BE FAIR TO PRIESTS, MERCIER'S PLEA TO VON BISSING

Cardinal Opposes Plan to Force Pledge From Clergy Not to Undertake Anything That Would Embarrass German Administration in Occupied Territory

Explanatory Comment

THE extraordinary battle of moral courage against brute force traceable throughout all the relations of the

Cardinal with the German masters of Belgium began quietly in a time of lull.

Some five weeks before Von Bissing's first letter was dispatched to the Cardinal, the little Belgian army had inundated the tiny strip of territory still left King Albert and had gloriously succeeded in driving the Germans back across the Yser.

The victory had signal strategic value for the Allies, but it did not seriously jeopardize the German satrapy in Belgium. By far the greater part of the country was cynically treated as a conquered province to

be incorporated into the German system. Ultimate absorption in the empire was frankly contemplated. At the worst, the territory was to be used

Field Marsha! Kolmar von der Goltz as the first governor general had but a brief tenure of office. In the first days the uncertainty of his position-for the decision of the Marne was not yet made-moved him to be somewhat careless of promises.

The Cardinal was quick to scrutinize every pledge and to estimate its value. The time inevitably came

when he justly accused the occupying power of repudiation of its own words. Von der Goltz, however, enjoyed a high reputation as a field general. He had fought in the Prussian war of 1866 against Austria, he had served against France in 1870, and in 1883 he went to Constantinople to reorganize the Turkish army. He did a workmanlike job, as was evidenced when the Ottomans, after thirteen years of his training, scored an easy triumph over Greece in the brief war of 1897. Von der Goltz Pasha

became the baron's eastern title, On December 3, 1914, the baron was transferred from Brussels to the Russian front.

The aged pasha-he was seventy-two-headed for a while the Turkish troops in Mesopotamia, and in the spring of 1916 he died of typhus fever at Ottoman headquarters in Asia. He is not to be confused with his kinsman, the younger General von der Goltz, who recently defied the Allies in the Baltic region. His role in the Mercier drama was prefatory. A chief actor entered with the arrival of Baron von

Bissing, old like his predecessor, and destined also to die before the German collapse. His name is infamously associated with the fate of Edith Cavell. Physically he was a spare figure with black hair, turning to gray. He had an aged and leather-like

complexion and was clean shaven, save for a thick junker moustache. He had the reputation of being scrupulously clean. His mouth was stern, but without the slightest suggestion of subtlety. This fact has acute bearing on every step of his protracted dealings with the fine, keen and superbly

virile mental make-up of the archbishop of Malines. On points of remorseless logic the great prelate worsted the visually impressive Prussian repeatedly. Von Bissing's complete surrender of his plan to extract loyalty pledges from the Belgian clergy before

sanctioning the payment of their salaries comes as a climax to the correspondence incautiously begun on Decem-

The backdown of the German Government at perhaps the peak of its power in Belgium was a significant index of dramatic capitulations still to come.

be collected and sent to the competent agent of the treasury and to the official in charge of the payment of naturies.

A list of the names of such ecclesiastics as have signed the declaration must be drawn up in the same order as appears on the pay list. This list must be sent to me. Your Eminence will also be kind enough to compile and forward me a list of the ecclesiastics whose salaries are not to be paid.

Concerning the drawing up of the pay lists, I would ask your Eminence to come to an understanding with the provincial presidents of those German civil administrations who exercise their functions in your diocese.

For the Governor General, (Signature illegible). * The following communication was inclosed with

the preceding letter: Brussels, December 28th, 1914

In view of the fact that ecclesiastical salaries are relatively small and that, in consequence of the war, a great many ministers of worship have had every other source of income considerably diminished, I consent to the priests being paid their salaries in full, so long as they have not been paid from other sources, viz: in the provinces of Brabant, Hainault, Namur, Limbourg, Liege and Luxemburg, from September 1st, 1914, and in the provinces of the two Flanders and of Antwerp from October 1st. The proposal to pay eccleniastics their salaries even in part from July 1st, 1914, cannot be entertained, as by this arrangement they are already privileged in comparison with all those who are ordinarily receiving remuneration from the state; for the German Government has only taken in hand the administration of the state revenue of Belaium since September 1st, for a part of Belgium, and from October 1st for the other part. In consequence, it is impossible for it to pay the salaries of the preceding months.

To receive their salaries, veclesiasties must sign the following formal pledge:

"Not to undertake anything against the German administration in the occupied Belgian territories and to avoid anything that could in any way prejudice its

Those ecclesiastics who have resigned or who have abandoned their posts, or who through force of circumstances are hindered from filling them, shall not receive their solaries. The same applies to those who have received their salaries from other sources. The ecclesiastics must give the agent of the treasury, or the official in charge, a written declaration testifying that they have not yet been paid.

Those ecclesiastics who shall act contrary to their pledges will be punished according to the laws of war and will be deprived of all further salary.

I have communicated the present order to His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines. to the bishops of Bruges, Ghent, Liege, Namur and Tournay to the presidents of the synods of the Protestant churches, to the council of administration of the Free Protestant Church, to the central committee of the Anglican Church and the chief rabbi of Brussels. I have asked them to take the necessary steps to collect the declarations of the ministers of worship and to hand them over to the officers whose duty it is to pay the salaries. .

I inclose with this communication the pay lists of the clergy of East Flanders, requesting that the order may be carried out. For the other provinces, I have given orders to the various presidents of the German civil administration to arrange with the ecclesiastical authorities about drawing up the pay lists. As soon as these reach me, I will hand them over to the minister of justice.

> For the Governor General (Signature illegible).

Appeal for Fairness to Clergy Archbishop's House, Malines,

January 27th, 1915. To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir-A communication from your administration informs us that the German Government of the oc-

Cardinal's Residence,

Waltimore.

September 16, 1919.

I am very happy to be able to recommend to the American

reading public this authorized, official and authentic story

of my beloved and esteemed brother, Cardinal Mercier's exper-

In it the reader will realize the full meaning of the

Cardinal's attitude during the war, and possess a true historical

account of the great moral fight which was carried on by him

408 N. Charles St.

payment of the clergy's salaries from September 1st or October 1st, 1914, but on condition that the various members of the clergy sign a declaration by which they pledge themselves not to undertake anything and

to refrain from everything which might be prejudicial to the German administration. Certain considerations which have, I believe, escaped the civil administrator's notice will make the juridical and legal status of the Belgian clergy clear, and will, I feel sure, receive your Excellency's atten-

First. Ministers of worship are not state functionaries.

Second. Their salaries are paid them as an indemnity in compensation for confiscated ecclesiastical property.

The members, therefore, of the clergy neither take an oath nor give even a pledge to the Belgian Government, but are merely subject, like ordinary citizens, to the general laws of the country.

First. I said, your Excellency, that ministers of

worship in Belgium are not public functionaries, Our Court of Appeal has explicitly recognized this in its decree of March 4th, 1847, in which it affirms that by virtue of their office ministers of worship have no executive authority, nor do they exercise any. In fact, only those can be regarded as such, says the decree, who either directly or indirectly are delegated by the law or by the Government to exercise any kind of authority; and ministers of religion have certainly no function of this nature.

Second. I added that the salaries are paid to ministers on the ground of indemnity. In the terms of Article 117 of the Belgian Constitution, "salaries and pensions of ministers of worship are charged to the State; the necessary sums to meet these are included in each year's budget."

Ancient Privileges of Priests

The discussions preceding the framing of this article show that the Congress looked upon salaries and pensions for the clergy as a compensation on the grounds of indemnity for the ancient privileges of which the Catholic Church was deprived at the time of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property.

From the very beginning of our national independence, His Highness the Prince de Mean, Archbishop of Malines, anxious to guarantee to the Catholic religion that full and entire liberty which alone can secure for it peace and prosperity, wrote to the National Congress as follows: "The State has appropriated ecclesiastical property only with the obligation of providing adequately for the cost of public worship and the maintenance of its ministers; as witness the first article of the French law of November 2d, 1789. The Holy See on its side only ratified the alienation in the interests of peace, expressly stipulating that the Government should undertake to provide the clergy with a competent salary, as evidenced both by the 13th and 14th articles of the Concordat of 1801, as also by the Bulls referring to these. In order to provide against unjust preferences and on the plea of these salaries, to prevent any agent of the executive power from interfering with the free exercise of public worship by bringing to bear any illegitimate influence on the opinions and conduct of ecclesiastics, it would be needful that the apportion-

ment of these subsidies be fixed by law."* In fact, the legal Government has never exacted from the clergy a declaration antecedent to any payment of salaries. If the German Government were to exact it, it would impose on the clergy a status inferior to that guaranteed them by the Belgian Con-

I firmly trust that the Governor General will give his fair-minded attention to the views herewith ex-

posed and will admit their soundness. I beg your Excellency to receive the expression of

my greatest esteem. D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER, (Signed) Archbishop of Malines.
*See the discussions of the National Congress, by

Huyttens, Vol. 1, p. 525. (TO BE CONTINUED)

"Why-why-what a boy you are!" she said shakily.

The next complete novelette-Solving

THE DAILY NOVELETTE THOSE MINCE PIES

D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,

Cardinal Mercier's Story

Including his correspondence with the German

authorities in Belgium during the war, 1914 to 1918, edited by Professor Fernand Mayence of

Louvain University and translated by the Bene-dictine Monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate,

CHAPTER II

The Cardinal Asks Von Bissing's Authority to

Send Belgian Priests Into Prison-

ers' Camps in Germany

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor Gen-

oners of war in Germany, notwithstanding the priest-

ly care which the German clergy may be lavishing

on them, are, on account of their ignorance of the

require the sending to Germany, for the term of

hostilities, of a few Belgian priests conversant with

ligious interests of our people, would you not con-

sent to take steps with the Imperial Government to

obtain for some of our priests authorization to at-

For this I should be extremely obliged to you.

Kindly accept, your Excellency, the expression of

Archbishop of Malines. Editor's Note—This letter remained without an

Your Excellency-The numerous Belgian pris-

A sound organization of the care of souls would

As your Excellency is concerned about the re-

eral of Belgium.

both our national languages.

tend to our prisoners?

my highest esteem.

(Signed)

language, deprived of religious succor.

Archbishop's House, Malines,

December 16th, 1914.

England.

He liked his present quarters im-

Men's Gloves

That Have the

Very Spirit of

This Christmas

Christmas for the giving of practical gifts. Surdy, stylish — and well made throughout. All the latest shades and styles for men.

\$2 to \$4.50

PEID MO FORT

1119-21 Market St.

Because this is to be a

COVERS were laid for three. Eric Lober declares the minee pies led up to it. Mrs. Deane skyly hints some credit is due her since she herself was indirectly responsible for the unlighted gas jet at the head of the stairs. Miss Barbara, however, keeps mum. It happened like this:

Eric had fallen asleep over a game of solltaire. He awakened with a start when the improvised table across his knees, with the cards aton, tumbled had her been been considered to the party. Eric's hand had trembled the whole of the provised table across his knees, with the cards aton, tumbled had her been considered to the party. Eric's hand had trembled the cards aton, tumbled had her been considered to the party in the would go for a stroll. He found the hall in darkness—an unusual thing. There was a gasic en must be too wasteful. Mrs. Deane is out," she apologized, and then that seed the provised the casement in halling deep draughts of the chill November night air.

He was good to look upon, was Eric. Not exactly hundsome — the feature were much too bronzed, and then that sear near the temple. Yet from tousied research the continuous had been considered to the stairs of the continuous had been considered to the stairs of the consensual time. There was a smothered shriek and, with presence of mind. Eric reached out to the output sense the well-work habit outfit tucked away in the trunk in the corner.

Suddenly eight collected and the the stairs was a minetimble something. Maybe I news so when the stair was a smothered shriek and, with presence of mind. Eric reached out the young body that made you instinctively sense the well-work habit and the corner of mind. Eric reached out to the room. It was the unmistakable outfit tucked away in the trunk in the corner.

Suddenly eight well-nigh made his mouth water and be experted at the stairs was a smothered shriek and with presence of mind. Eric reached out the provided for the provided provided the provided provided the stairs of the provided provided the stairs of the provided provided the

case of the higher clergy.

answer. Later Von Bissing informed the Cardinal that the steps which he had taken at headquarters to comply with His Eminence's request had not been successful.

CHAPTER III

Salaries of the Clergy

IN ORDER to obtain their salaries, the officials of the Belgian state who remained at their posts under the

German occupation had to sign a declaration by which

they pledged themselves not to undertake or omit

anything which could embarrass the German admin-

istration in occupied Belgian territory. The Governor

General wanted to subject priests to the same formality.

The Cardinal fought against this energetically; he drew

attention to the fact that ministers of worship in Bel-

gium are not officials and that their salaries were paid

them by way of compensation. Von Bissing replied that

he did not share in this view, but that he would never-

theless be satisfied with a declaration from the Cardinal

that the Belgian bishops had no intention of disturbing

public order. He would consider this pledge as binding

ject between the Cardinal and the German administra-

The Chief Administrator Attached to the Governor

I inclose for your Eminence's perusal a copy of a

communication made to the ministry of justice. I

would request your Eminence to take all the necessary

steps to make the members of the Catholic clergy sign

the declarations which are the subject of the in-

closed communication. If your Eminence will consent

to sign this declaration, I would ask you to send it

on to me and immediately to notify the official whose duty it is to pay you your salary. I, likewise, would

ask you to carry out these same instructions in the

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

The following are the letters exchanged on this sub-

Brussels, December 28th, 1914.

the whole body of the Belgian clergy.

General of Belgium.

Order No. 11a 1057.

dark, pansy eyes made him chuckle inwardly. Then, with a guilty flush, he noted the miscellaneous collection of eatables adorning the stairs. Through its covering of stiff brown paper the leg of a plump chicken protruded. Midway below reposed a bunch of celery.

And cranberries! There were other things; clusters of grapes, oranges, a bottle of plives lay at his feet. Me
bottle of plives lay at his feet. Me
dark, pansy eyes made him chuckle inwardly. Then, with a guilty flush, he not guilted. But I escaped stair. There was an awkward pause. Eric found his heart pounding furiously, she looked on wan and droopy-like.

But I escaped stair. There was an awkward pause.

Eric found his heart pounding furiously, she looked on wan and droopy-like.

"He often mentioned Teddybear out there. And you—he called you 'Babsie."

A queer, throaty sound issued from her lips like a sob held in check. Then her lips like a sob held in check. Then her lips like a sob held in check. Then her lips like a sob held in check, Then her lips live start to the craft a single to keep a stiff upper lips. And then added something that thrilled him clear through.

"You might

ience during the Great war.

as Belgium's spiritual leader.

J. Card, Williams

CARDINAL GIBBONS'S PREFACE

COLGATE'S IMPROVED PROVERBS-NO. 4

"A Tube in Time Saved Mine"





FAGER hands will strip the tree of its treasures, tinsel and candles will vanish and the tree itself will come to an ignominious end in the rubbish heap.

But pictures of the tree, of the children at play with their new toys, pictures of all that makes a Christmas merry will live forever.

KODAK

John Haworth Company

1020 Chestnut St.

HIGH GRADE DEVELOPING AND FINISHING EXTRA FINE ENLARGEMENTS

ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

An ideal book to send at Christmas time to all your friends, to a young boy or an old boy, to everyone who loves a dog-and a good story. \$2.00 net.

"'Lad' carries more keen interest and heart appeal than any other volume of the kind written within ten years."—Evg. World, New York. "Lad' wins you the moment you are introduced."-Christian Science

"The manner of its telling is delightful."-Boston Evening Transcript. If your bookseller cannot supply, order from the publishers

Postage extra. On sale E. P. DUTTON & CO. OSI Fifth Ave.