up to 5 o'clock in the afternoon not a single shot came from the woods where I expected the French to be ready for action. A few bullets were sent by the Germans without answer from the French side. Meanwhile a German aeroplane was circling above the town.

The reason why the French waited to open

fire on the Germans, as a wounded French soldier told me later, was the presence of Belgian civilians at the head of the German column, but suddenly I heard the rattle of the French guns. The Germans who at that time were moving forwards pointed their cannons and machine guns toward the sound. I returned home through the old cemetery that surrounds the church and leads to my garden, creeping over the ground, because the walls forming the fence around the cemetery are very low, and bullets coming from all directions were whistling through the air. In the main street, opposite my house, groups of Germans, continued singing the "Wacht am Rhein" which they had started some time before by order of one of the officers.

The rhythm of song mixed with the thunder of the cannon and the rattle of machine guns was impressing, notwithstanding the painful surprise it caused us, but soon I saw soldiers running to hide themselves behind walls, in corners or in the opening of doors as French bullets came in their direction.

The panic did not last long. A whistle signal, and the men ran for their arms and

baggage. I heard the rattling of the guns, and then through the windows of a house I noticed the sinister flames of a fire! Our chastisement was beginning.

Seeing their men fall, and not knowing where the bullets came from, the Germans pretended that the shots had been fired from windows and that we were hiding French soldiers in our houses. They set all the buildings of the town afire, and started shooting in all directions through windows and doors.

Beginning with the stores on the Grand Place, they broke the windows with chairs or the butts of their guns, and almost immediately fire broke out. The inhabitants took refuge in the cellars, and when their dwelling was set afire they tried to escape through the back yards. There seemed no end to the incessant stream of German soldiers, and each fresh company which arrived continued the work of destruction begun by its predecessors, causing new fires as they passed by.

Towards 8 o'clock, it was getting dark, and the incendiary work could be better seen by the light of the flames. Horses 'drawing

munition wagons galloped through the narrow streets where the heat caused by the fires was more intense. By half past ten o'clock I saw another group of German soldiers accompanied by a new group of prisoners, and amongst them were priests, women and children. These hostages did not go far; they were placed upon the two bridges used by the Germans for crossing the Sambre between Montigny and Couillet.

These same priests, women and children were later compelled to go to Somzee where the next morning, Sunday, the French fought a hard battle. Amongst them were four of our Brothers of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle. They suffered intensely from the insults and beatings, especially their director, Brother Merantius who was 64 years old. With the other prisoners he had to clear the road of the heavy rocks and stones accumulated there by the French. A soldier struck him several times with a stick, because he did not work fast enough. Another Brother's frock was pulled off and taken away. All this time, bullets were whistling around in such quantities that some Germans of kinder disposition ad-

vised the prisoners to lay down in order to escape sure death.

All night the German army continued marching through the town. Sometimes a half hour elapsed before another army arrived. Inasmuch as I was separated by the width of a narrow street only from the convent of Ste. Marie, I decided to see the sisters and tell them to bring water up stairs on the side where the fire was spreading, with the object of throwing that water upon the roof of the adjoining dwelling which was much lower than the roof of the convent. I found the poor sisters assembled in their front corridor, all terrified. The Sister Superior had taken the Holy Sacrament with her, the cibory was placed in a case which she carried, and they all were preparing to escape in the opposite direction of the streets to where the Germans were passing in case the fire should spread to the convent.

The orphans, assembled there a few days before from another convent, had taken refuge in the cellars so as not to be exposed to the bullets. I endeavored to console them. The Holy Sacrament was transported to the cellar,

and the water buckets were filled. We succeeded in stopping the fire before it reached the convent.

Dr. Dutriex, who lived quite near the convent, and who had been called upon during the night by the Germans to care for their wounded, pleaded with the officers not to set fire to the houses of the street where he lived. Thanks to his intervention the incendiary work in the neighborhood came to an end.

Between the convent and my own home, a distance of about 70 yards, I had not seen any German soldiers. Therefore, I decided at 6 o'clock on Sunday morning to return and say mass in the chapel of the convent; nobody could be expected in church that day.

After mass, on my return home, I inspected the narrow street for fear that soldiers might be there as they were still marching through the principal street. I detected nothing and proceeded cautiously. I had only to cross the street, and considered myself out of danger when, at the moment I left the wall of the convent, a soldier appeared in front of me and held the muzzle of his rifle against my breast, exclaiming "Stop!" Immediately I told him

there was no reason for him to shoot. He ordered me to accompany him, and I was led before a group of officers able to speak French. I observed then that the "Grand Place" was filled with newly arrived German soldiers. It was another army corps taking hostages before advancing. I expressed my surprise at such action. They admitted that it was abnormal, but claimed to have received the order to do so. These officers were relatively polite with the exception of one of them who obstinately insisted in keeping me and held me by the arm. I was allowed to return home and to get my hat and clothing. Four soldiers escorted me, and my sister was compelled to hand the requested objects—they did not let me go inside. It was a very painful moment. What was going to happen next?

I was directed on the main street to an officer of high rank who asked me in French: "Are you the priest of this locality?" I answered in the affirmative. "Sir", he said, "What we have to do is very regrettable, but you allowed a war of francs-tireurs to be made against us!" "I beg your pardon," I replied, "I told the civilians not to shoot,

the authorities placed posters with the same orders, and the newspapers have reproduced these orders."

"Your influence has been very important!"

"I certainly have not the influence you imagine, and I can assure you that the only shots fired came from French soldiers posted on Couillet heights, and not from civilians."

"You lie," exclaimed the officer, "It was your damned civilians, and we are going to knock their houses down over their heads."

It was impossible to argue with this brute, so I merely asked him if I could hope to be set at liberty. He ordered me to follow the soldiers, and I was led away from the artillery and ammunition column towards a place where all prisoners were concentrated. I walked through a crowd of soldiers who insulted me, pointing at their wounded comrades, at the bandages on arms or head, exclaiming that I was responsible. A few moments later, close to where I was standing, three of my companions, found in the cellar of Vandervelde's house, were shot: DeVos, Merkeman and Vandevelde. The reason for this execution was the finding of a revolver

in a room of the house.

An officer, speaking the French language very fluently, asked me if the authorities had requested the surrender of all arms by the population. I informed him that the Civil Guard had been disarmed two days before, but that the sudden and unexpected arrival of the German troops had prevented all the civilians complying with the order given before. He also asked me if I could designate houses where arms were still to be found. I told him that I could not, as I did not know who possessed arms. I added that it was very hard for us to be treated as we were, inasmuch as we did not have any hatred against Germany before the war, and furthermore that the large steel plants of the Sambre and Moselle, where 5000 of our people were working are German. He answered: "I also feel sorry, sir, because I left many friends in Belgium! But the civilians have fired."

I pointed out that the civilians proved their kindness for the German soldiers during Saturday afternoon, but he answered that they acted so in order to gain the confidence of the soldiers and to stab them in the back later

on. I think that this man meant what he said.

The officer did not know whether I was to be set at liberty or not, but during this conversation, shooting was heard behind the house where I was standing. It was the execution of unfortunate civilians accused of having shot at the German soldiers. We found about, 40 bodies aligned on this spot; seven of them had been shot under the very eyes of their wives who on bended knees had vainly implored for pity on behalf of their husbands.

Most of my companions and myself had been captured without having eaten or drunk, and, as a result of the emotions we had gone through, we felt very thirsty. A few soldiers had compassion and gave us a bottle filled with water which we passed one to another. One soldier let the hostages partake of the wine which filled his gourd, others offered chairs to the grayhaired prisoners pending our departure. Two men were released; the one for the sake of his young son who spoke German and implored pity for his father; the other one, because his little daughter, about ten years old, did not want to be separated from her father.

We had been made prisoners by the 73rd Infantry regiment. About one hour later, an officer appeared who gave the signal to depart to the group of nearly one hundred persons to which I belonged. The order was given in French: "Forward! and he who tries to escape will be shot!"

We descended towards the Sambre, passing in the midst of the soldiers and the ammunition wagons. Every now and then threatening remarks were addressed to us or a fist or whip shaken at us. In front of the hospital I noticed that doors and windows had been broken, and the window panes pierced by bullets.

Marching over the Grand Place, I saw to my left, seated upon arm chairs and smoking cigars, a group of officers, amongst whom the one who had questioned me after my arrest. I bowed and he answered by bowing and laughing. Further down I saw here and there bodies of dead horses in puddles of blood, corpses of civilians piled up and covered with yellow woolen bed covers stolen from the inhabitants; broken bottles, groceries, bones, straw, hay, smashed furniture,

all lying pell mell in the street. On our left several houses were still burning, and to make the picture complete, a lone soldier standing in front of the door of a pillaged house played the accordion as we passed. Behind the hills bordering the Sambre the cannons' voices once more resounded. It was an infernal spectacle.

When we arrived close to the bridge spanning the Sambre, I met a group of women ascending the main street in opposite direction, composed of eight sisters of Ste. Marie and four other women, amongst them my sister. They were returning from the same bridge where during the night the Germans had placed women and children, so as to prevent the French destroying the bridge. After my capture, the sisters' convent was invaded by German soldiers who got in through the back door which they had broken to splinters. They ordered everybody outside, and started a so called search for hidden civilians. The little orphans were standing on the street, trembling and crying. A soldier told the sister to have the children stop their cries as it disturbed his officers. Luck-

ily the little ones were hushed before the outraged officers could stop their cries.

After the convent had been thoroughly searched, my sister asked a soldier whether the sisters could now return to their convent. The soldier answered in the affirmative; but at the very moment when the sisters reached the door, a young lieutenant came running to them and said in French: "We want six sisters!" and addressing my sister, "you also!" She first refused and finally said that she was not dressed for a long journey. "Go and dress yourself!" replied the officer and he made a sign to a nearby soldier who, taking his gun from his shoulder and covering my sister with it, followed her in the house. Then she had to join the nuns, and the whole group was led to the bridge.

As I was going to cross the Sambre, a soldier stationed by the bridge took me rudely by the arm (I was the last one to the left of a row of five hostages) and, pulling me out of the ranks, he gave me a violent punch in the face, calling me "schwein" (pig). We had to walk ahead of the soldiers until we arrived in the village of Loveral,

at the spot where the street de Gilly crosses the road to Philippeville. After a halt of 20 minutes we had to return, in rows of four towards the Sambre at Couillet. All along the road, soldiers at rest or marching sang "Die Wacht am Rhein". More soldiers insulted me, showing me their clinched fist or their gun. Arrived at Couillet, a petty officer struck me on the head with a whip while exclaiming; "Ah! a priest!", and a few steps further an artillery officer, when he saw me come, began swinging his sword and tried to hit me in the back. Luckily a sudden movement of the crowd placed some of the soldiers between me and the officer, who was prevented from carrying out his intention.

On the other side of the road I saw soldiers, amusing themselves by slightly stabbing with their bayonets my companions in the back as they passed. I also noticed a drunken petty officer striking with the fists or kicking one of my fellow prisoners for the only reason that he did not understand a question put in German, and answered: "No, I did nothing!" Other soldiers fi-

nally answered in his stead by exclaiming "ja! ja!" This brought an end to the maltreatment.

We were drawn up in front of some houses where fire was still smouldering, and in an excessive heat we witnessed the movements of different groups of infantry and ammunition convoys arriving from all directions.

The hostages numbering now more than five hundred, were divided into two groups. The first started towards Charleroi. The unfortunate people had to walk hands up in the air. In the other group, to which I belonged, we were placed in ranks of three and had to walk in the midst of the soldiers on the main road of Philippeville. Before starting the same captain who had told us: "The first one who tries to escape will be shot" called me from the ranks and said to me in French "Mr. Pastor, tell all those men that if we are fired upon in the villages through which we go, all of them will be shot. If nobody shoots at us, tomorrow every one of the hostages will be set at liberty." I returned and transmitted the message. I asked further if I was also to be free. He an-

swered in the affirmative.

We started on our journey. All day long and during the following night, we were oppressed by the fear that somebody might fire at our escort. When passing through the town of Couillet, the soldiers, as they did in Montigny, destroyed the doors with their hatchets, broke the windows with the butt ends of their guns and pillaged the houses. I then noticed that the German soldiers constituting our escort were not the same who had been our guardians at the beginning of our captivity. One of them, of amiable appearance, approached me and speaking very low asked me if I was a Catholic priest. I said I was. Thereupon he told me he was a Catholic also and that six others of his comrades had the same religion. A conversation between us two began. When I left my house I had taken with me a German grammar, and thanks to a dictionary at the end of the book, I was able to make myself understood in German. This man was convinced of the so-called cruelty of the Belgians, and even of the Belgian priests, against the German wounded. He claimed that the

officers were informed rightly. He pointed to a shed to the right of the road, and told me that two of his comrades had been killed there on the previous day by a civilian. I had occasion to visit the spot a few days later, and learned that two Germans had indeed been killed there by a French soldier.

After what seemed a long time we reached a large field where ammunition wagons were packed in the form of a hollow square, we being placed in the middle. As we were completely exhausted the Germans allowed us to lay down on the ground. Here again I was insulted by cavalrymen, who coming close to me looked at me disdainfully, pointing me out to one another, menacing me with their whips and accusing me of having fired upon Germans. Occasionally I answered: "I have done nothing of the kind." This answer having however, the result of exciting their anger I avoided speaking and kept my eyes down. We remained there until 6:30 P. M. Nearby the cannon was still rumbling, but with less intensity.

One of the catholic soldiers who had spoken to me earlier in the day brought me a

bag of biscuits to be distributed amongst my friends, and this did much to give us strength for the next part of our journey.

When we resumed our march, the soldiers were still talking about the cruelty of the civilians. I heard a petty officer, the same who had beaten one of my companions in the morning, say in German to one of the prisoners: "We too are married, we all have a family to support; still the civilians fire upon us; the priests even do so. There is one of them right with us. Tomorrow morning we will get him!"

At the next stop I exhibited before a few soldiers a picture that I had found in my German grammar representing a Christian woman and a child, captives in the anti-theatre of Rome and waiting to be delivered to the wild beasts. On the back of the image was the following inscription in German: "Fortunate will be those who suffer persecution for the sake of Justice, because the kingdom of Heaven is theirs." The soldiers read the text, and silently walked away. A few minutes later one of them returned and told me I was not to be shot, as my hands

had not been bound and as my back was not marked with a cross in chalk.

At ten o'clock we were finally halted and ordered to lie down on the ground in an open spot where sentinels surrounded us. We were warned not to move, but a poor boy of our group, a lad of feeble intellect named De May, tried to escape in the darkness. We heard the loud call to stop, and at the same time three consecutive shots resounded. After the third shot I heard somebody give the order to stop firing. The young man had been shot in the leg, and as the Germans neither attended him nor allowed anyone else to do so he died of hemorrhage.

The captain was furious, and threw himself upon the five nearest hostages, saying in French: "And now all shall be shot." I first thought that he meant us all but I saw the soldiers bring away these five men only. From a distance I gave them the absolution as they disappeared in the darkness. A few minutes later I heard the volley of the execution squad.

We were then removed to a stable, into which we were jostled, the door being se-

cured behind us by a heavy farm wagon pushed against it. This stable was already crowded with people, so that we had to stand, leaning against one another in a suffocating atmosphere while vermin crept over our bodies and faces. Some men were praying, and begged me to hear their confession; others were cursing monotonously. Somebody wanted to open a window, but others opposed it, fearing that the soldiers might fire into the crowd. Others exclaimed: "It will be better to be killed by a shot; we are dying here anyhow." One of our party begged the sentinels to open a window but they replied with the shouted command: "Sleep." Finally at 5:30 the gate was opened, and we rushed upon a few water buckets in the yard of the brewery to quench our thirst.

We were then led to the same spot where we had been put the previous night, and it was there that the officer in charge abruptly told me that I could return home with all the other hostages. Before leaving, however, I called his attention to the fact that several of my companions had been already captured

and released two or three times, and I asked him to give us a passport so that we should not be arrested by the troops which we would undoubtedly encounter. "That is true," he said, "I am going to dictate one", and calling his orderly he dictated a pass and signed it "Von Muller, 73rd regiment." I thanked him and took charge of our group. Five or six times on our way home I had to exhibit the pass to other German army troops, yet we proceeded as swiftly as possible, the younger men helping the elderly who could hardly walk. Some of the soldiers who passed by greeted us with a smile while others sent us angry looks and clinched their fists.

When we neared our homes the mothers and children of those who accompanied me ran out to greet them, and I had to break the news of the executions that had taken place. Apart from the men shot without reason by the Huns several of the older hostages died within a few days as the result of suffering and exposure, while not a few became insane.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LOUVAIN.

Five centuries of labor turned into dust . . . such was the German triumph at Louvain.

It was with a heavy heart that I visited the once gay and quaint city whose library dated from the 12th century and contained more than 250,000 volumes, many of them priceless. Within the city the streets had hardly been cleared of the debris, and at every step the wind would fill my eyes with dust from the heaps of dirt and ashes. The atmosphere was heavy with the stale, sickening odor of burned things.

Laboriously I picked my way down Station street, one of the thoroughfares that had suffered most. After a while I paused to gaze about me at the awful spectacle of devastation. Presently I was approached by a little urchin

who furtively showed me a package of picture postcards which he wanted to sell for fifty centimes. I bought without bargaining.

Hardly had the purchase been consummated when the lad scampered away and I was approached by a man who appeared to be a Belgian laborer. He gave me a quick, searching glance, and then his eyes fell upon the postcards in my hands.

"Hide them," he said in a quick undertone, "unless you wish to get in trouble. You must be a stranger, for such things are forbidden and are only sold clandestinely."

He spoke excellent French, an unusual tongue to hear in Louvain where the language is either Flemish or defective French.

"Yes," I answered, pocketing the cards, "I am an American."

"I thought so," he said. His eyes sparkled and he extended his hand. "We love the Americans from the bottom of our hearts. They have been our good friends in our hour of need. Permit me to thank you."

Despite the rough garb he wore I was convinced by his bearing that he was not what he appeared to be. I felt sure he was not a

laborer but a gentleman in disguise, probably in Louvain on a secret mission.

“Would it be too much,” I ventured, “to ask you to accompany me about Louvain? Have you the time at your disposal?”

He held my gaze for a full moment before he answered.

“I shall accompany you as far as the church of St. Pierre and then leave you. It would be unsafe for both of us to be seen in each other’s company for a longer period. Even as we stand here we are being watched. Without appearing to glance about, take notice how suspiciously we are regarded by passing officers and soldiers.”

We remained where we were for a few moments longer, ostensibly chatting, the while I followed his suggestion. Every officer, every soldier who passed us would give us a searching survey. Some of them even stopped to look back after they had gone a distance beyond where we were standing.

“Come,” said my acquaintance, “we will attract less attention if we walk leisurely.”

“What other quarters of Louvain have suffered as this one has? I asked after we

had gone a short distance.

“The wealthy quarter inhabited by the University professors, the Place du Peuple, the Rue Leopold and the adjacent streets. Then, as you will observe when you reach there, the very heart of the city, round the church of St. Pierre and the neighborhood of the Hotel de Ville suffered horribly.

“Were you here on the fatal night?”

“Yes,” he answered grimly, “that night and ever since. And I hope to be here for the hour of reparation.”

We were nearing the church as my companion struggled for composure.

“Look before you at the ruins of the house opposite the church,” he said in a voice that shook with emotion. “Only one wall standing, the front one, and that full of bullet holes. Do you see the three small crosses at the right? That is the tomb of my wife and two little ones. When the massacre began I went to the assistance of friends who lived at the other end of the town. I thought my loved ones were safe and they died undefended! Oh, God! that I had been with them! You would now see more than three crosses!”

He clenched his fists and had to pause for a moment. After a while he went on with his story.

“The terrible picture of Louvain’s martyrdom will be with me until my hour of death. In groups of six or eight the drunken devils went for eight days, from house to house, breaking in doors, crashing through windows, penetrating into cellars. They blew open safes, carried away furniture, clothes, silverware, provisions—everything they could lay their hands on. I, myself, saw scores of military trucks filled with booty on their way to the station.”

“Is it known how many persons lost their lives in Louvain?” I asked, as we walked along.

“So far as we have been able to ascertain, 210 of our citizens were murdered. I helped to bury many of them. Twenty-four of the victims were women, twelve were octogenarians, and there were scores of little children from a few months to fifteen years of age. You cannot imagine the brutal lust with which many of the murders were committed. All through the night of Friday, August 28th, the

aged Curé of Herent was kept standing in the middle of the street, guarded by soldiers. In the morning he fell to the ground exhausted. Two of the soldiers picked him up, one at his head and the other at his feet, and after swinging him in the air for a few moments they threw him on to a small balustrade, and there they shot him with a bullet through the heart."

My acquaintance shuddered and ceased speaking. After a few minutes he spoke again.

"I must be leaving you now, or both of us will be subjected to annoying questions. You will find that what is left of the church is closed by order of the military authorities. But, if you will go to the sexton, who lives in the first house to the right, and tell him you are an American, he will probably let you in. Good bye and good luck. Above everything, be cautious."

With a hearty handshake and a courteous bow he left me. I followed his directions and made my way to the house he had indicated. A middle-aged man opened the door for me.

"Pardon me, Monsieur," I said to him, "I

am an American and would like to see the interior of St. Pierre. Will you be kind enough to let me in? ”

He examined me critically for a moment.

“ How do I know you are an American? ” he asked suspiciously.

I drew forth my imposing passport and pointed to the engraved insignia at the top. He frowned at it and then frowned at me, but his frown quickly faded into a smile of reassurance. Then he made a hasty survey of the neighborhood.

“ Walk slowly until you reach the side door, and then walk nonchalantly up and down until I come. ”

Twenty minutes later I was inside the church, picking my way amid the ruins of the fallen vault and the melted bells with which the floor was strewn. It was easy to see how the place had been set on fire. In each of the lateral chapels of the great nave a pyre had been made by piling up altars, furniture and pews. Some of these pyres had evidently burned feebly and then flickered out, and thus some of the beautiful woodwork had been saved. The two masterpieces by Bouts “ The

Last Summer " and Martyrdom of St. Erasmus" which hung in one of the aspidal chapels, had escaped the flames but they had been removed to the Hotel de Ville by the military authorities in charge of the town. The steeple and roof had been destroyed beyond repairs. Beyond this there was nothing to see but the smoke-scarred and bullet-pierced walls.

From the church of St. Pierre I turned my steps toward other devastated sections of the city. One by one I visited the ruins of other famous buildings that had fallen before the brutal advance of the Hun—the Halls of the University, the Palais de Justice, the Académie des Beaux-Arts, the theatre and the Ecole Commerciale et Consulaire of the University. The Library of the University was nothing but a heap of formless debris. Not a single book, not even one manuscript had been saved. With it had perished the gallery of busts, the priceless collection of portraits by masters and the precious archives.

Later I went to the American College of Louvain, founded by two American bishops for the purpose of educating young Americans

in the customs and languages of the old world and of training European students for the American field. It was late afternoon, and I sat with the Rector, Monseigneur De Becker, in the garden of the college, listening to the distant canon.

My companion was very thoughtful. His features were contracted, and he would brush his forehead from time to time, as if to dispel some troublesome thought. After a period of silence he fell to musing aloud.

“ Ah! ” he sighed, “ what evil days have come upon us. We were so happy here with our boys—our children from the four quarters of the earth. How popular were the German seminarists from the Rhine country! They seemed to love their Alma Mater so tenderly, and every summer they would come to visit us, and what splendid times we had together. I confess that I was partial to them. Does not German blood flow through my veins? But now I cannot bear the sight of them, even though they are my brothers. How we have suffered at the hands of the Germans! Louvain will never welcome them again, never!

I did not venture to speak, and for a long

time we sat silent, each busy with his own thoughts. After a while Judge de Becker, brother of my companion, came and joined us. His home had been totally destroyed in the invasion, and most of his family had fled to Switzerland for refuge, but he and his youngest daughter, Juliette, had elected to remain behind and they were making their home with Monseigneur.

“Even today,” said Monseigneur, as his brother sat down beside us, “there are times when everything seems hazy, unreal, nothing but a horrible nightmare. I feel that I must awake and find it all a dream.”

“Did the catastrophe come unexpectedly,” I asked, “or did you know that trouble was impending?”

“It was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky,” interposed the Judge. “I had given hospitality to the Commander of the first contingent of German troops to arrive in Louvain. He told me many times how greatly he admired the restraint of our citizens.

“The Germans entered Louvain first on Wednesday, August 19th. The population was peaceful, the communal authorities very

courteous. The German military authorities made a number of regulations at once—and they were promptly obeyed—first, that the people should be inside their homes before eight o'clock in the evening; secondly that all doors be left open and all windows lighted up; thirdly, that all weapons, munitions and gasoline be deposited in the Hotel de Ville, and, finally, that inhabitants be ready to lodge and feed in each home a number of soldiers and officers.

“Everything went well until Tuesday, August 25th. It was a little after eight in the evening and our citizens, complying with the military order, had retired to their homes, when a brisk fusilade was heard in the direction of the Rue de la Station and Porte de Bruxelles.

“I opened a window and looked out. The sound grew nearer and nearer, and soon bullets were whistling in the garden below. Then the rattle of machine-guns was added to the inferno of noises. I closed the window and joined a number of my neighbors who had sought refuge in the cellar.

“At dawn I crept upstairs. The town was in flames, and I could see that my own house

was doomed by the conflagration. I summoned my family, and we started for the American College which seemed to be outside the path of the fire.

“People were fleeing in all directions. Some were carrying bundles, hurrying along in silence. Others were screaming aloud, their hands raised high, beating the air, imploring help. Sick women were being carried to safety on carts drawn by dogs. Children separated from their parents were running in all directions, calling aloud for their mothers and fathers.

“Such cruelty as was visited upon us that night—and for the week following. It was all so horrible and so unmerited. Our citizens had done nothing. They were a peaceful, law-abiding lot. Why, in their desire to rid themselves of any incriminating weapons they had taken all sorts of useless and antique articles to the Hotel de Ville—razors and other things which even the Germans did not classify as weapons. And what was their reward? Murder, torture, pillage, incendiarism. The German had to show his power.”

“And you, Monseigneur,” I said when the Judge ceased speaking “how did it fare with you?”

“What I suffered,” was his answer, “forty thousand of my fellow citizens suffered—nay, some suffered more. Instead of complaining, I should be thankful to God that my life was spared. But it was so horrible that one cannot rid one’s mind of the memory.

“On that fateful Wednesday night I was restless and could not retire. When I saw the glare of the burning houses from my window I went to the roof to get a better view of the town. House after house was breaking into flames, others which had been burning for some time were collapsing. I remained on the roof until two o’clock in the morning, when the first flames darted through the roof of the Library.

“On Thursday morning, August 27th at nine o’clock, an order was promulgated throughout the town instructing the inhabitants to flee, as Louvain was to be bombarded. Old women and men, women in delicate condition, priests and nuns, people belonging to every stratum of society, began to crowd the

streets, many of them carrying bundles of their most cherished belongings.

“ Brutal German soldiers drove groups of people in different directions. More than ten thousand men, women and children were driven as far as Tourlemont, eighteen kilometres from Louvain, without a moment for rest or food along the way. Worse still, they were exposed to all sorts of ignominies. Those in the vanguard were compelled to raise their arms or bend their knees at the passage of German officers.

“ Others were driven to Bruxelles, and from there sent to Germany as prisoners. We have since heard from hundreds of them—and such tales of suffering as they have written! They were kept out in the open many nights in pouring rain, shown to the populace in open carts in the German cities through which they had to pass, hooted at and spat upon.

“ And in spite of all that Louvain was not bombarded at all. The Germans ordered it evacuated so that they could pillage it unhampered. That was the purpose of their order, a purpose which they began to put into execution almost at the moment our



An interesting picture of Edith Cavell taken a few days before the tragic events which ended in her execution.



people were leaving their homes.

“ I was with the contingent which was ordered to move in the direction of Tervueren. Many of my fellow-exiles were cripples and invalids who had to be transported in wheelbarrows. Many were children, of all ages; there were aristocrats and peasants, ecclesiastics and nuns. What a heart-breaking journey! Many of us passed ruined houses where only a few days before our friends had entertained us. The many villages that fringed the road were in ruins. Corpses of men and animals were on every side; the air was horrible with the odor of burned flesh.

“ When some of the old or feeble members of the contingent lagged behind they were prodded with the bayonet and ordered to walk faster. Two men, carrying a young woman who had given birth to a child that morning, attempted to pass ahead in their haste to bring her to some shelter before she perished from exposure. They were pushed back with brutal violence by soldiers who shouted “ Lumpschweinehunde ” (foolish pig dogs) at them.

“ Priests were the particular objects of abuse, and vilest abuse was hurled at us.

We certainly had been given into the custody of the dregs of the German army. Some of the officers joined in the abuse, others looked ashamed and half apologetic.

“To add to the terror of the situation we were constantly threatened with death. At the outskirts of the village of Tervueren the priests were singled out and stopped, while the rest of our comrades were ordered to continue their journey toward Bruxelles. That was noon of Thursday, August 27th. There were about 150 churchmen in our party, including the Rector and Vice-Rectors of the University. We were driven into an enclosed field and twenty-six priests, of whom I was one, were ordered to line up against a fence. We thought our last hour had come; and we confessed to each other and gave each other absolution.

“After some minutes had passed, minutes which seemed to drag into eternity, we were informed that we were taken as hostages and would not be released until the end of the war. We were then driven across a field to a spot within a few hundred yards of a wood, where we were drawn up in rows.

I stepped out of line and made an effort to regain my liberty by stating who I was and my connection with an American institution. I had scarcely uttered a sound before an officer stopped me."

"Silence!" he roared. "This is no time for explanations."

"But I am Rector of the American College," I protested.

"I don't care who you are," he shouted, turning on his heel and walking away.

"It was at that moment that Father Eugene Dupiereux, a young Jesuit, was led toward us between soldiers with fixed bayonets and followed by two officers. His clasped hands held his crucifix and rosary and by the movement of his lips we could tell that he was praying. The procession halted a few yards from where we were lined up."

"Which one of you can speak German?" asked one of the officers.

"Father Schill, a native of Luxemburg, stepped forward."

"Read this," commanded the officer, producing a scrap of paper, "read it and translate it into German. If you omit or add a

single word you will be shot.”

“The paper bore a freshly made entry which Father Dupiereux had intended for his diary but which, in a moment of thoughtlessness, he had placed in his pocket. It had been discovered when he was searched.

“I shall never forget the agonized expression of Father Schill when he glanced at that piece of paper. We all suffered with him as he read it. I cannot repeat its exact wording but in substance it was something like this:

“ ‘At the beginning of the war we laughed at stories of German atrocities. Now we know how the Germans have acted at Louvain we know that the other stories were true. After the burning of the Library and University, the barbarians can no longer utter a word of condemnation against Khalif Omar for burning the Library at Alexandria. And all in the name of German kultur! ’ ”

“Enough!” shouted the German officer.  
“That means death!”

“Father Dupiereux did not betray the slightest trace of fear or emotion. He asked

for permission to confess, which was granted, but not without churlish grumbling. A priest stepped forward and the young Jesuit knelt at his feet . . .

“What a scene! The sky was yellow, the daylight sickly. The sun seemed to have gone to sleep forever, or else to have hidden itself in shame at what was transpiring. When Father Dupiereux had received absolution he arose and shook hands with his confessor, and when he was ordered to move toward the nearby wood he advanced alone, his step steady and his countenance calm.

“We were commanded to face about, so that we could witness the execution. My body did not seem to want to turn; my mind rebelled at directing it. And if I suffered, what do you think must have been the emotions of sixteen of Father Dupiereux’s fellow students, who were in our party, and of his twin brother Father Robert Dupiereux! . . .

“When thirty yards or so from us the young martyr—he was only twenty-three—was ordered to halt. Four soldiers came from the rear and lined up about ten yards in front of us, their guns pointed at their victim.

A non-commissioned officer gave the order to fire . . .

“ After several minutes one of Father Dupiereux’s arms was still moving, clutching the air. Finally one of the officers walked over to his prostrate body and despatched him by firing a bullet into his brain. He was buried on the spot. Poor, poor, boy! ”

Monseigneur De Becker’s frame shook with emotion as he buried his head in his hands. After a pause he looked up and resumed his narrative.

“ After that we were loaded into open carts and driven to Bruxelles. I finally managed to get in touch with Mr. Whitlock, the American Minister, who called upon the German authorities at once and had me released along with several others. He was kindness itself. He took me back to the College in his automobile, and in order to give me prestige in the eyes of the military authorities, he personally came to see me several times. Since then the American flag has floated unmolested from our building and we have not been disturbed. But if America should declare war against Germany, God alone knows what other tortures are ahead of us! ”

## CHAPTER X.

### CARDINAL MERCIER.

I met His Eminence Cardinal Mercier for the first time in the summer of 1915. It was at his official residence in Bruxelles, a palace of comparatively modern construction and of no particular architectural interest. It is large, rather dark, and the waiting-room into which I was introduced was comfortably but simply furnished. A few good engravings of Rome were on the walls, while on a small stand stood a gothic Madonna. At one end of the room an old triptych, half opened, occupied the centre of a marble table above which hung a narrow mirror of pure Louis XVI period.

About a dozen persons were in the waiting-room when I entered, all of them there, like myself, to see the Cardinal by appointment. In the party were two or three nuns, an aged priest, four Belgian gentlemen, each dressed

in black, his top-hat resting on his knee, a lady, who, like the four men, evidently belonged to the aristocracy, two peasants in rough, blue smocks, and a large shapeless, middle-aged woman with a much-worn shawl covering her head and shoulders.

The Cardinal's visitors, I found, were received without preference. Each one was admitted in his turn. An aged lay brother would open a door at intervals and announce that His Eminence was ready to receive the next caller. Passing through the door and following your escort you were led to the second floor, where the Cardinal received you in his study, a small room in the middle of a suite. A door to the right led into his personal chambers, another to the left led into his private library. The entire apartment was chastely furnished, its appointments of austere simplicity. The Cardinal's portrait, by Janssens, his favorite, as he told me himself, hung in a conspicuous place in the library.

When it came my turn to be received I followed my escort upstairs where His Eminence, with both hands outstretched, stood waiting for me at his study door, his face inex-

pressibly sad, yet illumined with a smile of sympathy. The Cardinal was sixty-four years old when I met him. His tall frame was gaunt, his shoulders slightly stooped, his broad forehead slightly receding, his gaze benevolent and paternal. He looked exactly what the world knew him to be, the ascetic churchman, the scholarly philosopher, the uncompromising defender of Justice.

Here is a blending of the personal knowledge and popular estimate of Cardinal Mercier gathered during my various visits in Belgium: With his friends he is as simple and meek as a child, always seemingly unconscious of the honors which are his not alone through the exalted position to which the Church has called him, but which have also accrued to him through achievements in the world of learning. But, on the other hand, he has proved himself a tower of strength, as unbending as Truth itself, when he finds it necessary to denounce abuse, to condemn injustice. Then he knows no fear; then his courage is as steadfast as that of the early Christian martyr.

After a cordial greeting the Cardinal led

the way into his study and bade me to be seated. He told me that he had heard of the work I was doing, and praised my mission very highly. Then the subject evidently uppermost in his mind was presented in a query regarding the opinion of the people of the United States concerning Belgium. He was deeply moved when I told him that Americans of whatever religion were counted among the greatest admirers of Belgium and of himself for the stand he had taken in electing to remain with his people and defend them.

Cardinal Mercier, I soon learned, was profoundly grateful for the splendid work that Herbert Hoover and his assistants were doing in his stricken country.

“It has been the cornucopia of food from your fertile fields,” he said, “the stream of gold from your coffers and the courage and untiring efforts of the men you have sent over here that have kept us from starvation, from sinking into utter dejection, and it has sowed undying gratitude and sentiments of love in the hearts of our people.”

We discussed for some time the work of the Commission for Belgian Relief and other

generalities, and then our conversation turned to the subject of German atrocities.

“Your Eminence,” I asked, “how many priests were actually killed in the invasion of Belgium?”

“Thirteen in my Diocese,” he replied, “and forty in that of Namur.”

“Is there any foundation for the reports that the Germans violated cloistered nuns in Belgium?”

The Cardinal’s brow clouded for a moment as he sat in silence, his head bowed. I could see that I had broached a distressing subject.

“Let us not discuss that topic,” he said finally. “It is too delicate, too disagreeable. Suffice it for me to tell you that there are sisters in our hospitals today in the condition you have alluded to. We have been asked to take their deposition and publish them, but you can readily see the unnecessary pain that would bring to them. Their depositions would have to bear their names, and their publication would be but another burden of sorrow added to that which they are now bearing. I realize that our refusal

in this matter may tend to discredit the reports which the depositions would substantiate, but I am sure that all good people will appreciate the motive that bids us keep silent.''

The conversation again turned to my work, and after a little while I rose to make my departure. Others were waiting to see the Cardinal and I had already consumed much of his valuable time. But he was very anxious to get further details concerning my mission in Belgium, and to learn more about America's attitude toward Belgium's violation. He asked me to return at one o'clock and take lunch with him.

I returned at the appointed hour and joined in His Eminence's meal. Before the war, Cardinal Mercier was known throughout Belgium for the extreme modesty of his table and, with so much hunger and suffering about him, his daily fare had become even more moderate. One needed but to glance at his table to see that he was a true ascete. He told me that he never touched intoxicants, and I learned that although he was tolerant with the habits of others he

never ceased advocating teetotalism among his priests and parishioners. I was surprised, therefore, when I observed a decanter of wine upon the table.

“Do you wish a glass of wine?” he asked.

Though I am not a total abstainer I refused out of deference to his convictions. The same brother who had earlier escorted the Cardinal's callers to his study was in attendance at the table. There was a total absence of formality; for the time being we were just two Churchmen dining together, discussing the subjects that lay nearest to our hearts.

We talked again of the outrages perpetrated upon the Belgian people, and while the Cardinal expatiated upon certain particulars I watched closely to see if I could observe any trace of rancor against the oppressors. Never once did a note of hatred creep into his voice, never once did a shadow of enmity cross his countenance, though he was righteously indignant in his denunciation of German cruelty. At times he spoke with a heat of resentment, but even then there

rang through his words the tone of a holy, measured indignation. While I was in his presence I felt the strong, beautiful radiance of his soul envelop me, and for a long period after I left him I felt uplifted and ennobled.

I saw and talked with His Eminence on a great many occasions afterward, but I always visited him guardedly—sometimes clandestinely—because I could not tell when I might fall under suspicion of the secret service, and I did not want my visits to add to his already heavy burden of sorrow.

It was my good fortune to be present on July 21st, 1916, Belgium's Independence Day, in the Cathedral of Saint Gudule when Cardinal Mercier preached one of the finest and bravest sermons that ever came from human lips. Out of those troubled days he comes in my memory a giant figure. I did not know then, that later he was to make me his courier to President Wilson. But of that in proper time.

As he stood in the pulpit that day, tall, gaunt and austere, he seemed the veritable symbol of bleeding Belgium, and when he spoke he was a prophet of old, lamenting

over the ruins of his country's devastated cities. In words that echoed through the silent building he told the people that although they were temporarily in the grasp of a foreign power they owed that power neither love, nor respect nor obedience. "The only legitimate authority in Belgium today," he thundered, "is the King and the elected representatives of the nation."

The people sat spell-bound until the absolution, and then the Brabanconne peeled forth defiantly. As the last note died away, a scene occurred which I shall never forget. The people had come to church without any previous plans for demonstration. They had been told to be prudent, but the pent-up feelings of months and years were swept away by a trivial incident. A voice, rather timidly, almost apologetically, cried out, in the stillness that followed the conclusion of the Brabanconne, the magic words, "Vive le Roi!" There was a moment which seemed like the eternity of intense painful silence. Then a shout like the sound of a thousand cataracts filled the immense edifice, and it was "Vive le Roi!" "Vive le Reine!"

“Vivent les Princes!” Vive la Belgique!”  
“Vive L’Armée!” and “-Vive le Cardinal!”

Thousands of arms were striking the air, agitating hats and handkerchiefs. Strangers embraced each other. Some people were laughing. Others were crying. In vain did the organ try to drown the mighty sound; it only increased in volume and the loud Hosannahs were repeated over and over again. “Long live the King!” “Long live the Queen!” “Long live the Princes!” “Long live the army!” “Long live the Cardinal!”

There were hundreds of German soldiers and secret service men who had gone there for the purpose of preventing exactly such a demonstration, but not one of them dared to interfere; and I admired their prudence indeed, because had there been the least interference while the people were in such temper, it would have meant a catastrophe. Inside of half an hour the cannon would have been rolling throughout the city, its stately buildings would have been pounded to ruins,

and thousands of human lives would have been lost.

After a while the people streamed out, and lined up the streets solidly between the Cathedral and Place Rogier. When the Cardinal appeared on the threshold again, the same frantic salutations were given. It was only after his automobile disappeared beyond the station that a platoon of soldiers charged and made a few arrests. But the people dispersed quietly. They had had their day and were not ill-humored. The next day the city was fined a million francs for the demonstration, and all the citizens of Bruxelles for three months had to be inside their homes at eight o'clock in the evening, under pain of fine and imprisonment.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DEPORTATIONS.

I paid a visit to His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, during the worst period of the deportations. He had just returned from a three days visit of mercy and consolation at Wavre, Court St. Etienne, Nivelles, Tubize, Braine, l'Allend and other towns that had fallen victims to one of the worst forms of Hun atrocity. He was bowed with sadness, but in his eyes there flashed the fire of holy indignation.

“ These past few weeks have brought the supreme sorrow of my life,” he said, “ What sights have I not seen! I found the husband and father gone from almost every home I visited—the children orphaned, the wife haggard from ceaseless weeping. The atmosphere of hopelessness was in every cottage I entered; one might have fancied that some

frightful plague had swept over the land, leaving a corpse in every home."

"Your Eminence, is there any hope that Germany may abandon these iniquitous proceedings?" I asked.

"I fear not," he answered. "Our Holy Father and several neutral states have already addressed strong protests to Berlin, but to no avail. These deportations constitute a flagrant, deliberate violation of pledges made to me personally by the Government of occupation. After the capitulation of Antwerp, the Governor of that Province, General von Huene, confirmed the oral promise he had previously given to me that there would be no deportations. He addressed a letter to me which was read in all the churches—a letter which stated that our young men should entertain no fear of being sent to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army there or to be employed at forced labor. That statement was read in the churches in October 1914.

"When the first Governor-General, the late Baron Von der Goltz, arrived in Bruxelles, I called upon him, and made a personal plea that he ratify the pledge of General Von

Huene and extend it to the entire country. General Von Huen's promise, of course, had applied only to the Province of Antwerp.

“The Governor-General took my petition under advisement, and the next day he called upon me and in the presence of two members of his staff and my private secretary, he informed me that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected. When Baron Von Bissing assumed the Governor-Generalship the deportations were begun and I addressed a letter to him reciting the facts I have just related.”

The Cardinal gathered up some documents from his desk and handed me a copy of his letter to Baron Von Bissing and of another letter addressed to Baron Von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department in Bruxelles. The letter to the Governor-General, after recounting the pledges made to His Eminence, said:

“To doubt the authority of such pledges would have been an insult to the persons who had signed them, and I therefore employed all the powers of persuasion I possessed to

dispel the persistent uneasiness of the families concerned.

“But now your Government is tearing away from their homes workers who, through no fault of their own, have been reduced to a state of unemployment. It is violently separating them from their wives and children, and deporting them to a foreign land. A large number of workmen have already met this unhappy fate; more numerous still are those who are menaced with the same violence.

“In the name of the freedom of domicile and the freedom of labor; in the name of the inviolability of family life; in the name of morality, which the policy of deportation would gravely compromise; in the name of the pledges given by the Governor of Antwerp and the Governor General, the immediate representative of the supreme authority in the German empire, I respectfully ask Your Excellency to have the measures of compulsory labor and deportation repealed, and to restore to their hearths those Belgian workmen who have been already deported.

“Your Excellency will appreciate how

heavy would be the weight of my responsibility towards families if the confidence which they have reposed in you through my intervention and on my recommendation were lamentably deceived. I cannot, however, believe that such will be the case."

This letter to the Governor-General was dated October 19, 1916. On the same date His Eminence addressed the following letter to Baron Von der Lancken:

"Sir: I have had the honor of sending His Excellency, Baron Von Bissing, a letter of which I enclose a copy.

"Repeatedly and even publicly the Governor-General has expressed his intention to reserve a large share of his solicitude for the interests of the occupied territory, and you yourself have often affirmed the wish of the German authorities not to perpetrate for the period of occupation the state of war which existed during its early days. Consequently, I cannot believe that you will put into execution the measures with which your Government threatens the Belgian workmen who have been reduced, through no fault of their own, to a state of unemployment.

“ I hope you will use all your influence with the higher authorities to prevent such a crime.

“ Do not speak to us, I beg of you, of the need of maintaining public order, nor of the burden on public charity. Spare us this bitter irony. You are well aware that public order is not menaced, and that every moral and civil influence would spontaneously cooperate with you if public order were endangered. The unemployed are not a burden on official charity, and it is not from your finances that they derive support.

“ Consider whether it is not to the interest of Germany, as well as to your own, to respect the pledges signed by two high officials of your empire.

“ I feel confident that my petitions to the Governor-General and you will not be misinterpreted or misunderstood, and beg to remain,

Yours respectfully,

D. J. Cardinal Mercier  
Archbishop of Malines

“What answer did the Governor-General make to the representation of Your Eminence?” I asked.

“He had recourse to sophisms,” was the Cardinal’s reply. “He told me that the promises I referred to regarded only men of military age, not the unemployed. He said that the measure was rendered imperative by social and economic conditions due mainly to the policy pursued by England to isolate Germany, and which had gradually extended to Belgium where all factories had had to close down because of lack of raw material caused by the discontinuance of importations. He contended that Belgian workmen would obtain regularly a leave of absence to return home to visit their families, or better still—as he put it!—that they could arrange for their families to join them in Germany. Hundreds of thousands of workmen being idle in Belgium, whereas there was a shortage of labor in Germany, made it the economic duty of his Government, so he said, to employ the idle Belgians on productive work in Germany. He claimed that all of the blame should be put on England who had created such conditions

by her policy of isolation.”

“Is it true,” I asked His Eminence, “that the Germans are taking Belgian men indiscriminately, without regard to their condition or occupation?”

“Alas, it is only too true,” was the reply. “At first only the unemployed were threatened but now they are taking all able-bodied men, hearding them into cattle trains, and sending them God only knows where. One of the reasons advanced by Baron von Bissing in favor of deportation is that by their long idleness our workmen are losing their technical skill. We are told now that the Germans are going to send these men to the quarries and lime kilns of Germany—fine places, indeed, for skilled workmen to find employment that will preserve their skill! Why did the Germans not leave Belgian industry its machinery, its raw materials and the manufactured products which were sent to Germany!”

“Are there very many Belgians who have agreed to work for the Germans?” I inquired.

“Some tens of thousands, unfortunately, but they have done so only under the pressure

of threats, the fear of hunger. But what is that compared with the 400,000 loyal citizens who have chosen poverty and dependence upon the National Relief Committee rather than betray the interests of their unfortunate Fatherland?

“The Germans have paralyzed Belgium—not England. Who invaded our little country, a country that had never done anyone evil? Germany! Who inflicted upon our people death, pillage and devastation? Who, by cold calculation, gradually despoiled us of everything, and by the organization of their economic system absorbs the products of our agriculture and industrial plants? Germany! These deportations are Germany’s supreme injustice. They will result in failure and hatred. Most of the deported Belgians refuse to work; many of them have had to be sent home because of sickness; many of them have died.”

“Is it true,” I asked, “that the invading Government is deporting more than one member of a family?”

“That, too, is true, it grieves me to state. **As** many as four men have been taken out of

some of the families I visited recently. When they arrive in Germany they are poorly fed, and you should read the heart-rending appeals that are reaching their people here. The same plea runs through every message: 'Unless you send us food you will never see us alive again!'

"People flock to me daily, asking for help. Thanks to God and the generosity of your American people I am provided with some means which I use for this and other charitable purposes. Will you not tell good Father Stillemans, of the Belgian Bureau, and his assistant, Father Nys, how grateful we are for the sums that have been sent to us and how much good we are enabled to do with them? Their establishment of the Fund which bears my name, was a veritable Providence. I am deeply indebted to all of those who have contributed to it."

"I have been told by one of your intimates," I said, "that Your Eminence intends to visit the United States after the war. Is this true?"

"Traveling does not agree with me," the Cardinal replied, "and there will be so much

work here for a long period after the war that it was with much reluctance that I consented to the plan you have mentioned. Only the repeated persuasions and pleadings of my friends have caused me to make this decision. I believe they are right, that I should go to your country, and personally express my gratitude and appreciation of the immense services rendered to Belgium by the people of the United States. They have saved us from material and moral starvation by their generous help, their efficient work, their constant encouragement and sympathy. May the good God bless and protect their land."

Their methods of conducting deportations will probably make the Germans hated by the Belgians for generations to come.

I witnessed some of the deportations from Gembloux. All the towns and hamlets within a radius of fifteen miles had been notified that on a certain day they must send all their male inhabitants between the ages of seventeen and fifty-five to Gembloux, each one carrying a small bundle of food and clothing.

The fated day arrives. The little square

in front of the parish church is crowded with people. There are old men and women there, with tears streaming down their withered faces, clinging to their sons as they say good-bye to them; women are wrapped in the embrace of their husbands, and cry out aloud as if their hearts would break; then little children of both sexes group around the parents, not understanding exactly what is the matter, but realizing one thing, that the father is leaving them. The gold of the setting sun is dying out of the waters of the nearby canal, and the Angelus rings out its salutation upon the open air. It is time to depart. There is no way of going to the city except on foot, so they leave in small groups of two, three or half a dozen. In some instances they are accompanied by the younger women or by the elder children, who wish to say good-bye to them on the morrow. Throughout the entire night they are joined by other men coming from scores of villages and towns, going to the same place and for the same purpose. There are no noisy greetings exchanged, only a solemn salutation now and then.

The next morning at nine o'clock the men marked for the deportation are lined up before the Kommandantur in the station of the town, while the relatives are sent to the other end of the square, which is roped off and guarded by soldiers. As each man presents himself, two surgeons standing at the entrance size him up cursorily and superficially. If he appears to be able-bodied and strong, the command is given "Rechts"—to the right. If, instead, he looks weak or sickly, the given order is "Links"—to the left, and he passes into a room, there to be reexamined and possibly to receive his discharge to go home. Everytime that word "Rechts" is shouted a pitiful cry comes from the other end of the square, the cry of a woman who has seen her man, whoever he may be, father, brother, husband, lover, disappear inside the station.

At two o'clock the loud whistle of an engine is heard. The train is waiting for its human freight. And those people, who have been prudent and quiet during the morning, can no longer be restrained, but they rush through the square, in spite of the bayonets—

some of them are hurt in the attempt—and arriving at the building, they run to the railroad tracks. A cry of the infinite weariness of a strong race suddenly plunged from the very heights of prosperity into the depths of abjection rends the air. The men inside the cars are straining their necks looking out through the open windows, trying to steal a last glance of their loved ones.

But their thoughts are not for them, not of them. Nay, they do not even think of themselves. Their supreme thought and greeting are for their bleeding and martyred fatherland, and louder than the whistle of the engine or the rumbling of the wheels, louder than the guttural exclamation of soldiers and attendants, louder even than the pitiful cry of the distracted relatives, arises the cry of the victims, and it comes, as it were, from the very heart of bleeding Belgium. And what is that cry? “Vive la Belgique!”

Nivelles had a male population of 4,000. Of this number approximately 1,700 were deported, and unquestionable records reveal that of these but 550 had been dependent

upon relief organizations for subsistence. The balance were self-supporting or else had independent means. The famous *Ateliers Metallurgiques* are located in Nivelles, and there were many skilled workmen in the neighborhood—coveted prey for the German munition factories. All of these workmen were deported, together with many manufacturers, merchants, painters, farmers and students. One student was asked whether he did not want to go to the Flemish University in Ghent to study, an institution conducted by the Germans, and the professors of which were creatures of the Berlin government. In a spirit of evasion the student answered that he did not know Flemish, the language of the University, and so he was packed off to Germany. I know of one instance where a father of eleven children (M. Gobert, a painter of Nivelles), was deported together with his two eldest sons.

The number of men deported from Tubize totalled in the neighborhood of 2,000 souls. Braine-l'Allend lost 800 of its male citizens. From Tirelemont and neighborhood 1,500 men between the ages of seventeen and fifty-

five were torn from their homes and sent to Germany. These figures are not idle estimates but were substantiated by investigation. As the result of a conservative census it was established that, up to the end of December, 1916, 150,000 men were deported to Germany. No fewer than 20,000 were taken out of the district of Ghent (Flanders) alone. Municipalities that refused to furnish the military authorities with the names of the idle men for the purpose of compiling lists, were heavily fined. In some cases the Burgomasters and Municipal Councillors of these towns suffered personal fines and imprisonment. The city of Bruges was condemned to a fine of 400,000 marks and the Burgomaster was suspended. Of course, it was to be expected that the Germans would turn these refusals of assistance to their own profit. Some German officials actually assumed an air of injury when they told me that in many instances they had been forced to deport men who were not idle, because they were not given any assistance in locating those men who really were idle.

In a proposal as insulting as it was im-

puident some two hundred miners of Saint Ghislain were invited to go to Germany to work for their enemies. Their refusal was unanimous. They were immediately arrested and shipped to Germany, without permission being given them to take leave of their families or procure clothing. When they arrived in Germany they were told that they would have to choose between work and imprisonment. Again they refused to labor for the Hun. As a reward for their patriotism they were cast into jail.

The same noble spirit was displayed by 600 workmen of Lessines (Hainaut), but the punishment meted out to them was infinitely more cruel. They were taken to Germany to swell the ranks of munition workers, but when they arrived there they flatly refused to accept the assignment. "Very well," said the German authorities, "then back to Belgium you shall go." The men were overjoyed at what appeared to be their easy escape from servitude, but upon their arrival in Belgium they were informed that unless they signed a contract, agreeing to work for the Germans voluntarily, they would not be

allowed to return to their homes, not even for a visit. Again they courageously refused, this time not knowing what more frightful fate might await them. They were immediately divided into groups of 100, and sent to the Western front to work in the trenches.

It was with the utmost recklessness that the Germans selected many of their victims for deportation. Among the people I sought on my first Belgian mission was a young man, twenty-four years of age, whose father was a naturalized American citizen. The young man himself had lived in America, had suffered a paralytic stroke as the result of a coal mine accident in Pennsylvania, and shortly before the war broke out had gone to Belgium to recuperate. I was informed by the military authorities that it would be impossible to obtain a passport for him because he was of military age.

On my second voyage I took him money. On the third trip I had both messages and money for him, but when I reached his aunt's home, where he had been staying, I was told that he had been deported to Germany. It was not until then that I learned that in ad-

dition to being paralyzed he was an epileptic. I immediately went to the Politische Abteilung and appealed to the authorities there, Baron von Lancken, Mr. von Moltke and Baron Falkenhausen, to take steps to have him sent back to Belgium. They appeared anxious to aid me, and took the matter up at once with the authorities in Berlin. For months an active correspondence was carried on between officials in the two countries, but apparently it was very difficult to obtain the young man's release. When I was about to leave Bruxelles for the last time, which was after America had declared war, I went to the Politische Abteilung to make a final appeal in his behalf. The authorities showed me letters purporting to be from Germany, in which it was stated that he was soon to be released and permitted to return to Belgium. Whether this promise was kept I do not know. He may have died in Germany. If he did he was one of many deported men—heaven only knows how many—whose lives were offered as a sacrifice to the German god of brutality.

After the fall of Antwerp the German au-

thorities had taken the most solemn engagements that no civilian should be deported to Germany, this being done in order to persuade those who had fled to Holland to return. Some of the refugees accepted these promises, especially as they were guaranteed by the Dutch government, who had taken some sort of responsibility for them. They therefore returned, and two years later, in October and November 1916, they were deported and employed in military work.

It was a flagrant violation of a promise given . . .

Yet another.

The Dutch Government protested against the abuse made of its trust and good will.

The German official papers replied that the engagements made in 1914 were already two years old! and, besides, circumstances had altered. In the "Neue Züricher Nachrichten" (1st December 1916), General von Huene attempted to explain that though he had made promises to safeguard the liberty of the Belgians who trusted to his word, he had, at the same time, made mental reservations by which his promise would not be

binding in the event of military necessity. Considerations of social order and of humanity alone had induced him to take such an engagement. Now that military necessity was above all things important it was no longer valid. But the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" (December 3rd 1916, 2nd edition), the organ of the Chancellor, in its article on von Huene's explanation, gives quite another interpretation. According to this paper, von Huene is no longer bound by his promise because the matter is no longer a military one, it is now merely a question of social interest.

These contradictions would be almost laughable if it were not such a serious subject.

In point of fact, the promise to safeguard the liberty of the Belgians met the same fate as that to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CLANDESTINE PRESS IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM.

In spite of the sufferings which the Belgians in the occupied territory have to bear, they preserve a spirit of patriotism relieved by a keen sense of humor which has to vent itself in a cry of defiance or in a laugh at the invader's expense.

The war has furnished innumerable opportunities to the dramatist, the poet or the satirist of Belgium, and these opportunities have been seized through the clandestine publications which find their way from hand to hand in spite of every effort which the Germans can make for their suppression. The dignity of the exponents of kultur is outraged by this defiance, and the supreme ambition of the German secret service is to discover, and bring before a firing squad, those who help to keep alive a spirit of rebellion against the German rulers.

The best known and most widely read of these publications printed in the occupied territory is "*La Libre Belgique*," of which a front page is reproduced in this book. Its title, translated, is as follows:

"Price per copy: Elastic, from zero to the infinite (dealers will please not exceed that limit).

## LA LIBRE BELGIQUE.

I have faith in our destinies; a country which defends itself earns the respect of all: this country does not die! God will be with us in our just cause.

ALBERT,

King of the Belgians.

(August 4th, 1914.)

Let us accept temporarily the sacrifices imposed on us, and let us wait patiently for the hour of reparation.

A. MAX.

Towards the persons who rule by military force our country, let us have the attentions necessary in the interest of all. Let us respect the rules which they force on us as long as they do not conflict with the liberty of our christian consciences nor with our *patriotic dignity*.

MGR. MERCIER.

Bulletin of Patriotic Propaganda—Regularly Irregular  
Submitting To No Censor.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS	OFFICES AND MANAGEMENT.	ADVERTISING.
<p>Kommandantur-  Bruxelles</p>	<p>Inasmuch as they can be in no perfectly safe place, they are located in an automobile cellar.</p>	<p>Business being nil under the German rule, we have omitted the advertising page, and advise our clients to keep their money for better times.</p>

In an early editorial, *La Libre Belgique* explained its aims and purposes as follows:

"Those to whom this paper is sent should consider it as a proof of the confidence the

editors have in their patriotism and discretion. They will kindly hand it to equally trustworthy friends, who will pass it to others without delay. In this manner a necessarily small number of copies will have a considerable influence upon public opinion in Belgium.

“ Our sole object is to strengthen Belgian patriotism until the hour, as yet unknown but certain, of the deliverance of our noble and glorious little country, victim of Teutonic treachery.

“ There is in Belgium a considerable majority of citizens who are Belgians above everything else. Our paper will very soon have a large circulation.

“ *La Libre Belgique* will be printed one day in one cellar, the next day in another.

“ *La Libre Belgique* will not be like those newspapers which are published and widely distributed with the permission and encouragement of the Germans, and which endeavor to discourage our patriotism. No, “*La Libre Belgique*” will have its home underground and propagate thence like Christianity from the catacombs.

“ It shall live in spite of persecution be-

cause it tells the truth, nothing but the truth, and because there is something stronger than might, stronger than Kultur, stronger than the Germans,—the truth. And Belgium is the land of truth and liberty; Germany is the country of might and of false pride, mother of lying and hypocrisy.”

After the defiant editorials come news of the latest German atrocities, and such encouraging news as may have filtered over the border of the progress of the Allies and of the hopes for early success.

In one number the editors excuse themselves for delayed publication, and at the same time refer to the constant irritation felt by the Belgians at the use of their street-cars by German officers and men:

“A little indulgence, please. Some of our readers have complained about the unpleasant odor of some copies of this paper. They will kindly excuse us, remembering that in war time one cannot always choose one’s traveling companions. *La Libre Belgique* has been compelled to voyage with sour herrings, Limburger cheese and calcium carbide. We beg our readers to have the same indulgence for

*La Libre Belgique* which they are temporarily forced to show towards certain passengers on the street cars.

“ The present number is being issued late. The reason is that we had to reprint a second edition. *La Libre Belgique* met the enemy and had to dive into the water. While trying to escape by swimming, it was drowned.

Requiescat in pace! ”

In August, 1917, on the third anniversary of the war, *La Libre Belgique* published the following editorial:

#### AFTER THREE YEARS!

“ A statement, oh! very brief . . .

On August 4th, 1914, Germania goes to war. The plan is simple: Belgium does not count, Paris taken in six weeks, Russia crushed before winter, England remaining alone, too intelligent not to realize that nothing remains but to capitulate.

WE knocked down that castle of cards! WE! Later, one decided to seize Calais, to cross into England, etc.

There was the YSER! WE again!

The Zeppelins were to destroy London; London has suffered little; the reputation of the Zeppelins has suffered much. Meanwhile one tried to finish off Russia, in a military way at first, without success. One made attempts in the Balkans, one was crushed at Verdun, all in vain. And meanwhile the German people suffered terribly, the new chancellor has admitted it.

They are throwing in their last stake: the submarines! And now in Germany itself one acknowledges that this last weapon is useless. . . . Is it then the end? Yes, it is the end. Already one is attempting friendly advances: one desires no conquest, one wishes only the right to live, etc.

Let us be calm, we are in no hurry at all, *WE, THE ALLIES*. Since America has entered the arena, in good time to make up for the Russian weakening, the account of the Central Empires is settled. A little while longer, and they will be begging for peace. Of course, another winter would be especially hard for us. But in view of the unique importance of the contest we wish, we, the Bel-

gians, to suffer still more if necessary to let Right and Justice triumph more completely, more gloriously.

Let the Allies know it: We do not ask that any thought of our suffering should hasten peace *by a single day!* The future of Europe, the safety of the world, the necessary punishment of a crime against humanity are more important.”

Is it not admirable, that cry of a suffering, starving people who ask to go on suffering and dying rather than to see a premature peace? And what a lesson to the sleek, hypocritical and selfish pacifists of the lands untouched by war!

*La Libre Belgique* is only one of several patriotic sheets published clandestinely by Belgian patriots; others are *Motus*, *La Revue Hebdomadaire*, *Patrie*, *Vérité*, *Vlaamsche Leeuw* (in Dutch), *L'Ame Belge*, etc. The purpose of all centres around the same love of country, of law and of liberty.

One of the clandestine papers in Flemish is *De Vrije Stem*, which calls itself: *Belgian organ for the province of Antwerp, published during the German occupation:—Offices and*

*Editorial Department:* "Hotel des Patriotes," 42 Rue des Bèguines. This address is the nickname and location of the prison into the cells of which have been thrown a great many Belgians arrested for the crime of patriotism.

Besides these various papers published necessarily with "regular irregularity," innumerable pamphlets are secretly printed and mysteriously dropped into letter-boxes, slipped under front-doors and forwarded boldly to the German governor himself. One of these contains the following appeal:

### "COURAGE!

"Belgians, your dignified attitude, your superb protests have at last aroused neutrals. If the foreign press has not reached us for several weeks, it is because of its unanimity in protesting against the cruel wrong done to your liberty by the occupying power. Continue to show to the world the example of a country small in size, but great in spirit and in the endless courage of its children.

"Crushed under the heel of a brutal aggressor, you must continue to oppose Right to

Might. This attitude will win for you the sympathies of every noble heart and the admiration of history.

“ Let no one take any share, *direct* or *indirect*, in the crime of the Teuton.

### PASSIVE RESISTANCE

in all and always, such must be your watch-word!

### LONG LIVE BELGIUM.

Please copy and circulate this leaflet.

Besides the papers and leaflets clandestinely printed in occupied Belgium itself, there is secret distribution of papers or circulars dropped for that purpose by allied aviators. The purpose of these is generally to bring encouragement and to counteract the deceiving German propaganda; sometimes it is to give warning of impending danger. I have seen the following circular dropped over Mons and suburbs:

“ Department of Aviation, No. 2539,  
Section of Bombardment & Information,

IVth Escadrille A. R. P.

“Fearing to make numerous victims among the civilian population in the occupied territories, the Allies have carefully abstained until now from bombarding important buildings, even those of greatest value to the enemy and purposely selected by him for their location in the midst of populous parts of occupied territory.

“ Positive assurance has, however, reached the Allied General Staff that the number of Belgian workmen selling their labor to the enemy is constantly increasing. This gives the enemy great assistance by releasing an equal number of soldiers for the front, and the Allied nations have, therefore, unanimously decided that they will not be swerved in the future by considerations of humanity or sentiment. Whoever sells his services to his own country's enemy, whoever supplies him with money, must be considered in accordance with existing law as a traitor to be dealt with accordingly.

“In consequence, the allied fleet has received orders to act unsparingly, beginning August 1st, against all railways and places offering any advantage to the enemy. The Commander of Aviation intends to destroy by means of heavy bombs all railways, stations, trains, workshops, dock-yards, mills, factories, etc., now being used by the enemy.

“A last appeal is made to the patriotism of all Belgians worthy of the name, so that in the interest of their own lives they abstain from working for the enemy, and from making use of the railways operated by him.”

Allied and neutral papers are smuggled into Belgium and discreetly sold to always eager buyers. One night, I remember, I was sitting in a Bruxelles café, discussing with a friend the plans which he had made for escape into Holland, from whence he hoped to proceed to the Belgian front and join the ranks of his country's defenders. It was late at night, and only a few persons were in the place. A tall, emaciated youth entered the café, glanced about cautiously, caught the eye of the head waiter and received a nod of encouragement.

He then approached our table and ostensibly asked for alms. While he was doing this he slipped copies of *La Libre Belgique*, the *London Times* and *Le Matin* beneath our tablecloth.

“There is good news in these,” he whispered. “Would you like to read them or rent them?”

“What is the charge?” I asked.

“Twelve francs if you want to take them into the gentlemen’s retiring room for a few minutes or fifty francs if you want to take them home. If you want to take them home I will call for them tomorrow morning.”

We elected to take the periodicals into the retiring room and when we repaired there we found that they announced America’s declaration of war against Germany. My friend was jubilant.

“I am more determined than ever to make my escape into Holland,” he said. “This means that we are nearing the end, and I must do my duty before it is too late.”

A little later we bade each other good-bye. That was the last I saw of my courageous friend. I made repeated inquiries in Hol-

land, but I failed to locate him. Either he reached King Albert's heroic little army, or else his charred form was found under the murderous entanglements of the frontier.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FLEMISH AND WALLOONS.

“ ‘Flemish’ and ‘Walloon’ are only Christian names. ‘Belgian’ is our family name.” —Ant. Clesse.

Belgium has no common tongue. The northern part of the country is occupied by the Flemish who speak a Germanic language; in the southern provinces live the Walloons whose language is French. The natural result had always been a friendly rivalry between the two parts of the country, but it had never threatened the existence of the nation.

The possibility, however, of dividing the Belgians in order to more easily rule them appealed to German ingenuity.

During the first few months of the invasion the official notices of the military authorities were printed in French and German. Correspondence was not allowed save when written in

French or German. Flemish was prohibited. Then, the Germans, scenting possibilities of creating trouble between the North and South, began to print their orders in German, French and Flemish. Shortly afterward French disappeared from the official *comuniqués*, and Flemish took its place. German newspapers began to exhibit solicitude for their "Flemish brothers." Motion picture theatres were ordered to publish their programmes in Flemish as well as French. Shopkeepers were commanded to take down their French signs and replace them with placards printed in Flemish.

The German press bubbled over with allusions to the natural affinity between the Flemish and the Germans. Article after article was published citing the natural bonds of history, language, origin and customs that united the two races. In a trial at Tongres a group of Flemish and Walloons were accused of the same offense. The Flemish got off much easier than the Walloons; thus two purposes were served at the same time. The Flemish were being "coaxed" into favoritism for their oppressors, and the Walloons were being "persuaded" to suspect and hate the Flemish.

Could duplicity go further?

Of course the cost of this propaganda was exacted from the Belgians. Germany had no intention of spending any of her own money to accomplish her purpose. By decree of the military authorities, Flanders and Wallonie were split up into two countries, with separate administrations and educational departments for each. Seven millions of Belgian money was requisitioned for this division, and two millions were exacted for the purpose of establishing the University of Ghent.

This university was heralded as the first step to be made toward the emancipation of the Flemish people from the so-called yoke of their French brothers. Professors were recruited from a small body of traitorous Flemish, from Holland and from Germany. Students were offered all sorts of inducements—monetary assistance, white bread, other food which the rest of the people could not procure.

Up to the time America declared war, the Flemish University had proved a fiasco; it boasted of but four students to each professor! So much for that attempt to annihilate the spirit of Belgian patriotism.

These insidious efforts at spreading discord among the Belgians were exposed mercilessly in the clandestine press.

A copy of the "Revue Hebdomadaire" writes as follows about the Flemish University:

"Among the thirty-five students there are only two from Ghent. Of the others, the greater number are peasants from the region of Waes: In the beginning the number was much smaller still, but threats of deportation have brought a few of the cowardly element.

"These students greet with deference the German officers. They wear velvet caps with white, blue, orange, and red ribbons, and they all carry clubs as a necessary means of defence against a population which scorns them openly. The old servants of the University have refused to work for these students, preferring to starve rather than serve the renegades."

As recently as January 1917 the German press was weeping crocodile tears over the fate of their Flemish brethren. The KREUTZ-

ZEITUNG of that time published the following morsel:

“ To the Flemish population, ill treated by its own Government, we are as a big brother defending his junior.

“ Now that we have given them the University of Ghent we cannot abandon them again. Furthermore, we need Belgium in our war against England. The longer our fight against England remains undecided, the more we must protect ourselves against her. Naturally we will keep Antwerp and the whole Flemish coast, and for at least twenty years Belgium must pay to Germany a sum of money equivalent to what she would spend on her army and navy while she enjoys the protection of Germany. The separation between Flemish and Walloons must be complete. Flanders on one side, and the state of Namur on the other, will constitute two great principalities ruled by German princes, the Hohenlohe family for instance. We will thus avoid unconditional annexation and all the intricacies of representation in the Reichstag.

“ The State of Namur shall be reduced as much as possible to the benefit of Flanders

and Luxemburg, and there shall be added to it territory from Northern France. Ownership of the French mines is a vital question for us, as demonstrated by the war. Belgium is for us not only the milch cow bringing all the prizes that peace will give us; to all of us, to every man in the trenches, she is a symbol of our victories. Not one German will give her up."

How Belgium was viewed at the same time by a mind not saturated with Germanic vanity is shown by a correspondent of the NIEUWE COURANT, who wrote, after a tour of Belgium:

"I have seen for the first time a people whose land is occupied, but whose spirit and heart are in no manner subdued. The abyss between victor and vanquished is still as deep, if not deeper, as in the beginning of the war. Walloons and Flemish know how to enjoy life, but they also know how to suffer. They make a strong people, a people that knows how to hate as no other. Those who in Germany dream of a German Belgium, be they correspondents of the Tageszeitung or members of an annexationist gang,

dream of a peace with accompaniment . . . of machine-guns. An army occupies Belgium, but it is certain that the Belgian people remain unconquered.”

Another form of murder attempted by the Hun in Belgium, a form none the less revolting because it chose the spirit rather than the body for its victim, was the annihilation of the common bond of patriotism which held all Belgians in their loyalty to their King. The first effort of the German to this end was in the spreading of reports that King Albert was anxious to conclude peace with Berlin, but could not do so because of England. But even efficient Germany is not always consistent, and where one German officer would vow that Albert had sold his soul to England another would declare to me that Belgium's King had refused Germany's proffered hand because he was blind with pride! The spreading of such reports, I learned, was not confined to Belgium alone but extended into Germany itself. On November 15, 1914, the *Vossische Zeitung* printed this despatch:

“From Bruxelles the *Hamburger Nach-*

richten hears through a very reliable source that the report is confirmed of serious differences between Belgium and England—that is, that all personal relations are interrupted between King Albert and the British Staff. The King desires an understanding with Germany, which Great Britain is endeavoring by all means to prevent.”

Here we have Hun inconsistency blossoming from a tricolor bud. Belgium's King cannot make peace because he is in England's grasp; he will not make peace because of blind egotism, he wants to make peace because he has quarreled with England.

All efforts to discredit King Albert in the eyes of the Belgians have miserably failed. It was in Bruxelles that I heard these words: “There is only one King in the world today worthy of the name.” Spoken by a Belgian Socialist Deputy they measured for me, in a flash, the loyalty and admiration which the rank and file of the Belgian population entertains for Albert I.

Nothing will ever appeal more strongly to the imagination of the average Belgian than the spectacle of his King leading the

heroic Belgian army on the banks of the Yser. The eyes of those in exile, longing ardently for their return to the Fatherland, and the tear-dimmed, tired eyes of the millions groaning under the yoke of a ruthless foe turn constantly to the stalwart figure of the royal soldier sharing daily dangers and privations with his men in the trenches.

The praise of my Socialist Deputy friend for his King had been invoked by a question concerning the royal palace in Bruxelles. But in discussing Belgium he had but one thought, his love for his country and his admiration for Albert I. I shall never forget his expression as he leaned across the table where we were sitting in a Bruxelles restaurant. He was a young man, with long flowing beard, full of the intense enthusiasm that characterizes the Socialist zealot.

“Albert may have lost his kingdom and his crown,” he said in low, earnest tones, “but he still dominates the hearts of his subjects absolutely. What other ruler can boast of swaying the hearts of millions as he does? These hated Germans may rob us of everything else but they are powerless when

it comes to tampering with our affections for our King and country.

“ Albert the First, King of the Belgians! His people will never forget his attitude in face of the German ultimatum; his quiet, dignified, yet firm demeanor when he appeared before the parliament to deliver his epoch-making speech. That was on August 4th, 1914; we were gathered in session extraordinary. The speech which His Majesty then made will remain forever an example of dignity and courage. I have kept a copy of it, and read it again whenever I feel a tendency to discouragement.”

And my friend handed me a copy of this speech, which deserves to be printed again:

“ Never since 1830 has a more grave moment come to Belgium: the integrity of our territory is threatened.

“ The strength of our just cause, the sympathy which Belgium, proud of her free institutions, and of her moral conquests, has never ceased to enjoy at the hands of other nations, the fact that our independent existence is necessary for the balance of power

in Europe, these considerations give rise to hope that the events which we fear will not take place.

“But if our hopes fail, if we must resist the invasion of our soil and must defend our threatened homes, this duty, hard though it be, will find us ordered and prepared for the greatest sacrifices (cheers and cries of “Long Live the King! Long live Belgium!).

“From this moment, with a view to meet every contingency, the valiant youth of our nation stand ready, firmly resolved with the traditional tenacity and calmness of the Belgians to defend their fatherland at a moment of danger (cheers).

“To them I send a brotherly greeting in the name of the nation (cheers and cries of Long Live the Army!). Throughtout Flanders and the region of Wallonie, in town and country one sentiment alone fills every heart—patriotism; one vision alone fills every mind—our threatened independence. One duty alone is laid upon our wills, stubborn resistance (cheers).

“At this grave moment two virtues are

indispensable—courage, calm (renewed cheers) but firm, and close union among all Belgians.

“ Striking evidence of both these virtues is already before the eyes of a nation full of enthusiasm.

“ The faultless mobilization of our army, the multitude of volunteers, the devotion of the civil population, the self-sacrifice of families have shown incontestably that the whole Belgian people is carried away by stimulating courage (applause). The moment has come to act.

“ I have called you together, gentlemen, to give to the Legislative Chambers an opportunity to associate themselves with the impulses of the people in the same sentiment of sacrifice. Gentlemen, you will know how to deal urgently with all the measures which the situation requires for the war and for public order (general assent).

“ When I see this enthusiastic gathering in which there is only one party, that of the fatherland (enthusiastic cheers and cries of “Long Live Belgium”), in which at this moment all hearts beat as one, my mind goes back to the Congress of 1830, and I ask of

you gentlemen, are you determined unswervingly to maintain intact the whole patrimony of our ancestors? (Yes, yes, from every side.)

“No one in the country will fail in his duty.

“The army, strong and disciplined, is fit to do this task: my Government and I have full confidence in its leaders and its soldiers.

“The Government, firmly attached to the populace and supported by them, is conscious of its responsibilities, and will bear them to the end with the deliberate conviction that the efforts of all united in the most fervent and generous patriotism will safeguard the supreme good of the country.

“If the foreigner, disregarding the neutrality whose every duty we have always scrupulously observed should violate our territory, he will find all Belgians grouped around their sovereign who will never betray his coronation oath, and around a Government possessing the absolute confidence of the entire nation. (Cheers on all the Benches).

“I have faith in our destiny: a country

which defends itself commands the respect of all; such a country shall never perish. ("Hear, hear. Long live the King, long live Belgium.")

"God will be with us in this just cause (fresh applause).

"Long live independent Belgium" (long and unanimous cheers from the Assembly and from the Galleries).

The glory of Albert I, King of the Belgians, can never be dimmed by the subjects of Wilhelm II, emperor of Germany. The former has shown himself as much of a glorious leader as the latter has shown himself some vile thing to be cursed by all mankind for generations to come.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AMERICA DECLARES WAR.

It is now commonplace to say that the German mind is capable of the most astounding gymnastics, yet I was constantly bewildered by the agility with which it could evade logic when applied to the Fatherland.

For example, German officers declared to me time and again in Belgium that America's neutrality would remain a shallow mockery so long as she continued to supply munitions to the Allies.

“But, suppose it were possible for us to ship munitions to Germany,” I would invariably say, “Would that be unneutral?”

“Oh, no,” was the answer. “We are fighting for a just cause and that would be entirely legitimate.”

But, if I am to give the Hun his dues I must say that most of the German officers with

whom I came in contact seemed to be anxious to spare my feelings, to avoid any such discussion involving American policy. Upon only one occasion did any of my acquaintances among the military authorities forget themselves in this respect.

I had invited two officers to have dinner with me at the Palace Hotel in Bruxelles. They had been very kind in making it easy for me to discharge some of the duties connected with my mission, and I was desirous of showing my appreciation of their efforts in my behalf. To be quite candid, I wanted particularly to install myself in their good graces because I was on the eve of asking for some very special concessions. We had no sooner seated ourselves at the table than one of my guests raised a glass of wine to his lips and said with a rather sardonic smile: "Here is to Kitchener's fate as well as to the fate of all of our enemies."

"Kitchener's fate!" "I exclaimed in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

The world had not yet learned of the catastrophe that had claimed the great K of K as its victim, not even Holland, as I ascertained

later by comparing dates. I presume that England had kept the news quiet, fearing its effect upon the public mind. According to subsequent admissions of my guests, which I wrung from their rather reluctant lips, they themselves had only learned the facts half an hour before joining me.

I tried to smile at the officer's toast, but it was a guilty, sickly smile, which developed into a frown of protest. My guests evidently suspected the course of my thought and apologized for their thoughtlessness, but their apologies were not made because I was an American but because I was a Christian minister. During the entire evening the hilarity of the officers assembled in the Palace dining room was most irrepressible. They were besides themselves with joy at the news.

Many times as I traveled back and forth between Holland and the United States I heard the rumor that Kitchener was alive and in a German prison. I repeated this rumor to one of the officers I have referred to, and asked him bluntly whether there was any truth in it.

"Absurd," he laughed. "That is noth-

ing but a stupid English joke. Kitchener alive would be a far greater trophy for Germany than a Kitchener whose body cannot even be located!"

Although I had, with a few exceptions, been well treated by the military authorities in Belgium, I must confess that I entertained misgivings when America declared war. No one seemed to know whether all Americans were to be interned or whether they would be allowed to depart, but my military acquaintances were unanimous in the opinion that no American would be permitted to remain in Belgium.

I was in Bruxelles on the day word was received of America's declaration. One by one the American flags were lowered, and a feeling of gloom settled over the city. At first the Belgians were fearful that even the last morsel of bread was to be taken away from them. Later it was seen and realized how vitally important was the step taken by the United States, and all selfish consideration and fears vanished in the light of the greater good to be accomplished by America's intervention.

When Minister Brand Whitlock and his

family left Bruxelles, crowds gathered at the depot, offering them flowers and weeping silently. The tribute was not meant for Mr. Whitlock alone—though all Belgians held him in high esteem, it was meant for all Americans. The Belgians realized full well that they were facing a discontinuance of America's relief work, an undertaking that had kept them alive, but they were brave even in the face of unknown additional adversity.

Mr. Whitlock had advised me to leave Belgium at the earliest possible moment. American relief workers departed as soon as they could arrange their affairs. Some of them who had labored in Flanders were held in Bruxelles for several weeks so that they would not be able to report recent military operations when they returned home. I remained longer than anyone else, expecting to bring out a crowd of four hundred Belgians whom I had located since my previous journey to the United States. But the military authorities would not hear of it.

When every other avenue of appeal had been explored without success I appealed directly to Mr. Zimmerman, by letter. I portrayed, as

eloquently as I knew how, the plight of my poor charges. I pointed out that applications had been made for their passports before America's declaration of war, even before she had severed diplomatic relations with Germany, that they had sold what little property they possessed and were eagerly waiting to leave. I pictured their dismay at not hearing from me as I had told them they would; it was impossible for me to communicate with them as I had promised.

Two weeks after writing to Mr. Zimmerman I received a summons to report at the Pass Bureau in Bruxelles, where I was informed that the coveted permission had been granted. I then begged permission to communicate with the Holland American line through the German authorities, to ascertain the sailing date of the next steamer to the United States. In about ten days I received word that owing to the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, the Holland-American line had discontinued its sailings for an indefinite period. I was informed that there was no likelihood of any steamer sailing within the near future, and that so many reservations had already been

made that when a steamer did sail there would be no room for my party. So, to my great sorrow, I had to leave my poor people behind without even the opportunity to apprise them of the reason. I might have been able to obtain passports to take them out via Spain, but that would have involved an expenditure which I was not prepared to meet.

The question then arose as to my own passport. The German authorities insisted that I leave via Spain. I was equally insistent that I be permitted to make my departure via Holland as had been my custom in the past.

“What good will it do for you to enter Holland?” the Pass Bureau officials asked. “You will be bottled up there indefinitely; you might just as well remain here in Belgium.”

I explained that I wanted to enter Holland so that I could cancel the steamship passages that had already been arranged before it was known that I could not take my charges home with me. The money for these passages had been paid to Holland-American line representatives in America, much of it by poor families who could ill afford to lose it. Well, the Pass Bureau officials said my reason was

good, but they could not see how they could give me a Holland passport. Finding that my persuasions availed nothing, I went to my hotel and wrote an informal letter to Governor-General Von Bissing, who had just returned from taking the cure at Weisbaden. I begged the Governor-General to grant me an audience at his official residence.

Two days later I was called from my room to the office of the hotel, where an officer of the German government handed me an important looking envelope. I tore it open, and to my amazement discovered that it was an invitation to luncheon at Trois Fontaines, the Governor-General's chateau. I was in a dilemma. I hated to accept because, with America and Germany at war, it seemed nothing short of treason to accept such a courtesy from an official of the German government. On the other hand I dared not refuse, because my doing so would have set at naught the work of many months during which I had gathered messages from Belgians which I was to convey to their relatives and friends abroad. The officer who had delivered the invitation eyed me critically

as I stood there pondering what course to pursue.

“ Well,” he said, finally, “ what answer shall I give to His Excellency? Will you accept? ”

“ I will. ” I replied.

“ Very well; the Governor-General’s motor will be at the hotel entrance on Thursday at twelve-thirty sharp. ”

I was waiting at the hotel entrance on Thursday when the automobile drove up. Two young officers, in glittering uniforms, alighted and introduced themselves in excellent English. They informed me that they had been school friends of Baroness von Bisping, the Governor-General’s daughter, and as they were passing through Bruxelles on their way from the front, to spend a furlough at home, they had called her up and had been invited to join the luncheon party, with instructions to pick me up on the way.

I jumped into the car and settled back in silence. I was anything but a pleasant companion, for I could not help worrying over the possible outcome of the situation. I was fearful that I was about to be placed in a very

uncomfortable position, that unpleasant allusions would be made to America and that I would have to forget my position as a guest and show my resentment.

We were met at Trois Fontaines by the Governor-General's adjutant, who immediately informed me that I would be expected to escort Her Excellency in to lunch. I felt like asking that I be relieved of the honor; it was my first experience of that nature and I was puzzled which arm I should offer to her. But, before I had puzzled very long the Baron, his wife and daughter appeared upon the scene, and I managed to get through the ordeal somehow.

I was amazed at the Governor-General's appearance. He walked with great difficulty and with very evident pain; his face was ashen and there was a worried, agonized look in his eyes. I understood then why I had been invited to luncheon. It was apparent that the Governor-General would never go to his office again, and he had given me the one possible opportunity to see him.

The repast was very modest and of short duration. I was seated between the Baron

and his wife, and although the Governor-General spoke but a few times during the meal he took occasion to congratulate me upon the work I had been doing. Her Excellency spoke to me in English tinged with the very slightest accent, asking me in a general way about my mission and passing a few perfunctory remarks. The Governor-General, I was told, knew no English whatever.

The guests at the luncheon included the two officers who had called for me at the hotel, the family physician and two other officers, one of them Baron von Marx, the chief official of the Pass Bureau. No one made the slightest allusion to America's participation in the war, a mark of unusual courtesy for which I was deeply grateful. When we arose to say farewell I turned to Baron von Bissing and begged permission to leave Belgium via Holland. He seemed quite willing to grant the request and, calling Baron von Marx to his side, he gave instructions to issue the needed passport. I thanked the Governor-General, bade everyone present good bye and was taken back to my hotel in the Governor-General's motor.

Four days later I stood at the window of

my room in the Palace Hotel and watched the procession of officers and notables accompanying the body of the Governor-General to the railway station whence it was to be sent to Germany for burial.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FAREWELL TO BELGIUM.

Before leaving the country in which I now seemed to have worked and lived so long, I naturally paid a last visit to Cardinal Mercier. His cup of sadness was overflowing; he seemed more downcast than I had seen him at any of our previous meetings. The much-heralded offensive of the Allies appeared to be on the wane, and the Cardinal had just suffered from the petty tyranny of the German masters. His Coadjutor Bishop, Monseigneur De Graefe, had been imprisoned for extending hospitality to a French fugitive and his secretary, Canon Srancken, had that morning commenced a term of imprisonment for breaking one of the military laws of the enemy.

“So you are leaving us again, and this time for good,” said His Eminence. “What is

to become of us now that America can no longer be our godmother? Who will feed our starving people? ”

The pathos of his voice wrung my heart, and I remained silent as he stood gazing sorrowfully out of the window of his library. After a few minutes he turned and faced me with a cheerful smile.

“ Away with gloomy forebodings,” he said. “ We should be thankful that Columbia, young, virile Columbia, has unsheathed her sword in the eternal cause of righteousness. We love America for having succored us in our hour of need, and no matter what becomes of us we shall worship her for shedding the blood of her brave sons in the cause of Belgium and freedom, because the cause of Belgium symbolizes the vindication of humanity’s most sacred and inalienable rights against the abuses and oppression of caste and might.”

I felt the Cardinal’s emotion in every word he uttered about his love and gratitude for America, and when we discussed the possibility of my taking back some message from him to our President I assured him that I could smuggle such a message out of Belgium. His

Eminence therefore handed me the following letter:

Monsieur le President:

Often since the beginning of the war have I wished to express to the people of the United States, whose highest representative you are, my sentiments of gratitude. You have lavished on us your sympathy, your help, your devotion. At the very moment when you saw yourself compelled to break off the diplomatic relations of your country with Germany you have had one more special thought for our country; to the fifty delegates of the Committee for the Relief of Belgium you have immediately given the advice not to abandon us as long as the authority in power allowed them to look after our subsistence. Accept our thanks for your generosity, Monsieur le President, receive the heartfelt gratitude of the Belgian nation, and allow us to tell you that we pray God to bless your noble country and its very noble President.

An American priest, Father de Ville, is kindly bearing this modest message to your address.





Believe me, Monsieur le President, with renewed expressions of gratitude,

Yours very truly,

D. J. Cardinal Mercier,  
Archbishop of Malines (Belgium),  
Malines, February 9, 1917.

to Mr. Wilson, President of the United States.

Carefully I accepted this message, and with deep sorrow bade farewell to the Cardinal whom I, like all of his people, now loved as a real father.

This letter to President Wilson is only another example of his courageous spirit most decisively shown in his pastoral of January 29th, 1917 to the deans of his diocese and sent with his permission the same year to all of his clergy. I quote it beneath.

‘ To every day its sorrow. The practice of the moral virtues varies with events. At the present time, gentleness, strength of

mind, serenity, in a warm atmosphere of charity, are especially necessary to us. We have the divine mission of supporting and encouraging our people. Whatever our human reasons for confidence in the future may be—and you know well that they are more justified than ever—let us search for better.

“Let us follow the example of Moses, who, as is shown in the epistle to the Hebrews, had such a lively faith in God that he saw him with his eyes ‘By faith . . . he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible,’ and let us, as sons, deliver all our soul to God. Let this faith inspire our judgments and steep our wills. Undismayed ourselves, we shall support our brethren. The Belgian people have not flinched and, by the grace of God, they will not flinch. Their unalterable serenity will, to the end of their long and bitter trial, console our absent ones, thank our benefactors, smile on our soldiers, bless our dear Allies and bow before H. M. King Albert; to the end it will be our defiance of the oppressor, our daily act of patriotism, the homage of Belgium to wisdom and goodness and

to the justice and mercy of Divine Providence.”

I did what I could during the next few days to help all those who had previously appealed to me, and whom I would probably never see again.

These last efforts led me sometimes far into the country, and it was on one such occasion that I found myself walking late in the afternoon along a deserted road. The sun was just setting over the edge of the canal, and no sound was to be heard when my ears were startled by the words of a plaintive song in a woman's voice:

“Pauvre mère, pauvre enfant,  
Quel malheur, quelle douleur. . . .

The words seemed to be repeated again and again, in tones now tender and soft, again harsh and punctuated with sobs. I looked for the singer, and about a hundred feet from where I stood I observed a woman seated in the shadow of a cluster of willows, her body swaying slowly to and fro.

I walked over to the spot. A thin cotton dress covered her emaciated figure; a mass of auburn hair, clotted, unkempt, fell about her shoulders. Her pale face revealed traces of beauty through lines imprinted by sorrow and want. In her lap lay a sleeping child, an infant probably a year old. The woman looked at me with an expression of stolid indifference which soon changed to mingled shame and conscious self-pity.

“Pardon me,” I addressed her, “can I be of any service to you, Madame?”

“No one can do anything for me,” she replied, in the tone of one who knows utter despair.

“Do not say that, my friend,” I entreated her. “You are suffering, and that entitles you to my respect and my humble help as well, no matter what you may have done.”

She looked at me in silence, and her eyes filled with tears. I did not say anything, but sat down beside her and took hold of her hand. Presently she withdrew her hand from my grasp and wiped her eyes with her apron.

“Pardon my rudeness,” she said with unsteady voice. “Since this happened I am not

responsible for either words or actions.”

“Tell me the cause of your grief,” I urged gently.

She hesitated for a moment and then, with visibly painful effort, she told me her story.

“I was born twenty-two years ago in that little white house by the canal.” She paused for an instant, pointing in the direction of the dwelling she had mentioned. “I was the only child of comparatively poor parents, but I grew up happy and contented. I had everything I wanted because my desires were few.

“Three years ago, at the Easter Kermess, I became engaged to Peter, the son of the village blacksmith. We loved each other very much. He worked hard and saved his money, and bought a little piece of property in the next hameau. He was preparing to build a cottage on it, and this fall we were to move into it as man and wife. Then this cursed war broke out, and Peter went away with the defenders of Belgium. Perhaps he is not far from me now, on the banks of the Yser. Perhaps he is dead. Who knows?”

She ceased speaking and fell into a fit of revery, staring ahead into vacancy. After a

while she lifted her voice in agony.

“ Oh, I pray God that Peter is dead so that he may never learn of my shame. You little serpent,” she said with sudden fury, gazing with horror on the still form of the child, who awoke and began to cry.

I placed my hands on the woman’s shoulders.

“ My poor friend,” I said, “ do not be unreasonable. Though unwelcome, the little one is your child and innocent itself of any wrong.”

“ I know it, I know it,” she cried passionately with a sudden change. She gathered the child up in her arms and covered it with kisses. “ I know it—I am its mother and should cherish it, but when I think of the father I cannot but rebel and abominate the creature. Oh, if I could only repudiate it and forget that it is part of my flesh and blood!

“ \* \* \* when the Germans entered our village I was in the stable milking the cows. Three soldiers entered and asked for a drink of milk. I was trembling with fear, but I gave them a pail half filled, and then suddenly, one of them, the largest of the three, took off his helmet and threw it on the floor. He came over

to me and I knew his purpose from the expression on his face. I screamed, but he seized me in his arms and kissed me. I heard the other two soldiers laugh, and then I knew no more.

“ When I regained consciousness, I was under the covers of my bed, in my room. My father had found me lying on a pile of straw in a corner of the stable. When the little one came my parents tried to hide their shame, but occasionally things would go wrong and then they would reproach me. The villagers shunned me as though I were a leper. . . . Six months ago my father was deported to Germany, and we are greatly in want. My poor mother is pining away. Of late, and today especially, I know not why, I have thought that I could find peace only at the bottom of our old canal. Don't you think God would understand and forgive me? ” She looked up appealingly.

“ Poor, poor child, ” I said, “ how deeply I sympathize with you! ”

I offered her a few pieces of silver, as much as I could spare from my slender purse, then I gave her my card and said: “ Promise me to be brave for a little longer. I shall try to ob-

tain a passport for you, so that you may come with me to America, where I can introduce you to friends who will be glad to care for you.”

She pressed the babe to her breast and looked at me with tear-dimmed eyes.

“Tomorrow,” she said sadly “you will no longer remember me. I am only one of many.”

I assured her that I would not forget my promise, and took her name and address. Then I patted the child on the cheek and left her. I shall never forget the glance she bestowed upon me at my thought of the little one. There was infinite love and devotion in it. When I neared the road I heard her singing again, but her voice, though sad, had a note of hope in it.

I made every effort to obtain a passport for her, but she had no family in America and so I could not induce the authorities to allow her departure. I only hope she has had the courage not to let herself drop some evening into the still and peaceful waters of the canal where she played as a child.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOW AMERICA HELPS.

I carried Cardinal Mercier's letter to Washington, and delivered it personally to President Wilson, with whom I had an interview about conditions in Belgium and my work there. The President told me of his admiration for Cardinal Mercier, to whom he sent the following answer:

5 July, 1917.

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
WASHINGTON.

*His Eminence*  
Cardinal Mercier  
Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence

I am deeply touched by your personal communication of the ninth of February, 1917,

which recently reached me at the hands of Father deVille.

The sincere sympathy of the people of the United States for the people of Belgium in their sore affliction has been manifested in many ways since the very outbreak of the war, and this Government has set its seal of approbation upon this national sentiment by sending its chosen forces to the Belgian front, there to fight the common enemy. I trust that the efforts of the American people towards the relief of suffering among the stricken people of Belgium may soon be resumed under happier auspices which will attend the liberation of Belgium.

With assurance of my high personal consideration,

Faithfully yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

I came out of the White House more encouraged than I had felt for a long time. It seemed good to walk about the streets filled with American uniforms symbolic of the war for universal liberty, and it was with deep

reverence that I saluted the flag when I saw it borne by some of those keen-looking youths who had enlisted in its defence.

America is going to the war in the noblest and most unselfish manner that any country ever has, and her sons will come back from a war waged so unselfishly with deeper consciousness of the brotherhood of man.

The question has often been put to me, as to what effect this war will have upon religion. People who return from France tell us that the faithful flock to the churches and that there is a great revival of religious spirit. Thirty thousand priests have abandoned their missions in the Far East, in Africa and other places, and have returned home to fight for France in her hour of need. Sisters and members of religious orders flocked back in spite of the laws passed in France some years ago against religious communities, and are devoting themselves to the alleviation of suffering. Why did they desert the missions that needed them? Why did they abandon the benighted pagan and a fertile harvest in order to return to what they considered an ungrateful Fatherland? Was it because they felt their first duty

was to their brethren at home and hoped that their patriotism, their abnegation would cause many to come back to the fold? Or was it merely love of country that prompted them to do so? Perhaps both. Be that as it may, it is an imposing, inspiring spectacle that they present—this legion of levites—scattered throughout the army, fighting the enemy and pausing now and then to grant absolution to their wounded and dying comrades. The effect their heroism and ministrations must have upon their comrades is a beautiful one for the future of the Church of France.

In Belgium many people go to Church that never went before because the Church has become the only “Temple de la patrie” where homage may be paid to the Fatherland with a certain degree of impunity. The priests are patriots, and the sermons they preach are full of subtle allusions to the momentous questions of the time, if not openly patriotic. The national anthems are sung, the national airs played. Hence you will find there the pious Catholic and Protestant, as well as the bileral, the socialist and the atheist, all brought together by a common sorrow, all breathing the

same spirit, giving vent to the same emotions and aspirations. How beautiful would it not be if this could last forever!

On the other hand, I asked a Bavarian officer, an excellent Catholic, what effect the war had upon the church-going Germans, Bavarians and Austrians.

“Very bad,” he replied. “At the beginning of the war the churches in Belgium were full of soldiers who went to mass and received the sacraments regularly. Now things are different and you see comparatively few performing their religious duties. The war has lasted too long, and many of them having been away from their families so long have contracted illicit relations and consequently grow tepid, indifferent. Again, the socialist has not been idle, and during the long days in trenches and camps has argued and preached in season and out of season, making tens of thousands of converts, men whom he could never reach at home, surrounded as they were by the atmosphere of the church, and prejudiced against new doctrines. ‘What is the use of praying?’ they say to you now. ‘We have prayed long and earnestly but God does not

hear our supplications.' They gradually grow hard, skeptical, angry at the tenets they once professed. A prominent clergyman of Cologne told me as early as March, 1915, that there were very many cases of infidelity among the women of Germany whose husbands were away at war and that the clergymen and leaders of the various municipalities were very much alarmed."

Perhaps the people of France and Belgium have turned to religion in their suffering as the people of Germany, waging an evil war for ignoble motives, could not do. The German "Gott" is too opposed to the idea which civilized persons, be they Catholics or Protestants or Jews, have received of the Divinity. Not until the inevitable defeat will the German come to realize the ignominious part played by his country, and the glory of those who opposed Hohenzollern lust of conquest.

But who can tell now of Belgium's glory? Where are we to look for Belgium's singer? Not in Belgium herself nor yet among the peoples of any of her Allies. For there is no one person, no one nation that can sing the song of the savior of civilization. The hymn

of Belgian praise will ascend through the years of history, rising high on the voice of humanity. Justice, fairest daughter of mankind, will declaim the glory of Belgium's courage, a courage that unfurled the banner of defiance when Right lay bleeding under the heel of Might. Even German posterity will "sing unto the Lord a new song"—celebrating the immutable force that saved the German peoples from their self-directed destruction.

Picture the women and children of Belgium, —her old men—during the period of German domination. Those who stayed at home fought as bravely as the soldiers enlisted under the colors of King Albert's land. I saw them in their dark hours of adversity, I saw their smiles of hope as their savings gradually disappeared, and I saw their heroism in the face of danger. I saw them when they put aside their pride and joined Charity's bread line in order to keep alive. I observed the evidence of their unconquerable pride as one by one their liberties were taken away, I watched them hide their chagrin, bow their heads like early martyrs. And always in their eyes was

the fearless light of those who have "fought a good fight!"

It was Bismarck, that fiendish plotter, who laid the foundations for the present tragedy, who wrote in 1870 that: "True strategy consists in striking your enemy and striking him hard. Above all things you must inflict on the inhabitants of invaded territories the maximum of suffering, in order to discourage them from the struggle and to insure their assistance in bringing pressure to bear on their government to induce it to end resistance. You must leave to the people through whose homes you march nothing but their eyes with which to weep."

It is in accordance with this hellish doctrine of their great war teacher that the Huns are joyfully sinking peaceful fishermen, shelling the churches in which women pray and starving the children of Belgium.

And so, as I cannot return to those unfortunate millions starving in Belgium, I am doing what little I can from America for their relief. Before my final departure from Belgium, I had been asked by Cardinal Mercier and by those at the head of L'Oeuvre du Lait

to carry to the United States and to South America the plaint of Belgium's starving babes, and since my return I have been appealing for these little ones.

One of the most sorrowful sights in Belgium is that presented by little children gathered in shivering groups at corners where they remain for hours in the hope of receiving a cup of so-called milk. Though there be crowds of them together they are sadly silent, and rarely indeed is childish laughter heard in Belgium today. Father has been deported or is fighting somewhere for the cause of liberty, and mother is often in tears when she thinks of him and wonders whether he will ever return to fill that empty chair at the family table.

And now strict economy has been replaced by actual want, by gnawing hunger for these little children of the heroes of Liege and of the Yser who saved not only Europe but the whole civilized world. They are growing daily paler and thinner, and sometimes they quietly die for the want of a little food.

Wherever I go I find sympathy and generous response from Americans of every denomination and of every class whom war has

drawn together in such brotherhood as did not exist before. I wish I had the space to reprint here some of the letters I have received in connection with this work. They would show a little Protestant school teacher in Wisconsin teaching her class to make sacrifices in order to feed their Catholic friends in Belgium, they would show a poor Jewish woman in New York sending for the same cause her only Liberty bond, proudly bought at great sacrifice, they would show the unending generosity of those to whom a little often means a great deal.

The patrons of L'Oeuvre de Lait, known here as "The Belgian Children's Milk Fund," are headed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and include the Duchess of Vendome, Cardinal Mercier and the Princess of Ligne, while the Honorary President of the American Committee is the Hon. Henry Van Dyke, assisted by John Purroy Mitchell, Mr. Pierre Mali (Belgian Consul-General at New York) and a number of the leading ministers of every religion. Its American headquarters are at 2517 Logan Boulevard, Chicago.

The Belgian Children's Milk Fund has a

group of cottages near the Hague, Holland, and it takes care of destitute Belgian children of refugees who are not able to care for them or who have died during the war. Its principal object, however, is to send money to its branches in Belgium with which to buy milch cows or milk for their two distributing stations at Contich and Malines. It also buys cows in Holland to send over to Belgium and this is done with the protection of the Dutch authorities who see to it that they be regarded as property of a beneficent organization with Dutch connections, and hence immune from seizure. A great deal of good has been done and the work has been supported by the rich Belgians until now, but their resources are now exhausted and the need is greater than ever, as the little petitioners are daily increasing in number. More stations should be built in different parts of the country, and the daily allotment should be increased instead of diminished. At present each child receives one-third of a quart per day. The "Milk Fund" appeals now, for the first time, to the American people, and it is an appeal which should be heard by every parent whose own

little ones safe at home are growing up happy and healthy while those others—a week's traveling away—are slowly starving and have forgotten what it is to be happy.

As I write it is nearly four years since Belgium fell under the ruthless domination of Germany, and for nearly four years the Huns have dashed themselves against the barrier composed of French and British and Belgians. "They shall not pass" has been the challenge of civilization, and now the barrier is strengthened by the incalculable force of a peaceful America roused at last to war. It may be a long war still, and it will bring sacrifice and cost some of our best blood, but every man that falls will be a source of pride and inspiration for all times, and in the glory of the achievement we will remember Maeterlinck's words:

"Where are the dead?  
There are no dead."











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