"COUNTRY'S CHIEF BLESSING IS ITS LIBERTY," CRIES MERCIER

Explanatory Comment

THE following additional excerpts from M. Theodor's protest on behalf of the lawyers to Von Bissing exemplify the soundness of the Cardinal's position regarding the status of Belgium, expressed in the accompanying correspondence with the Governor General:

"The secret police, without external marks or badges, mingle with the population in the streets," asserted the distinguished Belgian advocate; "in the cafes, on the platforms of the tramway stations, listening to conversations, ready to pounce upon their secrets; on the watch not only for actions but for intentions.

"The race of informers, it is said, has increased. What value can their declarations possess, inspired as they are by hatred or rancor or base cupidity? Such auxiliaries could offer no useful aid to the task of justice.

"If we add to this total absence of control and defense the preventive arrests and the long periods of detention, and if to these we add the domiciliary searches, we shall have almost a complete vision of the mental torture to which our aspirations, our thoughts and our liberties are at present subjected.

"Among the moral forces is there one which is superior to justice? * * * It is the basis of all civilization; art and science are its tributaries; religions live and prosper in its shadow. Is it not in itself a religion?

"Belgium has raised a temple to this religion in her capital.

"This temple, which is our pride, has been turned into a barracks. A small portion, still further reduced, is reserved for the courts and tribunals. Magistrates and advocates have access to it by a servants' staircase. * * *

"Force installed in the temple of the law—is this not the perfect symbol of the German occupation of Belgium?"

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 Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate, England.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels.
P. A. I. 5898. June 28, 1916.

TO His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I acknowledge receipt of your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 23rd inst. First of all, to avoid all confusion, I ask you to note that in my letter of June 4 (No. 5193) I did not deplore the severe and deserved condemnations incurred by priests before military courts; I simply manifested my lively regret to discover that in certain dioceses, in spite of all my efforts to get superior ecclesiastics to influence the priests subject to them, the number of breaches against my regulations committed by members of the clergy had not diminished.

Even lately ecclesiastics have not hesitated to profane the sacred character of their churches by poisoning therein the spirit of the Belgian people and inspiring it with hatred. From the pulpit they have hurled against my country and the occupying power insults and baseless accusations. They ought to be punished for having been, if not the authors, at least the propagators of publications vilely insulting.

We could not tolerate the assistance given by priests to secret organizations having for their object to injure Germany and increase the forces of our enemies already so considerable, by permitting Belgians of military age to cross the frontier.

Although I do not indulge the hope that these fresh declarations will result in changing your Eminence's opinion on the grave breaches of which members of the clergy never cease to render themselves guilty, yet I cannot omit a refutation of the mistaken notions which seem to form the basis of your judgment.

I regard it as my chief duty to protect most energetically, in the part of Belgium which we occupy, the German interests of which his Majesty the Emperor has made me the guardian. I should fail in this duty if in compliance with your Eminence's wishes I refrained from prosecuting those who commit acts that endanger the security of the empire and those who urge the people to commit them.

Be also impartial enough, my Lord Cardinal, to respect our patriotic feelings, you who not only pay homage to the patriotic demonstrations of the clergy and people of Belgium in general, but encourage them in circumstances which are of a nature to create intolerable situations. As to the rest of my letter, I feel bound, in order to avoid misunderstandings which might easily have unpleasant consequence for those concerned, to make the following statement: During the occupation the only legal political power in the occupied territory is what I exercise. To this power alone is obedience due and not to the king of the Belgians and his government, whose power in the occupied territory is in fact and in law extinct. Should this obedience be not willingly given, I am then compelled to exact it by the enforcement of the German penal laws.

These laws are applicable to all the inhabitants of the occupied territory without any exception as to persons. The courts only do their duty when they enforce these laws justly and without consideration of the person arraigned. According to the principles of German jurisprudence, they must not yield to any influence nor permit themselves to be enticed to deliver judgment according to instructions.

On myself alone rests the responsibility for the maintenance of order and the welfare of the population, and it belongs to me alone to judge of the fitness of the steps that must be taken for its preservation. I have never ceased to appreciate the Belgians' patriotism nor have I forbidden its legitimate display.

It is now two years since I accepted the office of Governor General. If during that time in spite of the incessant instigation to hatred and passive resistance against the state of things caused by the occupation the Belgian people have remained calm, and, as I acknowledge, given proof of being better disposed toward us, it must surely be ascribed to the steps I have taken, steps that are just but which necessity at times renders severe. In so doing I am conscientiously performing a duty, which is to watch over the welfare of the land intrusted to my care and the fulfillment of which I have much at heart.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem. Yours devotedly,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 12, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium, Brussels.

Baron—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of June 28. In the mind of the writer perhaps that letter required no reply; but considered from my point of view it demands some explanations.

First. Your Excellency reverts once more to the sermons of the clergy and censures them in terms which I prefer not to repeat. But why has your Excellency so brusquely cut short a correspondence which we were carrying on in regard to that very subject and which you ourself had invited?

You have, indeed, at various times brought ill-defined charges against the sermons of our priests; I ventured to ask of you more precise accusations and in several cases you did not refuse. In each of these I forthwith held an inquiry and laid the results before you. In every case the charges were proved unfounded. This rebutting method of inquiry—the only means of shedding light on the cases under consideration—happily stopped several hasty condemnations. Would it then be equitable or wise to abandon this mode of procedure and fall back upon accusations which cannot be investigated?

Second. Another complaint. Certain members of the clergy assist lads to join the Belgian army. But your Excellency surely is not unaware that Belgium and Germany, through no fault of ours, are two enemy belligerent nations? These noble souls that run the risk of the most severe punishments, even electrocution, to go and defend their country, can you impute it as a crime to a priest that he should share this admiration? Some of these brave youths fall by the way victims of their patriotic bravery. Are they not more than a sufficient ransom for your military regulations?

Others reach their goal and add a few units to the handful of soldiers of the Yser, **but can they cause disquietude to an army of eight and a half million? This last remark is not mine, but it was flung at us months ago by one of your most prominent chiefs.** It was not the time then to take it up.

Third. Your Excellency has, you say, to guard German security, die "deutsche Sicherheit," and must therefore take account of every act likely to bring about unendurable situations, "unhaltbaren Zustanden."

Such indefinite expressions are not of a kind to promote the understanding for which your Excellency had craved my co-operation. Certainly the Governor General's vigilance should include the whole army of occupation; but should it sacrifice thereto the Belgian people? Your Excellency is kind enough to repeat that you have at heart the welfare of the country intrusted to your administration. **A country's chief blessing is its liberty. Treat, I pray you, the Belgians as a nation not yet conquered.** Do not exasperate them by claiming to stifle in their breasts their hopes of a better time to come. Your vigilance will be thereby less frequently demanded.

He Speaks for the Nation's Soul

We too are concerned to reconcile the welfare of the Belgians with the security of the Germans, for we aim at respecting the rights of nations. Thus whatever turn military operations may one day take, we shall preach to our people what we have preached to them long before your regiments ever trod the Belgian soil, namely, **that we must commit to our army and to our loyal allies the defense of our liberty.**

Your Excellency sees but one danger to the public order, the extolling of the virtue of patriotism. **I see another, the exasperation of a people unjustly oppressed.**

Your Excellency sees but one remedy for the evil that you fear, Might. **I see another and a better one, respect for civic dignity.**

I believe I understand better than any foreigner the Belgian people's soul.

Fourth. Anxious to obviate misunderstandings, your Excellency devotes the second part of your letter to a statement of principles on the situation of the occupying power, on the responsibilities which weigh upon you, on the method by which you intend to govern us.

On this point, Baron, there is between us a fundamental and irreducible divergence.*

A nation has only one legitimate supreme authority; two are quite inconceivable.

As long as Belgium is not recognized by international law as a constituent part of the German Empire, the occupied provinces legally and morally depend on their legitimate government and on it alone.

The occupying power possesses an authority "de facto," but can claim no "right" to such possession.

The occupied country has to submit to the "de facto" authority.

Obedience, as a moral obligation, is due only to the authority of the legitimate government, which, despite the momentary obstacles limiting its sovereign prerogative, is and remains the government of the country.

I am quite aware this legitimate government requires us to accept, without any signs of external disaffection, the regulations of the occupying power, so long as these violate neither international law nor our dignity as patriots. I am aware also that with these limitations, the above-mentioned government expects us to observe these regulations in order thus to spare Belgium falling into a condition worse than that which has been imposed on it by force.

It is for these reasons we respect these regulations ourselves and enjoin others to do the same.

But when the occupying power violates The Hague convention or does violence to our dignity as men or as citizens of the Belgian nation, we must raise our voice in protest. Your Excellency attempts to stifle this protest and reserves to yourself the right to speak, saying that, "You alone are qualified to judge of what the public order and the welfare of our population demand."

Excuse me, your Excellency. The Hague convention is not a decree of an occupying power, but an international contract. This contract Germany has signed in the same way as Belgium. We are powerless to restrain the power of your military arm, but **we have the right, and at the same time the duty, of satisfying our conscience in reminding you that an account will be exacted from you one day before the international tribunal of The Hague and also before history of the use or misuse you have made of the weapons of power.**

The empire that you represent has pledged itself at The Hague never to misuse this power, if ever it came into possession of it. You are bound in conscience by this pledge. Kant, to whom must be attributed the perversion of all German philosophical speculation and against whose influence I am proud to have struggled throughout my career, divorces right from morality. Hence the notion which identifies right with an authority devoid of aught save the simple power of coercion. Against this arbitrary mental identification, justifying as it does despotism, the conscience of humanity protests.

I fear your Excellency, in spite of your natural uprightness and religious sentiments and the promise made to us, in writing or in conversation, to alleviate our misfortunes and to heal our wounds, is dominated unconsciously by this false notion of government. Thus it is that today you declare to expect from stern severity alone the consolidation of your power of occupation.

Receive, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

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

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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BARON ALBERT STANLEY

FORMER AMERICAN CITIZEN MADE PEER

Albert Stanley, Who Once Worked in Railroad Yards in Detroit, Created Baron

London, Jan. 1.—Albert Stanley at one time a resident of Detroit, Mich., is included in the New Year honor list, being elevated to the peerage with the rank of baron.

Although English by birth, Baron Stanley was an American citizen by naturalization. He gave up that citizenship and the management of certain American electric railways and became successively a member of Parliament, president of the Board of Trade, and chief of transport. In his youth he had worked in the railway yards of Detroit, where his father lived.

Sir George Riddell, who, as liaison officer between the British delegation and the press during the Peace Conference in Paris, became known to most of the American newspaper men there, also is made a baron, as is Sir Bertrand Dawson, physician extraordinary to King George.

An earldom is conferred on Viscount Midleton, former secretary of state for India, known for his stand against peace with Germany until the Germans had made reparation for vandalism.

Charles Hubert Montgomery, of the foreign office, who was in the United States with Lord Reading, receives the C. B., an honor shared by Wilfred Maurice Short, secretary to Arthur Balfour.

Hugh Cunliffe-Owen, vice chairman of the British-American Tobacco Co., was created a baronet, and Edward Mackay Edgar, banker, who is almost as well known in New York as in London, receives a similar title.

Frederick Guest, treasurer of the king's household, who married Miss Amy Phipps, an American girl; Charles J. Doherty and Arthur L. Sifton, Canadian representatives at the Peace Conference, and Sir William White, former Canadian minister of finance, are made privy councillors.

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NITTI PRESIEDE UN CONCILIO DI GUERRA

La Situazione Riguardo l'Adriatico e' Stato il Soggetto della Discussione

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Authorized by the act of October 6, 1917, on file at the Postoffice of Philadelphia, Pa.
A. S. BURLESON, Postmaster General.

Roma, 31 dicembre.—Ieri il Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri ha Presieduto il Consiglio di Guerra per discutere la situazione Adriatica. Prima della riunione egli tenne un Consiglio dei Ministri. Al Consiglio di Guerra ha partecipato anche il Ministro per gli Affari Esteri Scialoia, il quale ha posposto la sua partenza per Parigi allo scopo di essere presente.

La piu' importante discussione tra i ministri fu quella riguardante la questione di Fiume e l'On. Nitti dichiaro' di sperare poter risolvere anche nei riguardi di D'Annunzio, prima di partire per Londra e Parigi per la proposta missione finanziaria.

I ministri discussero pure la questione di arrestare la minaccia di nuovi scioperi, specialmente quello da parte del personale delle poste e telegrafi ed anche da parte di alcune sezioni del personale ferroviario e delle strade ferrate.

Le aspirazioni dei detti impiegati, se assecondate, porteranno alla necessita' di imporre nuove tasse per parecchi milioni. Il Governo desidera, ciononostante, di evitare qualsiasi agitazione la quale potrebbe assumere un carattere politico, peri coloso agli interessi dell'Italia, specialmente all' Estero.

Le sottoscrizioni per il prestito nazionale hanno raggiunto approssimativamente i nove miliardi di lire, secondo quanto stampa il giornale "Il Tempo."

Cable Briefs

Plans announced yesterday for putting in force the peace treaty on January 6 are likely to be upset by German objections to plans for the plebiscites in Upper Silesia, Allenstein, Memel and other territories. Marshal Foch reports 80,000 German soldiers in Upper Silesia, and suggests they be sent away before allied forces go there to conduct the plebiscite.

President Ebert of Germany views with alarm the outlook for 1920. He declares the attempt to deliver war chiefs to the Allies for trial, in compliance with the treaty of Versailles, may bring civil war, and that the economic situation of Germany points to a crisis which may shake the young republic to its foundations.

While it is believed that the Allies will accept certain treaty reservations, it has become known that no effort has been made to apprise Washington as to how far they are willing to go. The British government will not act until after the Senate takes definite action, on the ground that it has no right to influence America in its decision.

Indications are that Britain may have a labor ministry before the end of this year. Changes in sentiment during 1919 have been so great that it is believed labor will abandon the strike as its great weapon, and give arbitration a real trial in the settlement of disputes.

Teh advance guard of the Lithuanian-American Legion has arrived at Koons.

A London physician attributes the wave of crime in Great Britain to the effects of war on former soldiers—men with a strain of mania who have lost all fear of death or injury through experiences in the trenches, and who find excitement of some sort necessary to existence now.

Mrs. Carl Seitz, wife of the Austrian president, sends a message of thanks to the women of America for their help to the starving people. "Our one hope and comfort," she says, "is that the mothers of the world will not let our children perish."

Removal of price control from milk, butter and cheese in Great Britain has resulted in sharp advances in price. Butter is now a dollar a pound and milk has soared to such an extent that consumption has been reduced 50 per cent.

Moslems in India regard the portition of Turkey as an attack on their religion and refuse to accept the King of Hedjas as the protector of holy places. They demand restoration of Turkey on a pre-war basis and threaten a boycott of British goods.

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135.00	Taupe Coney Coats. Smart sport designs with large rolling shawl collar and cuffs.	98.50
185.00	Australian Seal Coats. 36-inch flare models with wide border and large shawl collar and cuffs.	125.00
195.00	Nutria Coats. Chic sport model with large shawl collar and cuffs of Nutria.	145.00
250.00	Australian Seal Coats. 36-inch flare model; large shawl collar and cuffs of Natural Squirrel, Beaver or Skunk.	175.00
275.00	Natural Raccoon Coats. 30, 36, 42 and 45 inch flare models with large rolling shawl collar and deep cuffs.	195.00
395.00	Hudson Seal Coats. 36-inch full model; large rolling shawl collar and cuffs of Hudson Seal.	295.00
445.00	Natural Squirrel Coats. Smart sport models with rolling shawl collar and cuffs.	345.00
475.00	Hudson Seal Coats. 36-inch flare models; large rolling shawl collar and cuffs of Beaver or Skunk.	375.00
495.00	Hudson Seal Coats. 40-inch models with large rolling shawl collar and cuffs of Beaver or Skunk.	395.00
545.00	Hudson Seal Coats. 45-inch flare models with large Skunk or Beaver shawl collar and cuffs.	425.00
645.00	Scotch Moleskin Coats. 45-inch full model; with large shawl collar and cuffs of finest Skunk.	495.00
650.00	Hudson Seal Wraps. Very smart designs with collar and cuffs of Hudson Seal or contrasting Furs.	495.00
795.00	Natural Squirrel Wraps. Exclusive designs of the very choicest Siberian pelts.	645.00
1350.00	Broadtail Wraps	975.00
1350.00	Natural Mink Wraps. 50-inch models of very fine moire skins with large shawl collar and cuffs of Hudson Bay Sable.	975.00
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185.00	Natural Muskrat Coats. Smart sport model with large shawl collar, cuffs and border of Muskrat.	145.00
225.00	Hudson Seal Coats. Smart sport model with large rolling shawl collar and cuffs.	150.00
225.00	Australian Seal Coats. Smart sports model; large shawl collar and cuffs of Natural Squirrel.	155.00

Stoles

Regularly		Now
34.50	Taupe Coney	19.50
49.50	Australian Seal	29.50
79.50	Hudson Seal	49.50
85.00	Mole	59.50
98.50	Natural Nutria	64.50
98.50	Natural Nutria	69.50
110.00	Jap Mink	69.50
115.00	Skunk	74.50
125.00	Jap Kolinsky	79.50
180.00	Russian Kolinsky	125.00

Sets

Regularly		Now
49.50	Taupe Wolf	24.50
49.50	Black Wolf	24.50
65.00	Taupe Fox	34.50
65.00	Brown Fox	34.50
60.00	Nutria	38.50
75.00	Hudson Seal	48.50
75.00	Black Lynx	49.50
82.50	Black Fox	53.50
98.50	Natural Raccoon	62.50
110.00	Beaver	74.50
120.00	Natural Squirrel	79.00
125.00	Mink	83.50
125.00	Kolinsky	84.50
140.00	Jap Cross Fox	97.50
180.00	Mole	119.00
185.00	Skunk	125.00
215.00	Skunk Raccoon	145.00
365.00	Fisher	245.00
550.00	Blue Fox	395.00
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Choker Scarfs

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22.50	Natural Squirrel	12.50
27.50	Stone Opossum	16.50
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Regularly		Now
85.00	Taupe Coney	49.50
98.50	Australian Seal	59.50
135.00	Australian Seal	89.50
145.00	Hudson Seal	98.50
145.00	Jap Mink	98.50
175.00	Mole	110.00
195.00	Nutria	125.00
275.00	Natural Squirrel	175.00
275.00	Russian Kolinsky	175.00
325.00	Hudson Seal	225.00

Scarfs

Regularly		Now
20.00	Taupe Wolf Scarfs	12.50
20.00	Brown Wolf Scarfs	12.50
20.00	Black Wolf Scarfs	12.50
22.50	Natural Squirrel Scarfs	12.50
22.50	Australian Seal Scarfs	14.50
29.50	Taupe Coney Scarfs	14.50
25.00	Taupe Fox Scarfs	16.50
25.00	Brown Fox Scarfs	16.50
25.00	Black Fox Scarfs	16.50
29.50	Taupe Lynx Scarfs	19.50
35.00	Taupe Wolf Scarfs	23.50
35.00	Brown Wolf Scarfs	23.50
37.50	Black Lynx Scarfs	24.50
37.50	Red Fox Scarfs	24.50
44.50	Hudson Seal Scarfs	29.50
52.50	Taupe Fox Scarfs	33.50
52.50	Brown Fox Scarfs	33.50
52.50	Black Lynx Scarfs	33.50
52.50	Black Fox Scarfs	33.50
49.50	Jap Cross Fox Scarfs	34.50

Muffs

Regularly		Now
19.50	Australian Seal	12.50
25.00	Taupe Fox	14.50
25.00	Brown Fox	14.50
29.50	Jap Kolinsky	14.50
29.50	Hudson Seal	19.50
34.50	Dyed Raccoon	19.50

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