

GERMANS DESPOIL THE SACRED VESSELS IN BELGIAN CHURCHES

"Can You Not Realize That Respect for Truth and Religion Imposes Duties Upon You?" Cardinal Asks Head of the Occupying Power - Pleads for Merchants

Explanatory Comment

THE Cardinal's clarity of vision is strikingly indicated in the subjoined letter to Baron von Falkenhausen. The primate asks if the Governor General is not impeding the future of Germany by the tyrannous maintenance of the food Zentralen, the memory of which would render difficult the resumption of Belgo-German commercial relations in the days of peace.

On the other hand, the Governor General was thinking very little of future amenities. Belgium was throttled and the course of the war on various fronts indicated that there was still a chance of holding Belgium at the end of the conflict.

In November, 1917, the Allies enjoyed a gleam of hope when General Sir Julian Byng, employing tanks with dramatic effectiveness, smote the German lines at Cambrai and for a day or two a complete dislocation of the Teuton front was conceivable. But Byng's sudden advance was imperfectly supported. The Germans, furthermore, recovered from the shock with surprising speed. Once more the line congealed.

On other fronts there was much to stimulate German aspirations. The blow of Caporetto had been dealt to Italy. The demoralization was checked in the nick of time by the valor of King Victor's troops and Franco-British aid. Venice, however, had been saved almost by a miracle. The Austrians, however, were masters of much of the province of Venetia. Even in the Allied camps it was felt that Italy could not become for a long time an offensive factor in the war. There was no hint at that dark moment of her swift recovery.

In Russia the Bolsheviks were playing directly into the German hands. On the very day on which the Cardinal dispatched the appended letter the soviet armistice. Von Falkenhausen, judging from his activities, seemed unable to see beyond these events. It was the perspicacious Cardinal who was forecasting the day when Germany would sorely need trade friendships which she now so ruthlessly jeopardized.

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.

[Continuation of Cardinal Mercier's letter to Baron von Falkenhausen.]

HARDLY had he arrived in Brussels when the Governor General Baron von der Goltz proclaimed that Belgian citizens desirous of peacefully following their occupation had nothing to fear from the troops or the German authorities and invited our countrymen to resume their commercial activities, to reopen the factories and to gather in the harvest.

Under date April 22, of last year, the late Baron von Bissing made the following communication to the Belgian public:

"With a view of insuring the victualing of the people I have determined henceforth to prohibit in the territory under my authority the exportation of all foodstuffs. All these products, provided they be Belgian, will therefore be reserved for the population of the territory dependent on my administration!"

Every time, either in the beginning or in the course of the occupation the fulfilling of my pastoral duty has compelled me to draw a line of demarcation between our permanent duty of loyalty to the legitimate government on the one hand and the acceptance of the temporary regulations issued by the occupier on the other, the representatives of your government have appealed for their own advantage to Article 43 of the Hague convention. This article, it is well to remember, is conceived in these terms:

"Article 43. The authority of the legal power, having de facto passed into the hands of the occupier, the latter shall do everything in his power to re-establish and insure, as far as can be, public order and public life by respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country."

The reason why international law recognizes in the occupier a power de facto is therefore quite definite, "to re-establish and insure, as far as can be, public order and public life." The limits of the exercise of it are defined, "to respect, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country."

Whoever holds the power, therefore, will find in this Article 43 both the basis and the limit of his responsibilities. Moreover, Article 43 clearly defines the obligatory destination of the resources of the country. The occupier may not seize or claim them except for "the wants of the army of occupation."

These two articles give the key to the solution of the knotty problem of providing the country with foodstuffs and fuel.

Our own painful experience shows that the German administration has erred in intrusting to the "Centrals" the exclusive control of the supplies of potatoes, coal, sugar, cereals, fats, etc.

Means of subsistence and heating are not lacking, yet the people are badly fed and the means of heating very poor. Where does everything not intended for their consumption go? In the name of public order and public life, which your government pledged itself to maintain when it took the power in hand, in the name of a people suffering hunger and cold, we implore the General Government to resolutely abolish the "Centrals" whose procedure is so fatal to Belgian interests and to confide the control of supplies for our country either to permanent deputations agreeably to the Belgian laws of August 4, 1914, or to the national committee under the supervision of ministers who will protect Belgian interests.

This letter is addressed to the Governor General with feelings of deference and hope. No doubt what I ask him for is no favor, but when the interest of workers' families and small householders is at stake, it does not cost a pastor very dear to join to his lawful claims an earnest prayer. Besides, is not your Excellency bound to admit that in doing us justice you are falling in with the wishes of your own countrymen? If the latter, as we firmly believe, have not given up all hopes of one day renewing commercial relations with Belgium, is it not natural that they should ask you not to sow fresh seeds of discord and bitterness, but rather leave behind you some last remembrance which will speak of justice?

Please accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

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

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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Charters Filed. Dover, Del., Jan. 28.—The following charters were filed here today: Chicago By-products Coke Co., \$1,500,000, to deal in and with coke, coal and the by-products of same; T. L. Crockett, C. H. Blanke, C. L. Rinalder, local Wilmington, Del., incorporators. The Hartford Securities Corporation, \$1,750,000; Joseph A. Levy, Hartford, Conn.; George G. Steigler, W. F. O'Keefe, Wilmington, Del., incorporators. Penn-Texas Oil and Gas Co., \$1,000,000, to acquire oil and gas lands and develop same; F. R. Hansell, J. Vernon Pimm, E. M. MacFarland, local Wilmington, Del., incorporators. Williamson Holding Corporation, \$1,000,000, to deal in and with patents and to develop same; S. B. Howard, Philip L. Nisner, A. Roy Myers, all of New York city, incorporators.

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Table listing various securities at auction, including National Bank, Philadelphia National Bank, and others, with their respective values and terms.

STEAMSHIP NOTICES

Table listing steamship notices for I.M.M. Lines American Line, Red Star Line, Atlantic Transport Line, and White Star Line, including destinations like Liverpool, London, and Antwerp.

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