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# BELGIUM IN WAR TIME

*by Commandant  
de Gerlache de Gomery*



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# BELGIUM IN WAR TIME

TRANSLATION OF NOTE TO THE  
FRENCH EDITION

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# BELGIUM IN WAR TIME

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH EDITION BY  
BERNARD MIALL

*WITH 58 ILLUSTRATIONS, 6 MAPS  
AND MANY FACSIMILES*



NEW YORK  
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Spec 100  
1st  
2nd  
5th

THIS BOOK IS PIOUSLY DEDICATED  
TO THE  
MEMORY OF MY BROTHER  
GASTON DE GERLACHE DE GOMERY  
WHO DIED FOR OUR COUNTRY  
THE 2ND OF AUGUST, 1915

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# BELGIUM IN WAR TIME



# BELGIUM IN WAR TIME

## I

### BELGIUM

WHEN Belgium was separated from Holland, to which country she had been arbitrarily united in 1814, she set up an extremely liberal Constitution.

This constitution, promulgated on the 7th of February, 1831, made Belgium a representative monarchy, under a hereditary ruler whose title is "The King of the Belgians" (*not* "the King of Belgium"; there is a distinction).

Administratively speaking, Belgium is divided into nine provinces. The province of Brabant—whose chief city, Brussels, is also the capital of the kingdom—is the heart of the organism. Around it lie the provinces of Antwerp, Limburg, Liège, Namur, Hainault, and East Flanders. The two remaining provinces—Luxemburg and West Flanders—lie in the south-east and the north-west of the kingdom respectively.

Considered from the standpoint of its area merely, Belgium is a very small country.

Her surface measures, indeed, only 10,340 square miles, or rather less than one-eighteenth of Germany or France, her two powerful neighbours to the east and the south.

Belgium is smaller than Denmark; smaller even than Holland, her northern sister. To cross the country by rail along its greatest diameter, from Arlon to Ostend, that is, from the south-east to the north-west, requires only four or five hours.

Yet the soil of this little country presents a most remarkable variety of aspects.

To begin with, there are the mountainous, wooded Ardennes; the banks of the Meuse, with an infinite variety of wild landscapes; the fertile table-lands of Coudroy and the Sambre-et-Meuse; the rolling, verdant landscapes of La Hesbaye and

Brabant; the rugged Borinage or "Black Country" with its sullen slag-heaps; and, on the other hand, the melancholy Campine, with its heaths and pine-woods and sheets of water; and, lastly, bordered by a strip of sand-hills which protect them from the sea, the fertile plains of Flanders, traversed by the majestic Scheldt and the tiny Yser.

If in place of considering her territorial dimensions we judge Belgium by the number of her inhabitants, we must at once assign her a more important position among the countries of Europe.

Her population, in short, on the 31st of December, 1913, numbered 7,658,000 souls.<sup>1</sup>

From the ethnical point of view there is, it is true, a distinction between the Flemings and the Walloons. But in spite of all that has been said of this distinction, and in spite of a duality of language, common aspirations and common destinies have given them one single soul. When the vital interests of the country are at stake, all hearts beat in unison, and then, according to the happy expression of a national poet, "Fleming and Walloon are only baptismal names: Belgian is our family name."

The same love of industry actuates the two races. Both display in an equal degree the energy of action and the persevering determination which are the predominant qualities of the Belgian people.

Again, if we consider Belgium from the economic point of view, we shall see that she bulks still larger; indeed, this time the increase will be prodigious.

We shall find that the country is covered by a network of railways, covering a total length of 2,899 miles, over which—before the 3rd of August, 1914—several thousands of trains ran daily, carrying annually nearly 100 millions of passengers.<sup>2</sup>

We shall find that beside this principal railway system there are numerous railways of secondary importance, covering a total of 2,608 miles, and in connection with our rivers and navigable waterways<sup>3</sup> there are many canals.

We shall find that Belgium is full of factories, workshops, foundries, etc., which consume 2,500,000 h.p., provided by

<sup>1</sup> This means an average of 676 inhabitants to the square mile. At this rate Norway would contain nearly 85 millions of inhabitants, Sweden 116 millions, and France 137 millions.

<sup>2</sup> The first Continental railway was built in Belgium in 1835, between Brussels and Malines.

<sup>3</sup> Rivers which have been dredged, deepened, or embanked, or otherwise made navigable.



30,000 engines. We shall find that the Belgian coal-mines yield about 25 million tons of coal each year, while the annual production of cast-iron is more than 2,500,000 tons.

We shall find that the ever-increasing movement of shipping in the port of Antwerp—the commercial metropolis of the country—amounted, in 1913, to more than 16 millions of tons, so that Antwerp is one of the leading ports of the world.

Finally, we shall find that the national trade of Belgium—that is, the sum of her imports and exports (through freights being deducted)—amounted in 1913 to £350,000,000, or £46 5s. 7d. per inhabitant, which was—proportionately—three times the trade of France or of Germany: an enormous figure, which gives Belgium the fifth place in the statistical table of the world's commerce.

Yes; from the *absolute* economic standpoint little Belgium stands—or rather stood, in 1913-14—immediately beneath England, Germany, the United States, and France. From this point of view, then, Belgium is quite one of the “Great Powers.”

\*                                     \*                                     \*

This sketch would be too rudimentary did I not add a few data by which I shall attempt to define the soul of my country.

Here, to begin with, is an essential trait: the Belgians' love of liberty.

If we go back to the origins of the Belgian people, and follow its history down to modern times, we shall often behold it in arms, but we shall find that it was always fighting *for liberty*.

From the time of Cæsar, who declared the Belgians to be the most valiant among the Gauls, throughout the course of the centuries, it was for independence and liberty alone that the Belgians fought. Sometimes it was to preserve rights already acquired; sometimes it was to obtain some additional franchise; but it was never to increase their territory or to dominate their neighbours.

In all times the Belgians have loved liberty with a fervour which has often inspired them to deeds of the noblest heroism.

The wonderful Hôtels de Ville (1),<sup>1</sup> with their stately towers, which our ancestors have bequeathed to us—what are they but temples raised to liberty?

Here is another trait of the Belgian character: the love of the arts, the worship of the Beautiful. Always the Belgians have loved the arts and have excelled in them.

<sup>1</sup> The figures in brackets refer to the illustrations.

The Hôtels de Ville, the belfries, the guild-halls and market-houses, the ancient churches (3), and all those stirring records of the past with which our native soil is covered, are so many masterpieces of the art of architecture.

And what inestimable jewels in these superb caskets—what wonders too in our museums! The works of the brothers Van Eyck—the inventors of oil-painting; of Van der Weyden, Memling, Quentin Matsys, and other masters of the primitive Flemish school; the works of the fertile enchanter Rubens, of the graceful Van Dyck, and of the Breughels—a long and glorious line of painters; the works of Jordaens and Teniers, eloquent of the joy of life, which again is one of the characteristics of the Belgian soul; the works of De Vos, Snyders, and of many another master, whose famous names no Belgian can pronounce unmoved. How many other specimens of national art: tapestries, laces, stained-glass windows, household furniture, altar-screens, and what not; how many more specimens, carefully treasured up, which make Belgium one of those corners of the world in which is collected the greatest abundance of artistic wealth!

As for music, here again—as a learned German writer upon music has very truly said—“this little out-of-the-way corner of the north-west of Europe, this land of alluvial deposits, a land of laborious industry and flourishing commerce, is the veritable home of the most bewitching of all the arts.” Polyphony was of Belgian origin. Ludwig van Beethoven was of Flemish origin. “We must not overlook this fact,” says Romain Rolland, “if we wish to understand the fiery independence of his character, and many peculiarities which are not properly German.” Grétry was born at Liège.

Ancient though it is, Belgian art has not degenerated. It remains worthy of its noble and most ancient traditions.

The pictorial art of Leys, Charles Degroux, Stevens, Boulenger, Courtens, Gilsoul, Frédéric, Baertsoen, Claus, Van Ryselberghe, and I know not how many more; the sculptural art of Constantin Meunier, Jef Lambeaux, Victor Rousseau, and George Minnie, to name only these; the musical art of Gevaert, Peter Benoît, and César Franck, shine in the first rank amid the productions of contemporary art. And all those who follow the movements of international literature will also place in the front rank the work of Georges Rodenbach, Camille Lemonnier, Émile Verhaeren, and Maurice Maeterlinck.

In the domain of the sciences many Belgians have distinguished

themselves, in the past as well as in the present. We may mention Mercator, who invented mathematical geography, and whose system of projections is still employed for the preparation of marine charts; Ortelius, who made the first geographical atlas; Vesalius and Van Helmont, who created anatomy and physiology respectively; Stévin, who invented the decimal calculus; Minckelers, who invented coal-gas in its application to lighting purposes; all these were Belgians. Nearer our own days are other Belgian names radiant with the purest scientific glory: Quételet, Plateau, Stas, Houzeau de Lehaye, Renard, the Van Benedens, etc. I am speaking only of the dead, and not all of them; but among these illustrious Belgians I must mention Brialmont, who was incontestably the greatest military engineer of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Let us note also that for a long time Belgium has applied herself with victorious activity to "maturing the formulæ of international law, and instituting laboratories of jurisprudence. Did she not dream of creating for the peoples a common intelligence, a human patrimony, a *res communis omnium*? The Institute of International Law was born of the initiative of an eminent Belgian, Rolin-Jacquemyns. The International Law Association was founded in Brussels in 1873. Two Belgians—A. Beernaert, the illustrious statesman, and M. Louis Franck—were present at the beginning of the conference on maritime law. The Institute of Comparative Law, more recently, has made it its business to give juridical studies a peculiar breadth, introducing an original and more profound method."<sup>1</sup>

There are in Belgium two State Universities, one at Liège and one at Gand, as well as three private universities: the Catholic University at Louvain, the Free University in Brussels, and the New University in Brussels. Besides these universities there are various scientific institutes and technical colleges, as well as schools of art and musical conservatories, and the majority of these establishments are attended by numbers of foreign students, which is the best proof of the excellence of their teaching.

A very old Flemish proverb, which is found also in Scotland: *Oost, West, t'huis best*—"East, West, hame's best"—proclaims the Belgian's love of his home and his country.

Flemings or Walloons, the Belgians are a domestic, stay-at-home people. And although they have distinguished themselves in many overseas enterprises—such as the creation, in Central

<sup>1</sup> Eugène Baie, *Le Droit des Nationalités*, Paris, 1915 (Felix Alcan).

Africa, of a colony eighty times larger than the mother country, the organisation of the public services in Persia, and the construction of important railways in China—as a general thing they do not often emigrate, and when they do so it is rarely without the intention to return.

Life in Belgium, moreover, is—or was—pleasant, and it was for this reason, and because they were cordially welcomed, that so many foreigners have settled in the country. There were in Belgium, at the time of the last ten-yearly census (31st of December, 1910), 248,562 foreigners, of whom 80,765 were French, 70,950 Dutch, 57,010 German, 6,974 English, 5,927 Austro-Hungarian, and 26,936 of other nationalities.

To close this chapter I will make one more remark, to which present circumstances give especial interest.

The Treaty of 1839, which ratified the separation of Belgium and Holland, gave to Holland the north of Flanders. It results from this fact that the mouth of the Scheldt is entirely Dutch. Holland commands the mouth of the Scheldt, and, therefore, holds the key of the two great Belgian ports, Antwerp and Gand.

## II

### THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM

WHEN the delegates from the United Kingdom, France, Austria-Hungary, Prussia, and Russia assembled in London, in December, 1830, to consider the conditions under which the Belgian provinces might be constituted an independent State, they put their heads together in order to inquire into "the new arrangements best adapted to combine the independence of Belgium with the interest of the security of the other Powers and the preservation of the European balance."

Their labours bore fruit, on the 20th of January, 1831, in the shape of a draft treaty, which stated, in Article 5, that Belgium "should form an independent and perpetually neutral State," and that "the five (contracting) Powers would guarantee this perpetual neutrality as well as the integrity and inviolability of its territory."

The treaty now known as the "Treaty of the XVIII Articles," which ratified this arrangement, recognised Belgium's "right to defend herself against all foreign aggression."

A later treaty, known as the "Treaty of the XXIV Articles," which, being finally accepted by Holland, became, in April, 1839, the definitive international statute of Belgium, proclaims, in no less definite terms, the principle of Belgian neutrality.

Their Majesties the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary and Bohemia, the King of France, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of All the Russias declare, in Article I of this treaty, that the articles appended to the text of the treaty concluded between their Majesties the King of the Belgians and the King of the Netherlands, Grand Duke of Luxemburg, are regarded as having the same force and validity as though they were inserted in the treaty itself, and that they are thus placed under the guarantee of their aforesaid Majesties. And Article VII of an appendix to the treaty stipulates that:

“Belgium, within the limits indicated by Articles I, II, and IV (of the appendix), shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State,”

And that:

“Belgium shall be required to observe this same neutrality in respect of all other States.”

Belgium could not, therefore, in the case of any conflict whatsoever, dispose of herself to her own liking, declaring herself neutral or participating in the conflict. *Neutrality was imposed*

### Article VII

*La Belgique, dans les limites indiquées aux articles I, II, et IV, formera un Etat indépendant et perpétuellement neutre. Elle sera tenue d'observer cette même neutralité envers tous les autres Etats.*

FACSIMILE OF ARTICLE VII OF AN APPENDIX TO THE TREATY OF 1839.

upon her perpetually, and this neutrality was *guaranteed* by England, Austria-Hungary, France, Prussia, and Russia.

Before the present war there were only two other European States which were by treaty declared “perpetually neutral.” These were Switzerland and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. But there were distinctions in the character of these so-called “perpetual” neutralities. Switzerland had been bound to neutrality—since 1815—only by her own will; while Luxemburg and Belgium were compelled to accept neutrality by the express will of the Powers.

“Belgian neutrality,” says Colonel F. Feyler, the eminent editor of the *Revue militaire suisse*, “is a creation of the Powers, among them the German Empire, which succeeded to the obligations of Prussia. Belgium is not, properly speaking, a neutral State; she is a *neutralised* State; but she is also an armed State, with the reservation that she is armed exclusively in order to defend herself in case of attack.

“As for the neutrality of Luxemburg, it dates from 1867, the year in which the Grand Duchy was in danger of kindling the

war which three years later broke out between France and Germany.

“The King of Holland was Grand Duke of Luxemburg. Napoleon III arranged that he should sell the Grand Duchy to France. This was a menace to the Prussian frontier, and Prussia prepared for war. The areopagus of the five European Powers intervened, as in 1830, in respect of Belgium. A treaty was signed in London, on the 11th of May, 1807.

“‘The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg,’ says this treaty, ‘will henceforth form a perpetually neutral State. It will be required to observe this neutrality toward all States. *The high contracting parties undertake to respect the privilege of neutrality stipulated by the present Article.*’

“And the treaty adds: ‘Luxemburg being neutralised, the maintenance of fortresses upon its territory becomes unnecessary and objectless.’

“Consequently the fortress of Luxemburg was demolished.

“To sum up: The Swiss Confederation is a deliberately neutral State, armed as much in defence of this neutrality as in case circumstances independent of its desires and its will should make a change of policy a matter of obligation. Its sovereignty is complete.

“The Kingdom of Belgium is a neutralised State; that is, its neutrality is a condition of sovereignty, and it is armed in defence of this neutrality.

“The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg is a neutralised State; it is also disarmed, the Powers having undertaken to watch over its security themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Article II of the Treaty of the 11th of May, 1867, declares:

“This principle (of the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg) is and remains under the collective guarantee of the Powers signatory to the present treaty, with the exception of Belgium, which is itself a neutral State.”

Thus, incidentally, after the lapse of thirty years, the Treaty of the XXIV Articles was ratified.

Three years later, it was confirmed and ratified anew, and this time in far more serious circumstances. The Franco-Prussian War had just broken out. Great Britain considered that the time had come to determine, for this particular case, the executive details of the Treaty of 1839. Further treaties were concluded on the 9th of August, 1870, between Great Britain and

<sup>1</sup> *Journal de Genève*, 27th January, 1915, 2nd edition.

France on the one hand, and between Great Britain and Prussia on the other, with the "firm intention of maintaining the neutrality of Belgium, as it was established by Article VII of the treaty signed in London on the 19th of April, 1839." The term of the validity of these new treaties was fixed at twelve months after the ratification of the treaty of peace, and it was expressly stipulated that after the expiration of this term "the independence and neutrality of Belgium would continue as before to be based upon Article I of the five-fold treaty of the 19th of April, 1839"—that is, upon the guarantee of the same five Powers.

What was the import of these new treaties? Baron Anethan, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, defined it, on the 16th of August, 1870, before the Chamber of Representatives: "The separate and identical treaties concluded by England with the two Powers at war neither establish nor modify the obligations resulting from the Treaty of 1839; they determine, *for a given case*, the practical method of executing these obligations; they by no means invalidate the engagements of the other guarantee Powers, and, as their text testifies, they leave untouched as regards the future, the *obligatory* character of the previous treaty, with all its consequences."

Whatever might be the nature of these private agreements between those of the Powers which guaranteed her neutrality, Belgium, being also fully determined to honour her engagements, remained mobilised throughout the entire duration of hostilities.

\*                     \*                     \*

With very few exceptions our statesmen, even until the last few years, have been intimately convinced that our neutrality would never be violated.

One of them, M. Beernaert, who played a remarkable part in the deliberations of The Hague Conferences, even remarked, in the course of a debate upon the rules conditioning the occupation of invaded territory: "As for Belgium, her position is peculiar. Belgium is neutral, and this neutrality is guaranteed . . . notably by our powerful neighbours. Consequently we cannot be invaded." (First Conference, session of the 6th of June, 1899.)

It is true that of late years some did on occasion venture to suspect the intentions of Germany. But on each of these occasions the leaders of German politics gave Belgium—directly or indirectly—the most definite assurances that her neutrality would be respected.



In 1911, in the course of the controversy excited by the promotion of the Dutch proposals concerning the fortifications of Flushing, certain newspapers asserted that in case of a Franco-German war the neutrality of Belgium would be violated by Germany. The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs then suggested that a declaration made in the German Parliament, on the occasion of a debate on foreign policy, would be calculated to appease public opinion, and to allay public suspicion, which was greatly to be regretted from the point of view of the relations between the two countries. Herr Bethmann-Hollweg, who was sounded upon this subject, replied that Germany had no intention of violating Belgian neutrality, but that he was of opinion that by making a public declaration to this effect he would enfeeble the military situation of the Empire in respect to France, who, being reassured as to her northern frontier, would concentrate all her forces upon the east.

On the 29th of April, 1913, there was a debate in the Reichstag, in the course of a session of the Commission for the Budget, on the subject of Belgian neutrality. According to the officially inspired *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Baron Beyens,<sup>1</sup> the Belgian Minister in Berlin, gave the following account of the debate:

“A member of the Social Democratic Party remarked: ‘In Belgium the approach of a Franco-German war is regarded with apprehension, for it is feared that Germany will not respect the neutrality of Belgium.’ Herr von Jagow, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, replied: ‘The neutrality of Belgium is determined by international conventions, and Germany is determined to respect these conventions.’

“This declaration failed to satisfy another member of the Social Democratic Party. Herr von Jagow observed that he had nothing to add to the plain statement which he had made respecting the relations between Germany and Belgium.

“To renewed interrogations of a member of the Social Democratic Party, Herr von Heeringen, Minister of War, replied: ‘Belgium has no part in the vindication of the German scheme of military reorganisation; the latter is vindicated by the situation in the East. Germany will not lose sight of the fact that Belgian neutrality is guaranteed by international treaties.’

“A member of the Progressive Party having also spoken of

<sup>1</sup> To-day Minister of Foreign Affairs, having replaced M. Davignon, who was obliged to retire for reasons of health.

Belgium, Herr von Jagow remarked once more that his declaration in respect of Belgium was sufficiently definite." <sup>1</sup>

At the same time, in certain quarters anxiety was felt as to the possible attitude of England. Vague rumours had been circulated of a possible landing of British troops in Belgium, to forestall, if need should arise, the passage of German troops.

Now here, in this connection, are extracts from a letter addressed by the head of the Foreign Office to the British Minister in Brussels: a letter dated the 7th of April, 1913, which describes a conversation which Sir Edward Grey had had with the Belgian Minister in London:

"I told him," writes Sir Edward Grey, "that he might with certainty assert that the present Government would never be the first to violate Belgian neutrality, and that I did not believe that any British Government would take such a step, that public opinion would never approve of it. . . . What we had considered—and the question was rather embarrassing—was, what it would be desirable and necessary that we should do, as one of the guarantors of Belgian neutrality, if this neutrality should be violated by any other Power. . . . What we desired, for Belgium as for any other neutral country, was that her neutrality should be respected, and so long as it was not violated by any other Power, we certainly should not ourselves send troops across Belgian territory." <sup>2</sup>

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Not only was our neutrality guaranteed by the five Great Powers which were signatories of the Treaties of 1831 and 1839; it was also guaranteed, morally at least, by all the other States which adhered to the second Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907. The Convention relating to the rights and duties of neutral Powers, which bears the signatures of the delegates of the *forty-four* States represented at the Conference, states, in its first Article:

*"The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable."*

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance diplomatique relative à la guerre de 1914* (Second Belgian Grey Book).

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 7th December, 1914.

### III

#### THE GERMAN ULTIMATUM

WHEN, towards the end of July, 1914, gloomy clouds, which grew more and more threatening, began to pile themselves up on the political horizon of Europe, Belgium became alarmed, and her uneasiness increased from hour to hour.

Germany, however, down to the very eve of hostilities, endeavoured to conceal her intentions.

On the 1st of August, war being imminent, M. Klobukowski, the French Minister in Brussels, officially declared to M. Davignon, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, that France would respect the neutrality of Belgium.

Informed of this declaration by M. Davignon, Herr von Below-Saleske, the German Minister to Belgium, replied that he had not been instructed to make a similar declaration to the Belgian Government, but that the latter was aware of "his personal opinion as to the security with which Belgium was justified in regarding her Eastern neighbours."

Moreover, on the preceding day Baron van der Elst, the Secretary-General to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had had a long conversation with Herr von Below, and had reminded him of the remarks made by Herr Bethmann-Hollweg in 1911, and the public declarations made by Herr von Jagow in 1913. Von Below not only admitted the accuracy of these statements, but added that he was "certain that the sentiments then expressed had not been modified."

Again, on the 1st of August the Military Attaché to the German Legation spontaneously congratulated the departmental head of the Ministry of War upon the rapid and remarkable progress of our mobilisation. For we had, as a special precaution, just mobilised our army, as Holland had done, for that matter.

On the 2nd of August, between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning, this same attaché telephoned to the office of the *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (a Catholic newspaper, published in Brussels, which had

Governmental tendencies), when the substance of his message was as follows:

"Your newspaper announces this morning that war has been declared between Germany and Russia. This is quite untrue: there is no war. This news is certainly issued by interested persons. I beg you, therefore, to be so good as to contradict it, in the largest possible type, in your next edition."<sup>1</sup>

Stupefied, those members of the staff who were present asked one another whether they were not dealing with a practical joker, and for a moment they were inclined to decide to ignore this communication. But reflecting upon the grave responsibility of suppressing such a contradiction, supposing it should have any foundation, they decided to telephone to the German Legation for confirmation of the message.

At this moment they received, from a reliable source, the news that the German troops—as had been rumoured in the city all the morning—had violated the Luxemburg frontier and had entered the Grand Duchy: yet another reason, to their thinking, for questioning the statement of the German Attaché. M. Passelecq,<sup>2</sup> who had received the first communication (and from whom I have received these details), then called up the attaché on the telephone, gave his name, and reminded the former of his recent communication, complaining that it was difficult to believe it, and that it was, moreover, ambiguous. "The telegrams reporting the declaration of war have been very explicit," he said. "And what precisely do you mean to say? That the declaration of war does not emanate from Germany? That war has broken out without a preliminary declaration? Or that there is no war at all?"

"I repeat," replied the Military Attaché, speaking with energy and emphasis, "that there is no war, that Germany is not at war, that the report of war is false, issued by interested persons who wish to embroil Germany with her neighbours,

<sup>1</sup> The German Ambassador in Petrograd notified M. Sazonov, on the 1st of August, at 7.10 p.m., of Germany's declaration of war upon Russia. He left Petrograd on the 2nd of August. On the morning of the 2nd of August German troops invaded the neutral territory of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, while others invaded French territory at a number of points.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fernand Passelecq, advocate in the Brussels Court of Appeal, and at present Director of the "Belgian Documentary Bureau" at Havre, was not a member of the ordinary staff of the *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, but on account of the gravity of the circumstances he was, that morning, as an exceptional thing, at work in the offices of the newspaper. Owing to this chance, and being close to the telephone at the moment of the first call, it was he who received the communication of the German Military Attaché, which was officially intended for the editor of the *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*.

and I beg you once again to deny the statement in the largest possible type."

"But, *M. le capitaine!*" replied M. Passelecq, "we have this moment received, from the most reliable source, that your troops have already invaded the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and have seized its railways!"

"Ah! I know nothing about that. I do not believe it. Wait a moment; I will inquire here. . . ."

Silence; the attaché, it seemed, had gone away; then, very shortly, he continued:

"Well, it is as I told you: there is beside me someone who has just come from Germany and who confirms our statement that there is no war. As for Luxemburg, nothing is known about that here; but everything leads us to believe that there is no more truth in that news than in the other, and that both reports have the same origin. Besides, the attitude of Germany toward Luxemburg is not the same as her attitude toward Belgium. . . ."

"Then," concluded M. Passelecq, "can we say that this double contradiction comes from you, the German Military Attaché?"

"Certainly!"

There was no longer room for hesitation; information of such importance must of necessity be published. However, the editor of the newspaper, M. Neuray, who arrived shortly afterwards, wanted to judge for himself of the rights of the matter, so he, too, called up the German Attaché. The reply was: "No, no war; the invasion of the Grand Duchy is most improbable; please deny reports!"

This time the German officer expatiated upon the different situation of the Grand Duchy and of Belgium, stating that the Belgians must not be uneasy; that the railways of the Grand Duchy were German; that Germany might, therefore, have to make herself secure in that direction; that it was not the same in Belgium; and he ended by confirming his authorisation to support the denial by the mention of his official quality.

The *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, therefore, inserted a brief report of this communication in the special edition which was then in preparation, and which issued from the press about 2.00 or 3.00 p.m.

Almost at the same moment the *Soir* appeared. This gave a report, in a prominent position, of an interview which a member of its staff had had that morning with the German Minister

himself. The latter had given the Belgian journalist the most definite assurance as to the eventual attitude of Germany toward Belgium, and he concluded with the words: "We have never dreamed of violating your neutrality. You may perhaps see your neighbour's house on fire, but your own home will be untouched."

These reassuring declarations assuaged the prevailing anxiety.

Now at 7.00 p.m. Herr von Below handed to M. Davignon, in the name of the Imperial German Government, an insulting ultimatum, and he demanded a reply within twelve hours—within the space of a night!<sup>1</sup>

What a night it was M. Hymans, the Minister of State, has told us. What a night—what a tragic night! How could it ever be forgotten?

"The Ministers with portfolios and the Ministers of State met in the Palace (5), the King presiding.

"We deliberated.

"There were two solutions: one, to grant passage to the German armies marching upon France, and to obtain heavy indemnities for the loss and injury suffered. . . . This would be to tear up the statute of the Belgian nation, to violate, of our own accord, the neutrality decreed by Europe and accepted by Belgium; to betray the obligations which this neutrality imposes upon us.

"The other solution was to risk war and invasion; to affront the most formidable military Power in the world; but honour would be saved, the Belgian Statute maintained, and the treaties respected.

"There was hardly any discussion. The decision forced itself upon us. It was formed immediately: we should protest, and we should resist.

"The reply was drafted in the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was taken to the Palace, and approved unanimously by the King and Council."<sup>2</sup>

It had been necessary to translate the ultimatum, the original text being in German. On the other hand, the Minister of the Interior, M. Berryer, who had lately gone to Liège, there to

<sup>1</sup> We have a right to ask ourselves whether this document, which must assuredly have been brought to Brussels by special messenger, was not brought by that very person who had "just arrived from Germany" about 11 in the morning, and who was mentioned as being in the Legation in the course of the telephonic conversation which we have just recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to *La Neutralité de la Belgique*, Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1915.

confer with the Military Governor and various civil officials, could not rejoin his colleagues until an advanced hour of the night, so that the day was beginning to dawn when the Ministers took leave of the King. Great clouds were gliding across the sky. "It is a gloomy day, indeed, that is dawning!" said the King, who had approached a window. "Yet," he added, after a moment's pause, "it has begun as though it was to be brilliant!"

While this meeting was being held in the Palace, the German Minister, about half-past one in the morning, visited the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs. He stated that he was instructed by his Government to inform the Belgian Government that French dirigibles had thrown bombs, and that a French cavalry patrol had crossed the frontier, thereby violating the law of nations, as war had not been declared.

Baron van der Elst inquired of Herr von Below where these incidents had occurred.

"In Germany."

"In that case I do not understand the object of your communication."

Herr von Below replied, in substance, that these actions, being contrary to the law of nations, were of a nature to lead one to suppose that France would not hesitate to infringe international conventions in other ways. . . .

At seven o'clock in the morning the Belgian reply to the German proposition was handed to Herr von Below.

I will confine myself to transcribing this reply, which reproduces the essential terms of the German ultimatum,<sup>1</sup> and will therefore make my narrative sufficiently clear:

In its note of the 2nd of August, 1914, the German Government has stated that, according to reliable information, the French forces are said to intend marching upon the Meuse by way of Givet and Namur, and that Belgium, despite her best intentions, would not be in a position to repulse an advance of the French troops without assistance.

The German Government would hold itself obliged to forestall this attack, and to violate Belgian territory. Under these conditions Germany proposes to assume a friendly attitude toward the Government of the King, and engages itself, upon the conclusion of peace, to guarantee the integrity of the kingdom and of the whole extent of its possessions. The note adds that if Belgium places obstacles in the way of the advance of the German troops, Germany will be forced to regard her as an enemy and to leave the eventual settlement between the two States to the decision of arms.

<sup>1</sup> The entire text of this ultimatum will be found in the Appendix.

This note has profoundly and painfully astonished the King's Government.

The intentions which it attributes to France are contrary to the precise declarations which were made to us on the 1st of August in the name of the Government of the Republic.

Moreover, if, contrary to our expectation, a violation of Belgian neutrality should be committed by France, Belgium would fulfil all her international obligations, and her army would oppose the invader by the most vigorous resistance.

The Treaties of 1839, confirmed by the Treaties of 1870, ratify the independence of Belgium under the guarantee of the Powers, and notably of the Government of His Majesty the King of Prussia.

Belgium has always been faithful to her international obligations; she has neglected no effort to maintain her neutrality or to cause it to be respected.

The attack upon her independence with which the German Government threatens her would constitute a flagrant violation of the law of nations. No strategic interest justifies the violation of justice. The Belgian Government, by accepting the proposals which have been put before it, would sacrifice the honour of the nation, while at the same time it would betray its obligations to Europe.

Conscious of the part which Belgium has played for more than eighty years in the civilisation of the world, it refuses to believe that the independence of Belgium can be preserved only at the cost of a violation of her neutrality.

If this hope should be betrayed, the Belgian Government is firmly determined to repulse by all means in its power every attack upon its authority.

During the morning of the 3rd of August there was a meeting of the members of the Government, when they discussed, in particular, the expediency of an appeal to the Powers which, with Prussia, had guaranteed our independence and neutrality. But as our territory had not as yet been invaded, it was decided that this appeal would be premature.

On the same day the King of the Belgians despatched the following appealing telegram to the King of England:

Recalling to my mind the numerous marks of friendship vouchsafed by your Majesty and his predecessors, of the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and of the proof of sympathy which she now again gives us, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium. ALBERT.

But it was too late. Diplomatically, England could do no more; Germany wanted war, that war for which she had so long been preparing.

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Early on the 4th of August Baron Beyens had an interview



with Herr von Jagow, which he reported to M. Davignon in the following terms:

“ ‘Well! what have you to say to me?’ These were his first words, as he came forward with alacrity to meet me.

“ ‘I have to ask you for an explanation in respect of the ultimatum which the German Minister presented to my Government on Sunday evening. I suppose you have something to add to it, some reason to give, to explain such an action.’

“ ‘An absolute necessity has compelled us to make this demand of you. The Emperor and his Government are intensely grieved that they have been forced to resign themselves to it. As for me, it is most painful, the cruellest decision I have ever had to form in all my career. But the passage through Belgium is for Germany a matter of life or death. Germany must destroy France as quickly as possible, crush her completely, so that she can then turn back to Russia, or she herself will be caught between the hammer and the anvil. We have learned that the French Army was preparing to pass through Belgium and attack us upon our flank. We must forestall her.’

“ ‘But,’ I replied, ‘you are in direct contact with France along a frontier of 125 miles. Why, in order to settle your quarrel, do you need to go a roundabout way through our country?’

“ ‘The French frontier is too strongly fortified, and we are obliged, I repeat, to act as quickly as possible, before Russia can have time to mobilise her army.’

“ ‘Contrary to what you imagine, France has explicitly promised us to respect our neutrality, provided you yourselves respect it. What would you have said if, instead of spontaneously making us this promise, she had made the same demand of us before you, if she had demanded passage through our country, and if we had yielded to her threats? That we were cowards, incapable of defending our neutrality, and unworthy of independent existence?’

“ Herr von Jagow made no reply to this question.

“ ‘Have you,’ I continued, ‘any cause to reproach us? Have we not always fulfilled the obligations which the neutrality of Belgium has imposed upon us correctly and scrupulously toward Germany, as toward the other guarantor Powers? Have we not been loyal and reliable neighbours to you since the foundation of our kingdom?’

“ ‘Germany has no complaint to make of Belgium; her attitude has always been extremely correct.’

“ ‘Then in recognition of our loyalty you wish to make our country the battlefield of your struggle with France, the battlefield of Europe, and we know what devastation and ruin a modern war involves! Have you thought of that?’

“ ‘If the Belgian Army,’ replied the Secretary of State, ‘allows us to pass freely, without destroying the railways, without blowing up the bridges and the tunnels, and falls back upon Antwerp without attempting to defend Liège, we promise not only to respect the independence of Belgium and the life and property of the inhabitants, but also to indemnify you for the losses you will have suffered.’

“ ‘Sir,’ I replied, ‘the Belgian Government, conscious of its obligations toward all the guarantors of its neutrality, could only meet such a proposal by the reply which it has unhesitatingly made. The entire nation will approve of the action of its King and Government. You must yourself recognise that any other reply was impossible.’

“ ‘As I pressed him to speak, Herr von Jagow, as a result of my insistence, eventually said:

“ ‘I do recognise it. I understand your reply; I understand it as a private individual, but as Secretary of State I have no opinion to express.’

“ ‘Then he again expressed his concern that matters should have reached such a stage after so many years of amicable relations. But a rapid march through Belgium was for Germany a matter of life and death. We in our turn ought to understand this. I replied immediately:

“ ‘Belgium would have lost her honour if she had listened to you, and a nation cannot live without honour, any more than a private person can do so. Europe will judge us. However,’ I added, ‘you will not take Liège as easily as you think, and you will have to face England, the faithful guarantor of our neutrality.’

“ ‘At these words Herr von Jagow shrugged his shoulders. This movement might be interpreted in two fashions. It might have meant: ‘What an idea! Impossible!’ or else: ‘The die is cast; we cannot draw back!’

“ ‘I said once more, before withdrawing, that I was ready to leave Berlin with my staff and to ask for my passports.

“ ‘But I do not wish to break off our relations like this!’ cried the Secretary of State. ‘We may still perhaps have something to discuss.’



I. HÔTEL DE VILLE AND GRAND PLACE, BRUSSELS. (Page 3)



2. THE KING GOES TO PARLIAMENT, 4TH OF AUGUST, 1914. (*Page 21*)



3. THE CLOTH HALL, BELFRY, HÔTEL DE VILLE AND CATHEDRAL, YPRES. (*Page 3*)



4. GERMAN TROOPS CROSSING THE BELGIAN FRONTIER, 4TH OF AUGUST, 1914. (Page 24)



5. ONE OF THE FORTS OF LIÉGE AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT. (Page 36)



6. LIVING SHIELDS. (Page 33)  
(From a Drawing by Louis Raemaekers.)

“‘It is for my Government to decide upon that point,’ I replied. ‘It does not rest with you or with me. I shall await its orders to demand my passports.’

“On leaving Herr von Jagow after this painful interview, which was to be our last, I came away with the impression that he had expected something different when I had asked to see him; some unexpected proposition, perhaps a request that the Belgian Army should be allowed to retire in safety upon Antwerp, when it had made a show of resistance upon the Meuse, and had, as a matter of form, defended the principle of neutrality and the entrance to Belgium. My interlocutor’s face, it seemed to me, betrayed disappointment after my first few words, and his insistence in asking me not to break off our relations just yet fortified the idea which occurred to me at the beginning of our conversation.”<sup>1</sup>

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The Belgian people approved unreservedly of the proud and dignified reply which its rulers had made to the German proposals.

Immediately and unanimously it felt that it represented justice, that its mission was a holy one, and that it could not fail to accomplish it.

So, on the morning of the 4th of August, when the King, in campaigning kit, visited Parliament, where all the representatives of the nation were awaiting him, there were frantic acclamations all along his route (2).

Never had our handsome monarch appeared to greater advantage. On horseback, riding with a firm seat, he towered above the crowd, giving it the military salute, identifying himself, by that martial gesture, with the feelings of all. And it was our sole voice, the voice of an entire people, which rose, vibrating, in a single impulse of patriotism, hailing him who, in that solemn moment, symbolised it with unexampled majesty.

In Parliament the session was unforgettable. The great white hall had been arranged and decorated with great restraint, the effect being at once simple and impressive. In the place of the desk the royal throne had been installed—a large gilt armchair, upholstered in red velvet, on the back of which is embroidered, in letters of gold, the national motto: *L’Union fait la Force*. Above the throne was an escutcheon with the national coat of

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance diplomatique relative à la guerre de 1914-15*, II. (Second Belgian Grey Book, No. 51). Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1916.

arms, surrounded by the folds of the Belgian flag—black, yellow, and red—and the colonial flag—blue with golden stars.

On either side of the steps leading to the throne was a Belgian flag.

The President and his assessors sat at the table which is generally used by the reporters.

An extraordinary animation prevailed in the semi-circle of benches; the tribunes were overflowing.

At ten o'clock the Queen arrived, accompanied by the little Princes.

Greeted by an enthusiastic acclamation, she took her place in an armchair to the right of the throne; her children were beside her. Then the King entered, and the cheering broke out again, prolonged and vibrating.

But the President rapped with his mallet. Silence ensued, and the King, standing upright before the throne, deeply moved, delivered this speech:—

GENTLEMEN:

Never, since 1830, has a more solemn hour struck for Belgium: the integrity of our territory is threatened.

The very force of our righteous cause, the sympathy which Belgium, proud of her free institutions and her moral victories, has always received from other nations, and the necessity of our autonomous existence in respect of the equilibrium of Europe, make us still hopeful that the dreaded emergency will not be realised.

But if our hopes are betrayed, if we are forced to resist the invasion of our soil, and to defend our threatened homes, this duty, however hard it may be, will find us armed and resolved upon the greatest sacrifices.

Even now, in readiness for any eventuality, our valiant youth is up in arms, firmly resolved, with the traditional tenacity and composure of the Belgians, to defend our threatened country.

In the name of the nation, I give it a brotherly greeting. Everywhere in Flanders and Wallonia, in the towns and in the countryside, one single feeling binds all hearts together: the sense of patriotism. One single vision fills all minds: that of our independence endangered. One single duty imposes itself upon our wills: the duty of stubborn resistance.

In these solemn circumstances two virtues are indispensable: a calm but unshaken courage, and the close union of all Belgians.

Both virtues have already asserted themselves, in a brilliant fashion, before the eyes of a nation full of enthusiasm.

The irreproachable mobilisation of our army, the multitude of voluntary enlistments, the devotion of the civil population, the abnegation of our soldiers' families, have revealed in an unquestionable manner the reassuring courage which inspires the Belgian people.

It is the moment for action.

I have called you together, gentlemen, in order to enable the Legisla-



tive Chambers to associate themselves with the impulse of the people in one and the same sentiment of sacrifice.

You will understand, gentlemen, how to take all those immediate measures which the situation requires, in respect both of the war and of public order.

No one in this country will fail in his duty.

If the foreigner, in defiance of that neutrality whose demands we have always scrupulously observed, violates our territory, he will find all the Belgians gathered about their sovereign, who will never betray his constitutional oath, and their Government, invested with the absolute confidence of the entire nation.

I have faith in our destinies; a country which is defending itself conquers the respect of all; such a country does not perish!

This speech, need we say, was frequently interrupted by the cheers of the whole Assembly, and the peroration was greeted by a stirring acclamation, such as had never before been heard within those walls.

After the King had withdrawn with the Queen and the Princes, Baron de Broqueville, President of the Council and Minister of War, acquainted the Chambers with the events which had occurred during the last few days. He also read a Note which the German Minister had forwarded at six o'clock that very morning to the Belgian Government, in which Germany declared her determination to cross our territory *by force of arms*.

This was war!

"We shall defend ourselves," said M. de Broqueville finally, "*and even if we are defeated we shall never be conquered.*"

Various legislative proposals, inspired by the circumstances, were adopted immediately without debate.

In particular the Chamber voted unanimously a credit of 200 million francs with which to meet the first expenses. Then, about eleven o'clock, the President of the Council, with tears in his eyes, announced that the national territory had just been invaded. He further announced, amid indescribable enthusiasm, that "the King, wishing to recognise the patriotic assistance which the Opposition had afforded the Government, had decided to appoint M. Émile Vandervelde Minister of State."<sup>1</sup>

This historic session was terminated shortly before noon.

A few hours later words were spoken in Berlin which had

<sup>1</sup> In Belgium, the Ministers of State have no portfolio; selected from among those statesmen who have been of eminent service to the country, they form, so to speak, a Privy Council of the Crown.

less nobility than those which had rung through the Belgian Parliament.

The Chancellor of the Empire, in short, made the following declaration from the tribune of the Reichstag:—

Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and it may be (*sic*) that they have already entered Belgium. This is contrary to the prescriptions of international law. France, it is true, assured Brussels that she was determined to respect the neutrality of Belgium as long as her adversary did so. But we knew that France was holding herself in readiness to invade Belgium. . . . In this way we have been forced to override the justified protests of the Belgian and Luxemburg Governments.

We shall repair the injustice which we are committing as soon as our military object is attained.

That same afternoon the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Goschen, had an interview with Herr von Jagow, which he reported to Sir Edward Grey in the following terms:—

“In conformity with the instructions contained in your telegram of the 4th of August, I went to see the Secretary of State in the afternoon, and in the name of His Majesty’s Government I inquired whether the Imperial Government would refrain from violating Belgian neutrality. Herr von Jagow immediately replied that he regretted to say that his reply must be ‘No’; that the German troops had crossed the frontier this morning (4), and that the neutrality of Belgium had already been violated. Herr von Jagow then spoke once more of the reasons why the Imperial Government had been obliged to take this measure; he said in particular that the Germans were obliged to enter France by the quickest and easiest route, so that they could hasten their operations and endeavour to strike a decisive blow as quickly as possible. This was for them a question of life or death, for if they had followed a path further to the south they could not have hoped, owing to the scarcity of roads and the strength of the fortresses, to penetrate into France without encountering a formidable opposition, which would have resulted in a great loss of time. This loss of time on the German side would have been time gained by the Russians, who would be marching their troops upon the German frontier. Rapidity of action was Germany’s strength, while Russia’s consisted in an inexhaustible reserve of troops.

“I pointed out to Herr von Jagow that the *fait accompli* of the violation of the Belgian frontier rendered the situation extremely serious, and I asked him if it was not still possible to

turn back and avoid the consequences, which we should both have reason to deplore. He replied that for the reasons already given it was not possible for Germany to retrace her steps."

After this interview Sir Edward Goschen had another interview with the Chancellor of the Empire himself.

He found that "the Chancellor was greatly agitated." "His Excellency began a harangue which lasted about twenty minutes. He said the step taken by His Majesty's Government (the British Government) was terrible to a degree: just for a word—'neutrality'—a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a 'scrap of paper,' Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation."

There was no longer a question of a French attack by way of the Meuse.<sup>1</sup> Throwing off the mask, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg cynically declared, as Herr von Jagow had done, that Germany was thinking only of her own interest, and that she would follow the plan of campaign worked out by her General Staff without troubling herself about treaties!

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On the 4th of August M. Davignon telegraphed to Baron Beyens advising him to apply for his passports. He also begged Spain to watch over Belgian interests in Germany, to which the Spanish Government immediately agreed.

On the 5th of August the Dutch Government notified the Belgian Government that it was establishing a system of "war sea-marks" in the estuary of the Scheldt, so contrived that it would still be possible to navigate the river in order to make Antwerp or to sail from it, but only during the day and with the aid of Dutch pilots provided with the necessary data.

Navigation upon the Scheldt was, of course, forbidden, not only to warships, but also to vessels carrying troops, munitions of war, or any kind of contraband of war.

On the same date M. Davignon wrote as follows to all the diplomatic representatives of Belgium:—

"By the Treaty of the 18th of April, 1839, Prussia, France, Great Britain, Austria, and Russia declared themselves guarantors of the treaty concluded the same day between His Majesty the King of the Belgians and His Majesty the King of the Netherlands. This treaty states: 'Belgium will form an independent and perpetually neutral State.'

"Belgium has fulfilled all her international obligations, she

<sup>1</sup> Events, moreover, gave superabundant proof of the inanity of this pretext.

has accomplished her duty in a spirit of loyal impartiality, and has neglected no effort to maintain her neutrality and cause it to be respected.

“Thus it is with a painful emotion that the King’s Government has learned that the armed forces of Germany, a Power guaranteeing our neutrality, have penetrated Belgian territory in violation of the engagements which she has entered into by treaty.

“It is our duty to protest with indignation against an infringement of the law of nations which no action of ours could have provoked. His Majesty’s Government is firmly determined to repulse by all the means in its power the attack made upon its neutrality, and recalls the fact that by virtue of Article 10 of The Hague Convention of 1907, concerning the rights and obligations of neutral Powers and persons in case of war on land, the fact that a neutral Power resists, even by force, the attacks made upon its neutrality, *cannot be regarded as a hostile action.*

“You will please immediately request an audience with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and will read to His Excellency the present letter, a copy of which you will leave with him.

“If the audience cannot be immediately granted, you will make the communication in question in writing.”

It was not until after the German troops had invaded her territory—and about forty hours after the presentation of the ultimatum—that Belgium requested Great Britain, France, and Russia, co-signatories with Prussia and Austria-Hungary of the Treaties of 1831 and 1839, to aid her in her resistance. Moreover, she declared that she herself was prepared to undertake the defence of her fortresses.

But, alas! events followed one another with such rapidity that neither France nor England could give us help which was sufficiently prompt to be useful. In the words and according to the desire of the masters of German strategy, the attack was overwhelming.

## IV

### BY FORCE OF ARMS

BETWEEN the German threats and their execution scarcely a day elapsed.

We had to improvise everything, to organise everything, in a few hours. Yet nowhere in Belgium—and this may be asserted emphatically—nowhere and in no department was there the least hesitation or the least confusion.

Without faltering, and even with serenity, the little Belgian people prepared for the gigantic conflict. The long peace which it had enjoyed and the great prosperity which had resulted therefrom had not enervated it; they had not destroyed the spirit of combat for justice and liberty which is characteristic of its entire history. For the rest, there was not a single Belgian who did not at once intuitively feel that the German proposals endangered the very independence of the nation, and that to subscribe to them would have been to forfeit our honour and to sign our own death-warrant.

The whole nation, therefore, mindful of its noble traditions, came forward as one man; and as in the heroic ages long ago, its first thought and its first care were to make ready for battle. Everywhere, in the villages as in the cities, the national flag was hoisted.

Belgium had the appearance of a country making holiday. But it was only an appearance; the nation was fully conscious of the gravity of the moment.

Instantaneously, moreover, and without any hint from the authorities, all places of amusement were closed, and all bands and orchestras were silent.

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The King left Brussels to place himself at the head of the army in the field. He addressed to his soldiers a proclamation which was inspired by the purest patriotism.

The Queen, for the time being, remained in the Palace, but

she transformed it into a hospital. Never had the noble daughter of a princely doctor, the medical philanthropist, felt so completely at home; but this did not prevent her from undertaking activities outside the Palace, and visiting other hospitals. One hospital in particular she visited on the very first day: it was that installed in the Maison du Peuple.

In addition to the hospitals, which were improvised and organised on every hand, all kinds of organisations for aid and relief, responding to all the emergencies of the situation, came spontaneously into being everywhere.

From every corner of the country, from all classes of society, came volunteers to swell the ranks of the army.

Everybody wanted to be of use, down to the Boy Scouts, who, with touching conscientiousness and remarkable enthusiasm, undertook the duties of messenger, orderly, etc.

Finally, in order to place as many obstacles as possible in the way of the invasion, railways, bridges and tunnels were blown up in the neighbourhood of the frontier, while within the range of the Liège forts farms, villas and châteaux were blown up in order to clear the line of fire.

Unanimously, without hesitation or delay, the country made the greatest sacrifices.

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I should not be speaking the truth were I to tell you that all the Germans who were living in Belgium were secretly betraying our confidence. There were some who deeply loved our country, who had become very sincerely attached to it, and who would never on any account have consented to betray it. But these, alas! were only honourable exceptions.

Our eyes were suddenly opened, and we quickly realised that the great majority of these Germans, whom we had welcomed with such friendly simplicity, were the agents of Pan-Germanism, who, slowly, patiently, and with great skill, had been preparing the way for the invasion and conquest of our country. There were thousands on thousands of them, and profiting by our too great confidence they had organised in the midst of us the most varied means of espionage and of gathering information. They were everywhere, and they first contrived to feel their way into, and then to impose themselves upon, all classes of society.

In the interests of the national defence it was necessary to expel all Germans from the country, or at least to endeavour to do so. There was no time to make inquiries, to sift the sheep

from the goats; besides, how could we still trust them, and how for certain tell the good from the bad?

The people—justly indignant at the duplicity of these crafty aliens—gave themselves up, in the great cities, to noisy demonstrations which assuredly were not of a friendly nature. Windows were broken even, and shop-signs forcibly removed. But, in spite of all that has been said since then to inculpate us, the Germans who lived in Belgium were not the object of inhuman treatment; neither in Brussels, nor in Antwerp, nor anywhere else.

Here, for that matter, is how one of these Germans describes of his own accord, in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* of the 10th of September, 1914, the manner in which he left Brussels.

To begin with, he says that as he had to leave on Friday, the 7th of August, at one o'clock in the morning, he repaired on Thursday evening to the German Consulate—which was already under the protection of the United States—but so many of his compatriots were there that some measure of organisation had to be taken, so it was decided to transfer all these people to the Royal Circus, “a large building, very spacious and well ventilated”; then he continues, “During this transfer, just as subsequently in the circus itself, and on the following day, at dawn, during the journey to the railway station, we were guarded by soldiers of the civic guard,<sup>1</sup> who behaved with such consideration that one would have thought they were instructed to look after us rather than to guard us.

“They certainly made a lamentable spectacle, these innumerable fugitives, with their wives and children, and we heard, in spite of the early hour, the pitying exclamations of the inhabitants at the windows of their houses. The civic guards were equally compassionate; there was not one among them whose expression, words and gestures did not betray a human pity. Many of them made themselves helpful to the fugitives by carrying their portmanteaux or their children. Burgomaster Max himself came about two o'clock in the morning to make sure that everything was being done in an orderly fashion.<sup>2</sup> In the circus again there were soldiers who were looking after the children, distributing milk and food. An eye-witness told me that

<sup>1</sup> As to the civic guard, see the note in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> I might add that Mme. Henry Carton de Wiart, the wife of the Minister of Justice, passed a portion of this night at the Royal Circus, going from group to group, and attending with maternal solicitude to the more unfortunate.

he saw them taking up a collection for the benefit of a family without resources. . . . In a word, everybody did all that was in his power to help the fugitives."

This disinterested narrative proves conclusively that the Germans in Brussels were treated not only with every consideration which the circumstances permitted, but with real solicitude. It was precisely the same in the other Belgian cities.

It was not possible to expel all the Germans residing in Belgium during the first few days of the war. Many slipped through the meshes of the net, and these, naturally, were the most dangerous, including spies of all species.

They had to be hunted down. It was necessary, moreover, to discover and suppress their means of information. Accident favoured the search, which revealed surprise upon surprise, discovery upon discovery.

It was noticed, quite accidentally, for instance, that certain advertising placards, which were posted more or less all over the country, were designed, according to the manner in which they were placed, to give such-or-such information to the enemy. They were veritable sign-posts!

But it was in the domain of wireless telegraphy that the most unexpected discoveries were made. Here was a telephone circuit, cunningly insulated from the earth; there was a metallic weather-cock, a zinc cornice, a trellis of copper-wire fitted under the roof, or a wire mattress found in a garret, which served as antennæ; or kites of the Farman type were flown at night, or the stays of flag-staffs affixed on the roofs of certain industrial establishments provided ideal antennæ.

Spies were discovered who, furnished with portable apparatus, used to install themselves on the roofs at night in the heart of Brussels.

There were spies everywhere, and they employed the most varied means to deceive us.

Ah! This invasion of our poor too-trusting Belgium had been long and minutely prepared for, with astonishing treachery and cunning, and we entered the conflict under conditions of very great material inferiority.

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Only a year had passed since military service had been made universal, compulsory for all; the new military law would not produce its effect for four or five years. And not only was



our army too small: it was lacking in almost everything. Certain forts were hardly armed,<sup>1</sup> and our field artillery, too, was utterly insufficient.

How would our troops behave under these conditions?

The moment hostilities commenced we were completely reassured, and we felt proud indeed: the Belgian Army was doing its utmost duty; was doing it courageously and nobly.

## Au Peuple Belge!

C'est à mon plus grand regret que les troupes Allemandes se soient forcées de franchir la frontière de la Belgique. Elles agissent sous le contrainte d'une nécessité inévitable la neutralité de la Belgique ayant été déjà violée par des officiers français qui sous un déguisement, sont traversés le territoire belge en automobile pour pénétrer en Allemagne.

Belges! C'est entre vous plus grand désir qu'il y ait encore moyen d'éviter ce combat entre deux peuples qui étaient amis jusqu'à présent. Sachez vous de glorieux jour de Waterloo ce n'était pas les armes allemandes qui ont contribué à fonder et établir l'indépendance et la prospérité de votre patrie.

Mais il nous faut le chemin libre. Des destructions de ponts, de tunnels, de voies ferrées devraient être regardées comme des actions hostiles. Belges, vous avez à choisir.

J'espère être que l'Armée allemande de la Meuse ne sera pas contrainte de venir combattre. Un chemin libre pour attaquer celui qui voulait nous attaquer, c'est tout ce que nous désirons.

Je donne des **garanties formelles** à la population belge qu'elle n'aura rien à souffrir des horreurs de la guerre; que nous **payerons en or monnayé** les vivres qu'il faudra prendre de pays; que nos soldats ne manqueraient les meilleurs amis d'un peuple pour lequel nous éprouvons la plus haute estime, la plus grande sympathie.

**C'est de votre sagesse et d'un patriotisme bien compris qu'il dépend d'éviter à votre pays les horreurs de la guerre.**

Le Général Commandant en Chef l'Armée de la Meuse  
von Emmich.

PROCLAMATION DISTRIBUTED IN THE PROVINCE  
OF LIÈGE, 4TH OF AUGUST, 1914.<sup>2</sup>

A large body of German cavalry—about twelve regiments—crossed the frontier early in the morning of the 4th of August, making for the Meuse. On the way thither they distributed in the villages which they passed through a proclamation, in which General von Emmich, “Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Meuse,” declared that he must have an “open road,” and that “the destruction of bridges, tunnels, and railways” would be regarded as “hostile acts.” (This General von Emmich, let us remark in passing, was he who, the preceding year, had represented the Kaiser at the festival held at Liège on the occasion of the “Joyous Entry” of our young Sovereigns.)

Behind this large body of cavalry troops of all arms, forming

<sup>1</sup> Many large pieces of artillery ordered from Krupp's, and paid for long ago, had not been delivered.

<sup>2</sup> TO THE BELGIAN PEOPLE!—To my very great regret the German troops find themselves forced to cross the Belgian frontier. They are acting under the constraint of an unavoidable necessity, the neutrality of Belgium having already been violated by French officers who, in disguise, crossed Belgian territory in motor-cars in order to penetrate into Germany.

Belgians! It is our chief desire that there should still be a means of avoiding a conflict between two peoples who up to the present have been friends, even allies. Remember the glorious day of Waterloo, when the German arms contributed to found and establish the independence and prosperity of your country.

But we must have an open road. The destruction of bridges, tunnels, or

the VIIth, VIIIth, IXth, Xth, and XIth Army Corps, entered Belgium.

Early in the afternoon considerable forces reached the bank of the Meuse, at Visé, without having struck a blow. There they found the bridge blown up, and the crossing guarded on the left bank by the 2nd Battalion of the 12th Regiment of the line. This battalion resisted the hostile forces so valiantly that, although the latter were greatly superior both in numbers and in armament, they had to extend their movement toward the north. Two regiments of Hussars crossed the Meuse at the ford of Lixhe (close to the Dutch frontier), and thereupon the Belgian infantry posted at Visé were forced to fall back upon the line of the Meuse forts, or their left would have been turned.

On the 5th of August a bridge was thrown over the river at Lixhe, and advanced bodies of the German cavalry made their appearance at Tongres. At the same time a regiment of enemy cavalry collided, to the south of Liège, at Plainevaux, with a squadron of the 2nd Regiment of Belgian Lancers, who charged them furiously, and lost in this unequal conflict three-fourths of its effectives.

In the morning the bearer of a flag of truce was sent to General Leman, the Governor of the fortified position of Liège, and requested him to allow the Germans to pass. They received a categorical refusal, upon which they proceeded to attack the forts of Chaudfontaine, Fléron, Evegnée, Barchon, and Pontisse.

Although supported by powerful heavy artillery, the assailants were everywhere repulsed with very heavy losses. There were epic struggles, especially between the Barchon fort and the Meuse.

The enemy was finally thrown back in disorder beyond his original positions; his attack upon the Vesdre—Lower Meuse sector had miscarried.

railways will be regarded as hostile acts. Belgians, it is for you to choose.

I hope, then, that the German Army of the Meuse will not be compelled to fight you. An open road to attack those who wished to attack us—that is all we desire.

I give the Belgian population *definite guarantees* that it will have to suffer nothing of the horrors of war; that *we shall pay in minted gold* for the provisions which it will be necessary to take from the country; that our soldiers will prove to be the best friends of a people for whom we feel the highest esteem and the greatest sympathy.

*It rests with your wisdom and patriotism, properly understood, to save your country from the horrors of war.*

The General Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Meuse,

VON EMMICH.

Fresh troops were then brought to bear upon the Ourthe—Meuse sector, which they violently attacked during the night of the 5th of August. At the same time two German officers and eight cavalymen made a surprise entrance into Liège and attempted to assassinate General Leman; Commandant Marchant, the General's aide-de-camp, was killed while endeavouring to protect his General. But the ten Germans who took part in this hateful attempt were all cut down.

Between the Ourthe and the Meuse the assaults of the Xth German Army Corps forced the defenders of the intervals between the forts to fall back; but the available elements of the 4th Division, sent from Huy, stemmed these assaults by counter-offensives.

But the struggle was far too unequal. It was unequal not only by reason of the crushing numerical superiority of our enemies, but also, and especially, by reason of the disloyalty of the "ruses" which they used and abused from the very first moments of the war; the improper employment of the white flag and the flag of the Geneva Convention; the placing of Belgian civilians in huddled ranks before attacking troops (6), pretended surrenders, by means of which the German "kamerads" approached, concealing their machine-guns; the imitation, in the darkness, of Belgian bugle-calls; and I know not what other examples of deceit and cunning.

<sup>1</sup> TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE LIÈGE DISTRICT.—Great Germany is invading our territory after an ultimatum which constitutes a gross insult. Little Belgium has proudly taken up the gauntlet. The Army will do its duty! The population of the Liège district will do the same! Therefore it will constantly set an example of tranquillity and respect for the laws. Its ardent patriotism will be answerable for this. Long live the King, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army! Long live Belgium! Liège, 4th August, 1914.—Lieutenant-General LEMAN, Military Governor of Liège.

**AUX HABITANTS**

DU

**PAYS DE LIÈGE**

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La grande Allemagne envahit notre territoire après un ultimatum qui constitue un outrage.

La petite Belgique a relevé fièrement le sanl.

L'armée va faire son devoir !

La population du pays de Liège accomplira le sien !

Aussi ne cessera-t-elle de donner l'exemple du calme et du respect aux lois.

Son ardent patriotisme en répond.

Vive le Roi, commandant en chef de l'armée !

Vive la Belgique !

Le Lieutenant-Général  
Gouverneur Militaire de Liège  
**LEMAN.**

Liège le 4 Août 1914

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PROCLAMATION POSTED IN LIÈGE, 4TH OF AUGUST, 1914.<sup>1</sup>

Literally overwhelmed, the troops of the 3rd Division, which since the 4th had been fighting necessarily at every point of a widely-extended front—placing more than 60,000 Germans out of action—were forced to fall back, on the evening of the 6th of August, to the left bank of the Meuse in order to link forces on the Gette with the main body of the army in the field, whose concentration upon this line was by then completed.

The Germans entered Liège. This meant the taking of hostages, the posting of a proclamation—the first of a long series—requisitions, war-taxes, and what not. . . .

At this moment the King issued the following “Order of the Day” :—

Our comrades of the 3rd Division of the Army and of the 15th Combined Brigade are about to rejoin our lines after heroically defending the fortified position of Liège.

No fort has been captured; the fortified position of Liège is still in our possession; standards and a quantity of prisoners form the trophies of these days.

In the name of the nation I salute you, officers and soldiers of the 3rd Division and the 15th Combined Brigade; you have fulfilled your utmost duty; you have honoured our arms and have shown the enemy what it costs him unjustly to attack a peaceful nation, but a nation which derives an invincible strength from the justice of its cause.

The country has the right to be proud of you.

Soldiers of the Belgian Army, do not forget that you are in the vanguard of immense armies in this gigantic conflict, and that we are only awaiting the arrival of our brothers in arms in order to march to victory.

The whole world has its eyes fixed upon you. Show it, by the might of your blows, that you mean to live free and independent.

France, that noble country, which in history we find associated with just and generous causes, is rushing to help us, and her armies are entering our territory.

In your name I give them a brotherly greeting.

ALBERT.

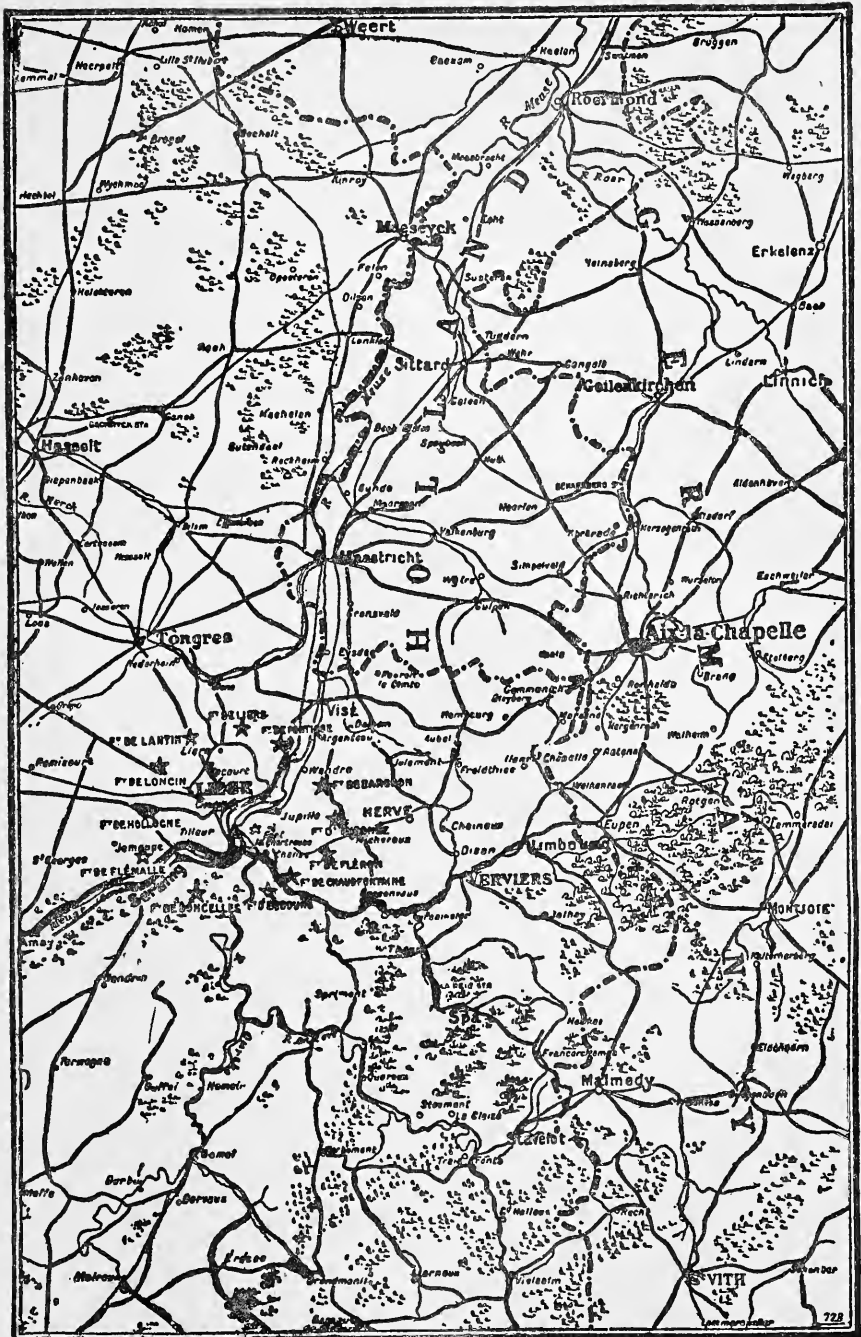
On the 9th of August the following overtures were made to our Government by the agency of the Dutch Government :—

Now that the Belgian Army has, by its heroic opposition to greatly superior German troops, maintained the honour of its arms, the German Government begs the King of the Belgians and the Belgian Government to save Belgium from the utmost horrors of warfare.

The German Government is prepared to make any agreement with Belgium which can be reconciled with its quarrel with France.

*Germany solemnly asserts that she has no intention of appropriating Belgian territory, and that she is far from conceiving such intention.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Author's italics.



MAP OF THE LIÈGE COUNTRYSIDE.

Germany is always ready to evacuate Belgium immediately the state of the war will permit.

To this fresh hypocrisy the Belgian Government proudly replied:—

The proposal made to us by the German Government reproduces the proposal which was formulated in the ultimatum of the 2nd of August.

Faithful to her international obligations, Belgium can only repeat her reply to this ultimatum, the more so in that since the 4th of August her neutrality has been violated, a grievous war has been carried into her territory, and the guarantors of her neutrality have loyally and immediately responded to her appeal.

The struggle therefore continued.

Before Liège, on the 12th and 13th of August, guns of 21 centimetres' calibre were brought up, and on the 14th these pieces bombarded the forts of the left bank. Then howitzers of 42 centimetres arrived (16.5 inches), which came into action on the afternoon of the 14th of August (5).

These howitzers threw projectiles weighing nearly a ton, their explosive power being unheard of.

"We used to hear them travelling through the air," said General Leman, the valiant defender of Liège, in a report. At this moment he was in the Loncin fort, to the north-west of Liège. "Finally there was the sound of a furious hurricane, which ended in a terrifying thunderclap; then gigantic clouds of smoke and dust rose from the trembling earth."

Shortly after five o'clock on the afternoon of the 14th the fort of Loncin was blown up.<sup>1</sup> General Leman, who was found unconscious under the ruins, was taken prisoner without having really "surrendered"; and he insisted upon a statement to the effect that he was found unconscious. He was allowed to retain his sword in consideration of his valour.

On the following day, before leaving Belgium as a captive, the heroic defender of Liège wrote this noble letter to the King:

SIRE,

After honourable battles delivered on the 4th, 5th and 6th of August by the 3rd division of the army, reinforced from the 5th onwards by the 15th Brigade, I judged that the forts of Liège could no longer do more than play the part of barrier forts. I nevertheless maintained the military government of the fortified positions in order to co-ordinate the defence

<sup>1</sup> Some forts held out until the 16th and 17th of August.

as far as it was possible for me to do so, and in order to exert a moral influence over the garrisons of the forts.

The propriety of these decisions was amply proved by the results.

Your Majesty is aware that I took up my post in the Loncin fort from about noon on the 6th of August.

Sire, you will learn with sorrow that this fort was blown up yesterday at about twenty minutes past five, burying under its ruins the greater part of the garrison, perhaps four-fifths.

If I did not lose my life in this catastrophe it was because my escort, composed as follows: Captain-Commandant Collard, a non-commissioned officer of infantry, who has doubtless perished, the gendarme Thevenin, and my two orderlies (Ch. Vandebossche and Jos. Lecocq), dragged me from a part of the fort where I was on the point of being asphyxiated by the gases of the explosion. I was carried into the moat, where I fell. A German captain, by the name of Grösen, gave me something to drink, but I was made a prisoner, and then taken into Liège in an ambulance.

I am confident of having maintained the honour of our arms. I surrendered neither the fortified position nor the forts.

Deign to pardon me, Sire, for the carelessness of this letter; I am physically greatly shattered by the explosion at Loncin.

In Germany, whither I am about to be sent, my thoughts will be what they have always been: of Belgium and her King. I would gladly have given my life to serve them better, but death would not have me.

*Lieutenant-General*

G. LEMAN.

The German forces which had crossed to the left bank of the Meuse to the north of Liège, tried in the first place to outflank the left wing of our army in the field.

On the 12th of August the German cavalry attempted to force the passage of the Gette at Haelen; six regiments of cavalry, supported by two battalions of Chasseurs and three batteries, took part in this action. To these 4,000 cavalry, 2,000 infantry, and 18 guns the Belgian cavalry division could oppose only 2,400 cavalry, 410 cyclists, and 12 guns. At first these forces alone sustained the enemy's attack, giving way only step by step; about 3 o'clock the arrival on the battlefield of the 4th Combined Brigade enabled our troops themselves to take the offensive; at 6 o'clock the enemy fell back, abandoning his dead and his wounded. On the following day 3,000 corpses of men and horses were buried. Our losses were some 1,200 killed, wounded, and missing.

However, the thrust of the enemy forces became more and more irresistible, and, despite the heroism which they displayed in many an advance-guard engagement, our brave soldiers were continually forced to fall back. On the 16th of August the rather serious action of Eghezée took place; the Germans, who had

taken the offensive at this point of our extreme right wing, were forced to withdraw, and our troops pursued them for two days.

On Tuesday, the 18th of August—note the date<sup>1</sup>—the 6th Division, drawn up on the plain of Walhain-Saint-Paul, effected its junction with a division of French cavalry.

But violent German attacks were delivered in the direction of Tirlemont on the previous night, and this town had to be evacuated on the Tuesday in question. The German forces were in such numerical superiority that our army was in danger of being cut in two and destroyed. Our right wing and our centre fell back in consequence upon Antwerp, while the French cavalry withdrew toward Charleroi.

But in order that this retreat upon Antwerp might be accomplished, the left wing of the Belgian Army and a portion of the centre had still to fight desperate battles. Near Louvain, in particular, and above all at Aerschot, our soldiers fought with admirable valour.

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Yet Nature continued her eternal poem. The weather was radiant; never within the memory of man had there been a finer summer.

The harvest was abundant.

Everywhere in the countryside the peasants, hardly conscious of any unusual anxiety, were busy with their peaceful tasks.

Communications with the occupied districts were gradually cut; sometimes at a distance of only a few miles nothing was known of the horrible crimes which were being committed in the east.

But suddenly the scene changed: Mars arrived, expelling Ceres. Horrible massacres took place. These warriors from Germany respected nothing, destroyed everything. And those

<sup>1</sup> On the 4th of August an order of the French Ministry of War declared:—

“Germany is about to endeavour, by means of false news, to lead us to violate Belgian neutrality.

“It is strictly and explicitly forbidden, until a contrary order is given, to penetrate, even by means of patrols or single cavalymen, into Belgian territory, and aviators are also forbidden to fly over such territory.”

Only on the 5th of August, on the demand of the Belgian Government (formulated on the 4th), were French dirigibles and aeroplanes authorised to fly over Belgian territory, and French patrols to enter it.

On the 6th of August a corps of French cavalry received orders to enter Belgium in order to reconnoitre the German columns and hamper their movements.

The German allegations of the 2nd and 4th of August were thus entirely untrue.



of the poor country-folk who escaped massacre or captivity had to flee in haste, far away, and always farther.

"To understand what this invasion was," said M. Roland de Marès, in the *Temps* of the 27th of August, 1914, "you would have to see, as I have seen, the bewildered flight of old men, women, and children in the rear of the Belgian Army. Along the roads, across the fields, through the woods, they



MAP OF THE COUNTRY CROSSED BY THE ARMY IN ITS RETIREMENT UPON ANTWERP.

dragged themselves in compact masses, their shoulders burdened with their pitiful possessions, the children, barefoot, clinging to the skirts of their mothers. They marched without a cry, without a tear, with haggard eyes and pale faces, and nothing could have been more tragic than this distressful crowd, marching persistently toward the wide horizon."

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Our enemies advanced in increasingly compact masses toward the south-west, and also toward the west. It became obvious that they intended to enter Brussels.

Now it was impossible to think of defending this great city, which was not fortified. It would have been sheer madness.

On the 18th, therefore, the Government, a portion of the functionaries of the Central Administration of the State, most of the Ministers of State, the Queen, and the Royal children, as well as several of the representatives of foreign Powers, left for Antwerp.

To Antwerp also were removed all those of the wounded in the hospitals of the capital who were fit to be moved; and the funds of the National Bank were removed, with the plates intended for the printing of bank-notes. And in the precious, lamentable convoy, which for two days passed from one city to the other, which contained all that the fugitives hoped to save from the cupidity or ambition of the enemy, were also the horses, carriages, and automobiles of the Court: it would not have done for our enemies to seize them and exhibit them in Berlin!

On the 19th the Burgomaster of Brussels posted this fine proclamation on the walls of the city:—

#### FELLOW-CITIZENS,

Despite the heroic resistance of our troops, seconded by the Allied Armies, it is to be feared that the enemy may invade Brussels.

If such an eventuality should be realised, I trust that I may count upon the tranquillity and coolness of the population.

Let all panic and disorder be guarded against.

The communal authorities will not desert their posts.

They will continue to fulfil their functions with the firmness which you have a right to expect of them under such serious circumstances.

I need hardly recall to my fellow-citizens the duty of all toward their country.

The laws of war forbid the enemy to compel the population to give information as to the national army and its means of defence. The inhabitants of Brussels must understand that they are right to refuse to give the invader any information whatsoever upon this subject. This refusal is obligatory upon them in the interests of the country.

Let none of you consent to serve as guides to the enemy.

Let everyone be on his guard against spies and foreign agents, who might seek to collect information or to provoke manifestations of some kind.

The enemy cannot legitimately commit offences against the honour of the family, nor private property, nor religious or philosophic convictions, nor the free exercise of religious worship.

Let any abuse committed by the invader be immediately reported to me. As long as I am alive and at liberty I shall protect the rights and the dignity of my fellow-citizens with all my energies.

I beg the inhabitants to facilitate my task by abstaining from all acts of hostility, all use of arms, and all intervention in battles or encounters.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

Whatever happens, listen to the voice of your burgomaster, and put your trust in him: he will not betray it.

Long live Belgium, free and independent!

Long live Brussels!

ADOLPHE MAX.

The Government, for its part, informed the public that it found it necessary to leave the capital. "A laconic statement announced the retreat upon Antwerp; not a sounding phrase, not a word of oratory. No effort was made to magnify the ordeal!"<sup>1</sup>

During the night of the 19th of August the Civic Guard of Brussels was disbanded and disarmed.

The newspapers printed their last issues; then, stoically, they destroyed their presses, rendering them useless. Only the *Indépendance Belge* removed to Gand, declaring that "as long as there is a corner of free soil in Belgium and a printing-press, it would continue to appear in order to proclaim to the world the suffering and the glory of the Belgian nation."

As the free soil of Belgium grew less, the rolling-stock of our railways was evacuated into France or Holland, but up to the last moment and the extreme limits of possibility communication by railway was maintained. It was only when the occupation was imminent that the trains ceased to run in this or that district. Thus even on the evening of the 19th of August trains were still running between Brussels and the non-occupied portion of the country.

On the morning of the 20th, although the Germans were then at the gates of the city, people were still leaving for Hainault and Flanders.

On this date—the 20th—M. Max set out in good time to meet the German advance-guard, which he knew to be quite close at hand. He was provided with a white flag, hastily fashioned of a bedrom towel and a rough cane. The sheriff's Stiens and Jacqmain, as well as the communal secretary, accompanied him.

The conditions of the surrender of the city were discussed, and the valiant burgomaster upheld the interests of his fellow-citizens with superb energy and dignity.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Bardoux (*Opinion*, Paris, 29th August, 1914).

About 11 o'clock the first German cyclists arrived.

"From that moment," relates M. Louis Dumont-Wilden, "the conditions of the surrender were known. It was known that General Sixt von Arnim, in consideration of enormous requisitions, had promised that no attempt would be made upon the persons or the property of the people of Brussels.

"Little was known of the murder, pillage, and incendiarism committed in the Walloon country. . . . So at first the entrance of the Prussians was observed with more curiosity and astonishment than uneasiness.

"It was the 'knock-out' blow of which one at first feels only the shock.

"But the invasion commenced immediately. . . . For three days they passed in their thousands upon thousands, a dejected herd, resigned, formidable, marching toward crime and death, without revolt, without ideas, under the command of remote and imperious officers. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Like huge birds of prey, aeroplanes hovered over the city, completing the painful impression.

A relatively small force remained in Brussels, installed itself in our barracks, and made itself comfortable in our superb Palais de Justice, whose beautiful audience-halls and council-halls were shamelessly turned into barrack-rooms and guard-houses. Force paraded itself in the Temple of Justice. . . .

The bulk of the troops—several hundreds of thousands—merely passed through before turning toward the south.

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In the suburbs of Namur it was necessary, as in Liège, to free the line of fire from the forts, and to make great sacrifices: dwelling-houses, farms, and châteaux were levelled to the ground, and, which was even more distressing, quantities of beautiful trees had to be felled.

The Germans arrived there in considerable force on the 19th of August, and immediately, at long range, began the siege.

On the 21st, without previous warning, they bombarded the city itself for twenty minutes; projectiles fell on the prison, the hospital, and the burgomaster's house, causing fires and claiming many victims.

On the 23rd they succeeded in forcing the outer line of defences, and while the 4th Belgian Division began to fall back in

<sup>1</sup> Louis Dumont-Wilden (*Opinion*, Paris, October 31st, 1914.)

the sector between the Sambre and the Meuse, they entered the city about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

At the same moment violent encounters were taking place in Hainault between the Germans on the one hand and the French and English on the other hand. Like stupendous torches, towns and villages burst into flames, lighting the advance of Germanism with the sinister glow of their fires. The Germans, arrogant, cruel, and implacable, already occupied two-thirds of our territory. They had not found the "open road," but they passed on, as they had threatened, "by force of arms."

"The German plan has succeeded in its entirety," so a certain General Spohn thought it safe to proclaim in the official organ of the German Military Union. In his enthusiasm he praised the skill with which this plan had been elaborated. "The plan for the invasion of France was definitely laid down long beforehand," he said; "it was arranged to be carried out successfully in the north through Belgium, avoiding the line of barrier-forts with which the enemy had protected his frontiers on the German side, and which would have been very difficult to break through."<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, the little Belgian Army had held the German forces in check so long that this famous plan of the Imperial Great General Staff, so "definitely laid down," was irrevocably spoiled.

This is expressed in the following terms, under the title of "Honour to Belgium," in the *Bulletin des Armées de la République*:—

"If we had been told three weeks ago, on the first Sunday of the war, when France was awaiting the decision of London, and was still able to doubt whether she would see beside her the Army and the Navy of England—if we had been told that twenty-two days later we should have been able to complete our last preparations, and that along the entire front, or almost the entire front, our national soil would be untouched, who would have believed it without dispute?

"Oh, we know at what a cost our present security was purchased!

"We know who are the true authors of this security.

"Our troops have done their duty, but the heroic Belgian nation has done more than its duty.

<sup>1</sup> *Parole, Deutsche Krieger Zeitung* (edition for the armies in the field, Berlin, September 2nd, 1914).

“It owed it to itself, it owed it also to us, to defend its neutrality.

“We expected everything of its loyalty and valour. But it has surpassed all expectation; by its determined resistance it has rendered possible our mobilisation, our concentration, the disembarkation of our Allies in our ports, their arrival on the front of battle, and the systematic organisation of this war in common: our outer rampart was made of the breasts of the men of Liège, and the entire Belgian nation, yielding up its capital, has determined that Liège and Antwerp shall become, in history, synonymous with Thermopylæ and Marathon. . . .”

## V

### BY ALL AND ANY MEANS

FROM the time of their entry into Belgium the German troops displayed in every way an absolute contempt for the laws and usages of war and the Law of Nations.

Not only did they make abundant use of treacherous ruses, unworthy of a self-respecting army, but they rendered themselves guilty of abominable crimes, and presently there was not a single prescription of The Hague Conventions which they had not outrageously violated.<sup>1</sup>

It was obvious that they had resolved to shatter our resistance not only "by force of arms," but also by *all and any means*.

For this reason, on the 8th of August, quite early in the course of the hostilities, M. Henry Carton de Wiart, the Belgian Minister of Justice, instituted a "Commission of Inquiry into the Violation of the Regulations of the Law of Nations and the Laws and Usages of War."

This Commission was composed of magistrates, diplomatists, university professors, and jurisconsults, all men of ripe age, unfettered conscience, and well-balanced mind, who, moreover, made it a rule to include in the reports which they addressed to the Minister of Justice only those facts which were rigorously established by reliable and consistent evidence, subjected to a searching criticism.

I have written this chapter principally by the aid of these reports.

<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, Germany had subscribed to these conventions. For these early atrocities see *The Road to Liège: The Path of Crime*, by M. Gustave Somville, translated by B. Miall. Hodder and Stoughton, 1916. There is a preface by M. Carton de Wiart.

## LIVING SHIELDS (6)

Counting on the nobility of heart of their adversaries, the German troops often endeavoured to protect themselves by driving before them either Belgian soldiers who had been taken prisoners, or even civilians.

Impossible as it may appear, soldiers and officers have frequently resorted to this vile stratagem; this cowardly and treacherous manœuvre has been practised in many different circumstances since the beginning of the war.

At the time of the fighting round Liège a body of German troops, passing through the interval between the Chaudfontaine and Fléron forts, had before it a number of civilians captured along the road; the majority had their hands tied behind their backs. Another group of civilians was forced to march in the midst of the troops, and among them was an old man of eighty years.

German artillerymen firing upon the Carmelite convent at Chèvremont secured themselves against the fire of the fort by placing all round their battery men, and even women and children, captured in the neighbourhood.

On the 18th of August one Joseph Rymen, of Shaffen, was compelled, with two inhabitants of Meldert, to precede the German troops in their march through the town of Diest, and then to lead them to Montaigu.

On the 23rd of August the Germans placed at the head of their attacking column at the bridge of Lives, below Namur, women and children, of whom several were wounded by the fire of the Belgian troops.

In very many parts of Hainault the Germans forced civilians, men and women, to precede or accompany them. Thus a German column passing through Marchienne drove before it a group of several hundreds of civilians; it was marching upon Montigny-le-Tilleul, where the first important engagement with the French took place.

To guarantee a bridge over the Sambre from any attempt at destruction, the Germans placed upon it men and women—eight of whom were nuns—and children, who were forced to pass the night there.

At Tamines also, during a fight between German and French



troops, the former drove civilians on to the bridge. When these poor people tried to take refuge in the house of the opposite bank (of the Sambre), the Germans fired upon them and mortally wounded several of them.

The German troops who entered Tournai on the 24th of August were preceded by several ranks of civilians.

I might give many more such examples.

This stratagem, which consists in its essentials in saying to the enemy: "I know you will not fire on these unfortunate people, and I hold you at my mercy, disarmed, because you are less craven than I"—this stratagem, so often employed by troops on the march, was also employed by patrols.

In the suburbs of Malines six German soldiers who were carrying off five young girls encountered, on their way, a company of Belgian soldiers. They kept in the midst of the young girls in order to prevent the Belgians from firing upon them.

And at the very outset of the hostilities a bicyclist who was going homeward was arrested on the way by one officer and eight hussars, who forced him to walk beside them, threatening him with death if the Belgian troops fired upon them.

Here again I could go on citing examples. I could also cite many cases in which—contrary to the laws of war—Belgian peasants were forced to execute defensive works for the Germans, and in particular to dig trenches.

#### MASSACRE AND INCENDIARISM

Just before crossing the frontier, on the 4th of August, the German officers harangued their men, informing them that the outposts had been attacked by the population, and recommending them to punish the latter implacably at the firing of the first shot. From that moment, and during the whole period of the invasion, soldiers and non-commissioned officers lived in a continual dread of the attacks of *francs-tireurs*. This fear resulted in unheard-of panics. If any shots were heard, except in set battles, civilians were massacred instantly—under the pretext of repression—and houses burned. And as the burning of houses was generally preceded by systematic pillage, this pretended repression, as a result of being thus stimulated, would extend to a whole village or an entire town.

In this way hundreds of peaceable Belgian citizens paid with

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Bédier, Professor in the Collège de France, *Les Crimes allemands d'après des témoignages allemandes*. (Armand Colin, Paris, 1915.)

their lives or their liberty for the frenzied libations of the invaders and the brawls which inevitably followed.

Others, in their hundreds again, expiated the resistance of the Belgian soldiers, that determined resistance which the Germans had certainly not foreseen, and which, from the first hours of the war, disconcerted them.

Some were even executed—after a summary trial—for giving our own troops information as to the advance of the German troops.

But in most cases these massacres, burnings, and all the rest were not committed as punishment or in revenge, but merely as a matter of preventive terrorisation!

I will try to give you here some idea of these horrible excesses.

On the 4th of August, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, a few German officers arrived in a motor-car in the little town of Herve (4,700 inhabitants), which lies on the road from Aix-la-Chapelle to Liège. On their way they questioned two men whom they met upon a little bridge, and shot them down without giving them time to reply. Doubtless, in order to give themselves courage, these gentlemen had consumed a generous lunch before entering Belgium, and were now amusing themselves.

A little later on the same day German troops entered Herve. They took a few hostages, but otherwise they behaved comparatively well.

On the 8th of August, about 10 o'clock in the morning, some fresh troops arrived, who immediately began to fire in every direction. They burned the railway station, as well as the house of Mme. Christophe, who was asphyxiated, with her daughter. Seeing that the fire was reaching her house, a neighbour, Mme. Hendrickx, rushed into the street, a crucifix in her hand; she was immediately shot down. After this, other murders took place; houses were sacked and burned; forty persons, of whom five were women, were assassinated; the town was pillaged from end to end, and more than 300 houses were burned.

On the 6th of August the village of Battice, which lies a few miles to the east of Herve, was pillaged and burned by the Germans, who were thrown back by the fire of the forts; thirty-five persons, of whom three were women, were massacred. And here the tragic adventure acquires a touch of irony: on the day before the invasion the curé, who was something of a Germano-

phile, felt it his duty to reassure his flock. "You have nothing to fear," he told them; "if you do not attack the soldiers, they will do nothing to you. Do you suppose they are going to sack your houses, burn the village, and assassinate the women and children? The Germans are not savages!"<sup>1</sup> Now not only were these soothing statements promptly contradicted by facts, but the priest who had made them with such serene conviction escaped death only by a miracle!

Between Battice and Herve the majority of the houses which bordered the road here and there were reduced to ashes.

The road running from Herve, through Mélen-la-Bouxhe, to Micheroux, was also bordered by ruins.

At Mélen-la-Bouxhe the victims were no fewer than 120. Entire families were exterminated, on the 5th and 8th of August, by German troops infuriated by the resistance of the forts. Among the victims were old men of eighty years and children of five or six. One young girl, Marguerite W——, was sacrificed to the lust of twenty soldiers before she was shot beside her father and mother.

On the 5th of August, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, some German troops, repulsed and thrown into confusion by the fire of the Fléron fort, entered Soumagne, a large village of 4,750 inhabitants. "It's your brothers who are firing on us from the forts!" they cried. "We are going to take our revenge!"

They arrested a hundred of the inhabitants, led them into a meadow, and there killed them by rifle-bullet or bayonet. The village was partially burned.

In the list of 105 victims I find the names of a baby of eleven months, a little boy of three years, a girl of thirteen, and several aged persons of either sex.

And everywhere, all along the great highways of the invasion, there were, with a few variations, the same excesses.

At Warsage six men were hanged.

At Micheroux an infant of seven weeks, Pierre Gorès, was violently torn from the arms of the woman who was carrying him and thrown to the ground; when it was possible to pick him up the poor little thing was dead.

At Francorchamps, out of twelve persons shot, one was a little boy of six years, and four were old people. Of these latter two were women.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a letter sent by M. l'Abbé Voisin, curé of Battice, to the *Tijd*, of Amsterdam.

At Forêt thirty-six Belgian soldiers passed the night of the 4th of August at the farm of the Delvaux family. On the 5th, about 8 o'clock in the morning, the Germans arrived in force. While retiring, the Belgian soldiers fired upon them, coming off pretty well. Result: vengeance. The farm was set on fire, and two of the farmer's sons were killed. The farmer and two surviving sons were driven before the troops, who were marching upon Liège. The communal schoolmaster, M. Rougy, was shot for refusing to trample underfoot the national flag, which had been torn down from the front of his school.

At Olm, M. Rensonnet, the vicar, and the communal secretary, M. Fondenir, raised the blind of a window to watch the troops passing; they were instantly arrested, dragged out of the village, and shot. This was on the 5th of August. In the evening, before proceeding to the assault of the Fléron and Chaudfontaine forts, the Germans—no doubt to stimulate their valour—assassinated a poor old paralytic woman, the widow Desoray, as well as her daughter Josephine; they then set fire to their house. They drove M. Warnier, the schoolmaster, and his family out of their house, and shot M. Warnier before the eyes of his wife. "At a few paces distance," relates an eyewitness, "his two young daughters were treacherously shot from behind. The elder, her skull being merely grazed by a bullet, recovered consciousness in the ditch beside the road; a body was weighing upon her, that of her sister, killed outright by a bullet in the nape of the neck. The survivor remained where she was until the last of the soldiers had gone. She could hear, at a short distance, the death-rattle of one of her brothers. Not until later did this vigorous young girl notice that her left arm was broken in two places, while she had a wound in the head and bruises all over her body. Later still she found her mother and her little sister. The father, her sister, aged eighteen, and her two brothers, aged eighteen and seventeen, lay stretched upon the road with two inhabitants of Fairon and three of Forêt. All the houses in the neighbourhood were reduced to ashes."

On the heights of the left bank of the Vesdre the village of Louveigné is in ruins. It was completely pillaged, and the greater part was burned. One hundred and fifty houses were burned; only a few were left standing. A certain number of men were shut up in a forge; then, after the lapse of some hours, the Germans drove them out into the open. "In other words,"

says a witness, "they opened the door of the cage, as in pigeon-shooting. The marksmen were waiting, and they brought down as many as they could; seventeen fell, never to rise again."

"*Pepinster*, August 12. Burgomaster, curé, schoolmaster shot and houses reduced to ashes," writes Adolf Schlüter, of the 39th Regiment of Fusiliers, in his memorandum book (7). "We resume our march."

At Sprimont, the owner of a château, M. Poirnez, and his son, were killed at the very moment when they were doing their utmost to satisfy the demands of the invader as to requisitions!

VISE was a delightful little town of 4,000 inhabitants, built on the flank of a hill overhanging the Meuse, some ten miles below Liége, and quite close to the Dutch frontier. It was more than a thousand years old. Princess Bertha, daughter of Charlemagne, built a church there about 800 A.D., and since then, of course, the little town had known many vicissitudes. In particular, for example, on the 30th of January, 1396, it was surprised in the night by a troop of German brigands, who sacked and pillaged it. But this was more than five hundred years ago, and in those days many things used to happen which in our times seemed impossible.

Fresh German troops coming from Gemmenich, by way of Warsage, Berneau, and Moulant, reached Visé on the 4th of August, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The bridge by which they expected to cross the Meuse had been destroyed; moreover, some Belgian soldiers, who were in ambush on the left bank of the river, opened a well-sustained fire upon them. Enraged by this resistance, the Germans spread through the little town, shooting half a score of the inhabitants, and then began to pillage.

On the 10th of August they set fire to the church (8), pretending that the town formed a mark for the guns of the Pontisse fort. On the following day the Dean and M. Meurisse, Professor in the University of Liége, and Burgomaster of Visé, were arrested as hostages.

On the 15th the inhabitants were forced to work upon the construction of bridges over the Meuse. Numerous troops arrived from the east. In the evening there were brawls between drunken soldiers; some shots were fired. . . . Hundreds of the inhabitants were immediately driven from their homes; men, women, children, old people, sick people, all were driven by blows of the rifle-butt, and even by thrusts of the bayonet, to the

open place by the railway station, where, under a strong guard, they were made to pass the rest of the night.

On the following day a poor old man, more than seventy years of age, one Duchesne, was shot—why, no one knows—having first been tied to a tree, his hands bound behind his back. His body was left on the spot. A man named Roujolle also was executed under similar conditions, and with no more reason.

A few hours later the men were ranged on one side, the women on the other. The women were authorised to take refuge in Holland. Three hundred to four hundred of the men were sent to Germany and interned in the Münster camp. Others were forced to execute military works at Navagne.

All this time the troops were pillaging, loading their booty upon waggons, which took the road for Aix-la-Chapelle. Then, systematically, by means of reservoirs of benzine and hand-pumps, they sprinkled the houses and set fire to them. When the flames were slow in spreading they helped them by throwing incendiary pastilles into their midst.

Such was the end of Visé.

From the 15th to the 18th of August the Germans gave themselves up to all kinds of excesses on the left bank of the Meuse as well.

At Haccourt, on the 18th, they pretended that the old farmer Colson had killed (or wounded) one of their horses. Without making any inquiry, and ignoring the denials of the accused, they set fire to his farm, after shutting his son and his daughter-in-law indoors. These two contrived to escape and hide themselves, but old Colson was unable to endure the shock, and a few days later he died.

At Heure-le-Romain 72 houses were burned; 27 persons were assassinated; among them a Mme. Fasset, and her child, five months of age.

At Hermée 12 persons were shot and 46 houses were burned.

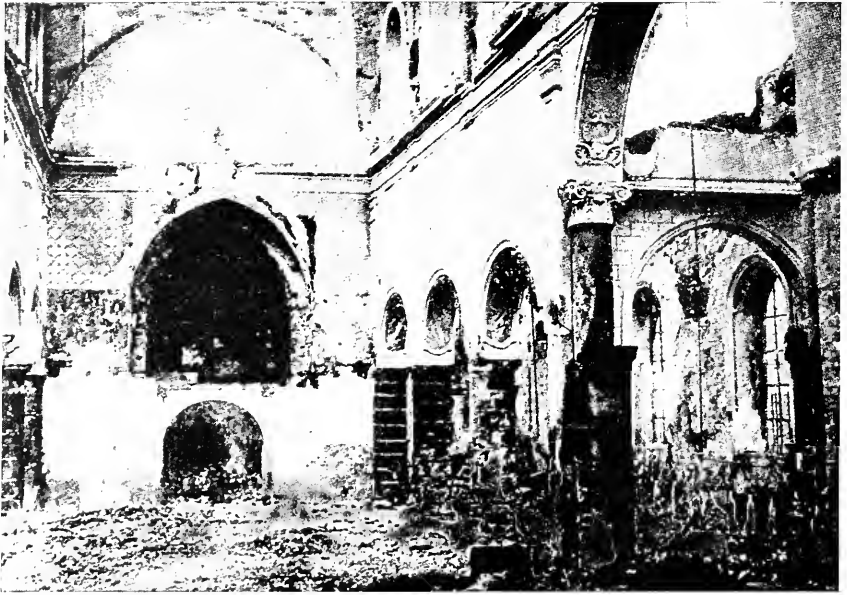
Flémalle-Grande was the scene of unashamed pillage, incendiarism and murder. A man's head was cleft by the blow of a sabre in the presence of his wife and child; his death-rattle was still audible when the soldiers removed his watch and all else that he had about him.

At Tongres, on the 18th of August, some working-men's houses were sacked and burned, no one knew why. In the evening the most terrific drinking was followed by scandalous scenes;

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7. PAGE FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF ADOLF SCHLÜTER. (Page 51)



8. THE CHURCH, VISÉ, BURNED 10TH OF AUGUST, 1914. (Page 51)



9. THE POPULATION TOOK REFUGE IN THE WOODS. (Page 56)





10. AT TAMINES. (*Page 61*)  
Corpses of inhabitants on the ruins of a house.



11. CIVILIANS DEPORTED TO GERMANY.



12. AT LOUVAIN. (*Page 75*)



13. IN LOUVAIN. (*Page 78*)

The house on the right was spared on account of its name.

German soldiers, outrageously drunk, donned feminine clothing—Oh, much-vaunted Prussian discipline!—and so showed themselves in the streets. Others began to fire into the houses, killing ten persons thereby. Then, in the middle of the night, the town had to be evacuated, on the pretext that it was about to be bombarded. In all haste the mothers aroused their children; the sick had perforce to leave their beds, and there was a desperate flight into the open country. One sick man died at the gates of the town; the Germans immediately buried him, under the eyes of his wife and daughter.

Once masters of the place, officers and soldiers alike began to pilage at their ease. On the 20th they allowed the inhabitants to return to their homes. Six private houses had been burned; in particular that of M. Huybrigts, which contained a remarkable collection of vases, coins, inscriptions, and tombs of Roman colonists (Tongres dating from before the Roman invasion). These treasures had disappeared: the fruit of forty years' patient research! Why?

## Chers Concitoyens,

D'accord avec l'autorité militaire supérieure allemande, j'ai l'honneur de vous recommander à nouveau de vous abstenir de toute manifestation provocante et de tous actes d'hostilité qui pourraient attirer à notre ville de terribles représailles.

**Vous vous absteniez surtout de sévices contre les troupes allemandes et notamment de tirer sur elles.**

**Dans le cas où des habitants tireraient sur des soldats de l'armée allemande, le tiers de la population mâle sera passé par les armes.**

*Je vous rappelle que les rassemblements de plus de cinq personnes sont strictement défendus et que les personnes qui contreviendraient à cette défense, seront arrêtés séance tenante.*

Hasselt, le 17 août 1914.

Le Bourgmestre  
FERD. PORTMANS.

par ordre de l'Autorité militaire allemande.

FACSIMILE OF A PLACARD POSTED AT HASSELT.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DEAR FELLOW-CITIZENS,—In agreement with the superior German military authority, I have the honour to recommend you once more to abstain from all provocative manifestations, and from all hostile acts, which might bring terrible reprisals upon our town.—You will, above all, abstain from attacks upon the German troops, and especially from firing on them.—Should the inhabitants fire on the soldiers of the German Army, the third part of the male population will be put to death.—I will remind you that all gatherings of more than five persons are strictly forbidden and that persons who disobey this prohibition will be arrested on the spot.

Hasselt, the 17th of August, 1914.—The Burgomaster, Ferd. Portmans.—By order of the German Military Authority.

As for Hasselt, the market-town of Limburg, read the placard reproduced above, which Burgomaster Portmans had posted by order of the invader.

AERSCHOT.—The enemy troops entered Aerschot, a town of 8,000 inhabitants, lying to the north-east of Louvain, on the 19th of August, in the morning. No Belgian force was left there. Suddenly the Germans shot six of the inhabitants and set fire to a number of houses.

In the afternoon the church was bombarded for two hours; then the soldiers ran through the town firing in all directions at random.

Suddenly some officers declared that their superior, a general, had been killed by the son of the burgomaster, a boy of fifteen! In his capacity as father and as burgomaster, M. Tielemans was doubly responsible. He was doubly deserving of death! It was for this reason, doubtless, that his brother was arrested simultaneously with his son and himself.

A large number of their fellow-townsmen were arrested at the same time. Forty were killed the same night. The rest, who were imprisoned, were not to be executed until the following day.

During the night the soldiers invaded the houses, turning everything upside down, breaking up furniture and strong-boxes, and starting fires.

Then, on the morning of the 20th, the burgomaster, with his son and his brother, and all their companions in misfortune, were led into a field beside the Louvain high road. They were lined up at random, and while the burgomaster, with his son and brother, were kept in the line, of the rest two men out of every three were made to step forward, the soldiers counting "One, two, three," and each time the third man was left in the row. Then all who remained—who were selected by fate alone—were shot!

Thus, with those killed in the town, nearly 150 victims were executed! And all this because the son of the burgomaster, a child, was said to have killed a German officer, *which, by the way, was never proved!*<sup>1</sup>

But this was not all. The "repression" was not sufficient.

The houses of the Grande Place were fired, and the wives of the prominent citizens were forced to look on, holding their arms in the air. This torture lasted for six hours. During this

<sup>1</sup> See in respect of the Aerschot tragedy, the affecting letter of the widow, Mme. Tielemans, which will be found in the Appendix.

time the men who had been spared by fate were forced to dig great trenches, and to throw into them, pell-mell, the bodies of their unhappy fellow-townsmen.

And while the pillage and the flames were at their height, men, women and children were shut into the church, where they were left for several days, suffering from thirst and hunger.

It is impossible to tell all; one would fill a volume in relating the details of what each of these martyred towns endured. And what would it be if we had to enumerate the crimes committed in all the villages? But I will say a few words more, still guided by reliable documents, of what happened in the region, of old so flourishing, to which we have now come.

At Hasselt, to the north of Aerschot, 32 houses were burned; 23 persons were shot.

At Rotselaer 15 houses were burned, after suffering pillage.

At Schaffen, not far from Diest, at Lummen, Molenstede, and yet other communes, houses, farms and haystacks were burned, and everywhere hideous torments were inflicted.

"A little before Diest," writes the German lieutenant, Kietzmann (2nd Company, 1st Battalion of the 49th Regiment of Infantry), "a little before Diest," he says in his note-book, "lies the village of Schaffen. About fifty civilians were hiding in the church tower, and fired on our troops from above with a machine-gun. All the civilians were shot."<sup>1</sup>

Now nearly all the inhabitants of Schaffen had taken flight upon the approach of the Germans. When the latter arrived in the villages they found only a very few persons, whom they immediately massacred. And, if, instead of describing this tragedy as briefly as Herr Kietzmann has done, I were to enter into a few details, this is what I should tell you:

The Germans found, in a cellar, Mme. F. Luykx and her daughter, aged twelve; they were shot. A little girl named Ooyen, aged nine, was shot; Joseph Reynders, aged forty, was shot; his little nephew, a boy of ten, suffered the same fate; André Willem, aged twenty-three, was tied to a tree and burned alive; Gustav Lodtz and Jean Mahren, both aged forty years, were buried alive.

But what a singular country is Belgium! It has not enough rifles for its army—for such was the case at the beginning of the campaign<sup>2</sup>—and yet every citizen in the tiniest village, every

<sup>1</sup> Bédier, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Owing to the quite recent reorganisation of the army, and the great number of volunteers who came forward.

man and woman, every little boy, every little girl, is armed! For it will, of course, be understood that the little Luykx and Ooyen girls, and their little comrade, the nephew of Joseph Reynders, were "executed" as *francs-tireurs*!

There are not enough guns in the forts, but the last village belfry is armed! Moreover, the curés too are *francs-tireurs*. At Gelrode-lez-Aerschot the curé was arrested by a German patrol as he was helping two sick people to enter a house. Accused of having fired on the German soldiers, he was imprisoned in the church at Aerschot. On the following day his hands were tied behind his back and his ankles were bound with iron wire. He was then placed with his face to a wall, and after several bullets had penetrated his head and back he was thrown into the river (the Demer).

In many rural districts in the neighbourhood of Aerschot, Diest, Malines, and Louvain the devastation was, comparatively speaking, greater than at Aerschot.

"Whole villages have been annihilated," we read in the fifth Report of the Commission of Inquiry. "The population took refuge in the woods (9). They had neither food nor shelter. In the ditches by the roadside lie unburied unfortunate peasants, women, and children who were killed by the Germans. Bodies have been thrown into the wells, contaminating the water. Wounded men have been abandoned without attention. A peasant took refuge, with his little family, in a manure-pit which he had first emptied. The Germans came, lifted the cover of the pit, and fired into the group. The man was terribly wounded in several places. He remained five days in this condition. When he was rescued, which was when the Antwerp garrison made a successful sortie, it was necessary to amputate one leg above the knee. . . ."

In the whole of this district men were requisitioned in large numbers; in defiance of the laws of war, the Germans forced them to dig trenches and carry out defensive works to be employed against our troops, their own compatriots!

ANDENNE.—On the 22nd of August a proclamation was posted upon the walls of Liége, bearing the signature of the General and Commander-in-Chief von Bülow, of which we give a reproduction.

Delightfully situated in a semi-circular sweep of hills on the right bank of the Meuse, between Huy and Namur, Andenne

was, in the Middle Ages, one of the favourite meeting-places of the chivalry of the neighbouring counties and duchies, which made the place famous by the tournaments held there.

In the nineteenth century Andenne had become an industrial and commercial country; boat-builders' yards, paper-mills, porcelain factories, pot-banks, chemical works, etc., were established there.

Andenne, which numbered 7,500 inhabitants, was connected by a bridge with the village of Seilles, which was built facing it upon the left bank of the Meuse.

Some Uhlans came to Andenne as scouts on the morning of the 19th of August. They could not cross the river, as Belgian soldiers had blown up the bridge some few hours earlier. They therefore withdrew—after seizing the communal funds and bullying the burgomaster, Dr. Camus, a man of nearly seventy years of age.

The main body of the German troops arrived in the afternoon. The regiments spread through the town and the outskirts, waiting for the completion of a bridge of boats.

On Thursday, the 20th of August, this bridge being com-

<sup>1</sup> To the Communal authorities of the City of Liège,—The inhabitants of the town of Andenne, after having proclaimed their pacific intentions, have made a treacherous attack upon our troops. It is with my consent that the General in Chief Command has had the entire locality burned and that about 100 persons have been shot.

I bring this fact to the attention of the City of Liège, in order that the people of Liège may realise the fate with which they are threatened if they assume such an attitude.

Then dum-dum bullets were found in an armourer's shop in Huy, etc., etc.

Armee - Oberkommando  
Abteilung II b. Izn. N 150.

CC 25 AOUT 1914

Aux Autorités communales  
DE LA  
VILLE DE LIÈGE

Les habitants de la ville d'Andenne, après avoir protesté de leurs intentions pacifiques, ont fait une surprise traître sur nos troupes. C'est avec mon consentement que le Général en chef a fait brûler toute la localité et que cent personnes environ ont été fusillées.

Je porte ce fait à la connaissance de la Ville de Liège pour que les Liégeois se renseignent le sort dont ils sont menacés, s'ils ont pareille attitude.

Ensuite, il a été trouvé dans un magasin d'armes à Huy des projectiles dum-dum dans le genre du sien non joint à la présente lettre. Au cas qu'il y ait quelque chose de plus, veuillez en informer.

PART OF A PLACARD TORN FROM A WALL  
IN LIÈGE.<sup>1</sup>

pleted, the troops moved off toward the left bank. They made a lengthy procession, at which the inhabitants of Andenne and Seilles looked on from their windows.

Suddenly a shot rang out, immediately followed by a terrifying rattle of rifle-fire. The troops stopped short; disorder appeared in the ranks. The maddened soldiers began to fire at random. The massacre had commenced.

A machine-gun was posted at the cross-roads, and was used for firing upon the houses. A gun fired three shells into the town in three different directions.

A certain number of men who would not or could not escape were killed in their own houses.

Simultaneously with the massacre the sack and pillage of the unhappy town were commenced. Windows, doors, shutters were broken in with hatchets; articles of furniture were broken open and destroyed.

The soldiers rushed into the cellars, drinking to intoxication, smashing such bottles as they could not carry away, and finally setting fire to a certain number of houses. During the night the shooting broke out again at intervals.

On the following day, Friday, at 4 o'clock in the morning, the troops drove into the streets those who had remained in their houses, forcing men, women, and children to march with raised hands. Those who did not obey quickly enough, or did not understand the orders which were given them in German, were immediately shot. Those who attempted to escape were also shot down as though they had been dangerous wild beasts. Dr. Camus, against whom the Germans appeared to entertain a peculiar hatred, was wounded by a rifle-bullet and killed with an axe. His body was dragged some distance by the feet, and left on the edge of the pavement.

"It was a vision of hell," writes an eye-witness. "By the light of the flames I seemed to see soldiers driving back with their bayonets those who were trying to escape from their burning houses. To the crack of the rifles was added the sharp report of the machine-guns and the explosion of hand-grenades. It was an affecting sight to see all these old men, women, and children forced to march toward the Place des Tilleuls, where the population was rounded up; a paralytic was taken thither in a wheeled chair; others were carried."

The men were separated from the women and children. All were searched, *but not a weapon was found.* Then, at random,



at the order of their officers, the soldiers set apart forty or fifty men, who were taken away and shot, some on the bank of the Meuse, some near the police-station.

While these horrible scenes were being enacted, soldiers were scattering through the town, killing, plundering, and burning.

Eight men belonging to the same family were led into a field; some were shot, others were killed and mutilated by hatchet-blows.

A child was killed by the blows of an axe while in its mother's arms; a little boy and a woman were shot.

About 10 o'clock in the morning the officers sent the women back, ordering them to pick up the dead and remove the pools of blood that reddened the streets and houses.

At noon some 800 men were shut up as hostages in three small houses near the bridge.

"In the evening," relates an ex-sheriff of the town of Andenne, "Colonel Schumann, commanding the Potsdam Chasseurs, had an immense bonfire lit in the Place des Tilleuls and organised a concert. The festival was terminated by a prayer. . . ."

A prayer! A holy man, this Colonel Schumann!

All this time the "hostages" remained imprisoned, so crushed together that they could not sit down. Their torment lasted for four days.

To sum up, and to end this recital of horrors, we may say that those massacred at Andenne were not "about one hundred persons," but more than two hundred, and that if we add those killed in the suburbs of Seilles we arrive at a total of nearly three hundred victims.

As for the town, if it was not entirely burned, as von Bülow asserted in his proclamation, it very nearly amounted to that; several hundreds of houses, among them a number of working-class houses, were completely destroyed. Lastly, numerous inhabitants have disappeared.

YET NO GERMAN SOLDIER WAS KILLED, EITHER IN ANDENNE OR IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

TAMINES, MONCEAU-SUR-SAMBRE, and NIMY are other sorrowful stations of my country's grievous Calvary.

French detachments occupied Tamines on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of August.

On Thursday, the 20th of August, a German patrol advanced

toward the suburb of Vilaines. It was received by the fire of some French soldiers and a body of Civic Guards from Charleroi. A few Uhlans were killed or wounded; the others took to flight. The inhabitants, with enthusiasm, began to shout, "*Vive la Belgique! Vive la France!*"

But the Germans very soon arrived in a body at the hamlet of Les Alloux. There they burned two houses and made all the inhabitants prisoners.

An action commenced between their artillery, posted at Vilaines and Les Alloux, and the French artillery, which was firing from Arsimont and Ham-sur-Heure.

On the 21st of August, about 5 o'clock, they seized the bridge at Tamines, crossed the Sambre, and marched through the streets of the village. About 8 o'clock in the evening some soldiers began to enter the houses, driving out the inmates and proceeding to plunder and to burn everything. "Not being able to get at those who had fired," says a correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung*, "the rage of the troops turned against the little town; it was pitilessly given to the flames, and has become a heap of ruins."<sup>1</sup>

The pillage and incendiarism continued through the whole of the 22nd.

About 7 o'clock on the evening of the 22nd a body of 400 to 450 men was massed in two groups before the church, at a short distance from the Sambre. A detachment of troops opened fire upon them, but as they did not fall quickly enough, the officers had a machine-gun brought forward, which soon cut them all down.

Some, however, were only wounded. Groans and supplications arose from the bleeding mass. A few energetic bayonet thrusts put an end to these unseemly complaints.

That night some victims who had simulated death were able to escape by crawling; some, crazed with agony, threw themselves into the water to make an end of it all.

On the following day, Sunday, the 23rd, about 6 o'clock in the morning, some men who had been taken prisoner in the village and the neighbourhood were led into the Place. This is the narrative of one of these men:—

"One of the officers came to ask for willing men to dig pits and bury the corpses. I stepped forward, as well as my brother-in-law and a few others; we were led to a piece of ground

<sup>1</sup> No. 1,009, 10th of September, 1914.

beside the Place, and made to dig a pit some 16 yards long, 11 yards wide, and 6 feet deep.

“We received a spade apiece. While we were digging the pit soldiers, with fixed bayonets, gave us orders.

“When the pit was completed it was at least twelve o’clock.

“They gave us some planks. We placed the bodies on these; then we threw them into the pit. So fathers carried the bodies of their sons, and sons the bodies of their fathers.

“The women had been brought into the Place and were watching us at work. All the houses around us were burned.

“There were soldiers and officers in the Place. *They were drinking champagne.* As the day drew on they became more and more intoxicated; and we became more and more inclined to believe that we should be shot.

“We buried 300 to 400 bodies”<sup>1</sup> (10).

There was no fighting at MONCEAU-SUR-SAMBRE, nor in the immediate neighbourhood.

Yet the 56th Infantry and the 15th Light Infantry committed—when in drink—the most frightful crimes. Three hundred houses were burned and sixty-one civilians murdered, some in the most horrible manner. The brothers S——, who had taken refuge in a shed, were shut up in it and burned alive. François P——, hidden in a cellar with his wife and child, was deliberately shot point-blank while holding the poor little thing in his arms.

An old man of seventy years, Jean Pierre H——, was killed just as he was crossing the threshold of his house, which the Germans had fired. The K—— family, father, mother, and children, were killed in their garden, where they thought they would be in safety. M. and Mme. H——, hidden in a cistern, were driven out of it by German soldiers; these latter dragged the husband away to shoot him; the wife they shut in a room, where they tore the clothes off her. . . . In the middle of the night the unhappy woman, stark naked, succeeded in escaping, but some soldiers fired at her and she was grievously wounded. Mme. D—— was horribly tortured before being killed; her butchers drew obscene pictures upon the walls of her room with her blood.

At Nimy, near Mons, more nameless horrors were committed.

The British and German troops had for some time been

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, nearly 600 inhabitants of Tamines were massacred during these bloody days (Author).

within a short distance of one another. The 23rd saw a violent engagement between them.

About 2.30 p.m. the inhabitants heard the sound of cheering; the Germans had crossed the bridge over the canal and entered the commune.

Murder, pillage, incendiarism, and the rest commenced immediately; 85 houses were reduced to ashes and 17 persons, four of them women, were murdered. One young girl, Irma G——, was odiously outraged; her martyrdom lasted six hours, and only death put an end to her sufferings. Her father, who had tried to rush to her assistance, was shot; her mother and sister were seriously wounded.

Five hundred persons, men, women, and children, were united in a procession and driven, by blows of the rifle-butt, before the troops which desired to pursue the English. The latter, on seeing these civilians, of course abstained from firing; the 84th and 85th Schleswig Regiments were able, sheltered by their living bucklers, to continue their heroic and triumphant march nearly to Maubeuge!

NAMUR.—As we saw at the end of the preceding chapter, the Germans entered Namur on Sunday, the 23rd of August, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

All went well that day; officers and soldiers requisitioned food and drink, paying sometimes in silver, more often in vouchers. These were for the most part fraudulent; but the trusting population, knowing nothing of the German language, accepted them without demur.

Tranquillity prevailed until the 24th. Precisely at 9 o'clock in the evening firing broke out simultaneously in two different places, and soldiers were seen advancing in skirmishing order up the principal streets. A huge column of flames and smoke was rising from the centre of the town; the Germans had started fires in the Place d'Armes and four other points: the Place Léopold, the Rue Rogier, the Rue Saint-Nicolas, and the Avenue de la Plante.

In the Rue Rogier six persons who were escaping from their burning houses were shot point-blank. The other inhabitants of this street, to avoid the same fate, escaped through their gardens, mostly in their nightgowns, having no time to collect money or clothing.

In the Rue Saint-Nicolas a number of working-class homes

were burned. A larger number of houses and some timber-yards were destroyed in the Avenue de la Plante.

The fire in the Place d'Armes continued until Wednesday, the 26th. It destroyed the Hôtel de Ville, with its archives and its pictures, the group of houses adjacent thereto, and the whole quarter included between the Rue du Pont, the Rue des Brasseurs, and the Rue du Bailly, with the exception of the Hôtel des Quatre-Fils-Aymon.

The firing and the incendiarism claimed about 75 victims. I will only refer in passing to the taking of hostages, the rapes, and all the nameless infamies which, at Namur as elsewhere, marked the beginning of the German occupation.

DINANT was a pretty little town of some 8,000 inhabitants—a place of great antiquity, built principally on the right bank of the Meuse, some 17 miles above Namur.

Picturesquely situated in a pleasant landscape, this charming town enjoyed a well-merited renown among tourists, and this renown was one of its chief resources. The whole town contained only some two or three factories, and these were quite modest and retiring, doing no serious injury to the singularly charming beauty of the whole.

Like all old Belgian cities, whether Flemish or Walloon, small or great, Dinant had at times been the scene of sanguinary conflicts. But never, in all the course of the centuries, did anything befall the town comparable to the hideous drama which was unfolded there during several days at the end of August, 1914.

On the 15th of August there was in Dinant a violent engagement between French and German troops, which terminated in favour of the troops of the Republic. The town suffered little from this encounter; a few houses only were destroyed by German shells.

On the following day tranquillity returned. The hostile troops departed in opposite directions.

But this period of calm, alas! was only a lull in the storm.

On Friday, the 21st of August, about 9 o'clock at night, some German soldiers, coming from the east, fell upon the town as it was about to retire to rest, peaceful and unsuspecting.

Without any reason, without the occurrence of any incident either on this or on the preceding days which could be interpreted

as an act of hostility on the part of the inhabitants, the German troops began to fire into the windows.

They killed a respectable working-man who was going home, and wounded another, whom they afterwards forced to shout "*Hoch der Kaiser!*" with them.

They they invaded the cafés, "requisitioning" all that they could find in the way of liquor, and becoming intoxicated.

When they at last withdrew, completely drunk, they set fire to a number of houses.

On the following day nothing unusual happened; except that many inhabitants, guided by the instinct of self-preservation, were happily inspired to flee and to gain the heights of the left bank.

On Sunday, the 23rd, some soldiers of the 108th Regiment of Infantry appeared in the early morning.

At 6.30 they entered the Church of the Premonstrants, driving out those of the faithful who were there assembled; they divided the women from the men, and immediately shot fifty of the latter without trial and without distinction of age. Then, between 7 and 9 o'clock, they scattered through the town, giving themselves up to pillage and incendiarism, driving the inhabitants from their homes and shooting on the spot those who attempted to escape.

They seized in this way a large number of men, women and children of all ages and conditions, and, driving them before them with clubbed rifles, they assembled them in the Place d'Armes, where they kept them prisoners all day, amusing themselves by incessantly informing them that they would soon be shot.

At 6 o'clock in the evening a captain divided the men from the women and children and made them stand in two ranks along one of the walls of the estate of M. Tschoffen, a State Attorney. Those in the front rank had to kneel, while the rest had to stand upright against the wall. A platoon of soldiers was placed facing the group, and it was in vain that the women pleaded for mercy for their husbands, sons, or brothers; the officer gave the order to fire. . . . Dead and wounded fell in confusion. For greater certainty the Germans fired again into the heap of bodies.

However, a few victims had escaped this double volley. They simulated death for more than two hours, remaining motionless among the corpses; then, at nightfall, they succeeded in escaping

into the hills. But a hundred bodies remained in the Place d'Armes.

This was a bloody Sunday in many parts of Dinant.

M. Himmer, Consul of the Argentine Republic, with his wife, his children, his workpeople and their families, had all taken refuge in the cloth factory of which he was manager. Some neighbours had just joined them there. Now at the very time when the tragedy of the Place d'Armes was being enacted these unhappy people decided to leave their retreat. They gathered about a white flag, but hardly had they gone a few steps when the soldiers surrounded them; they were taken before an officer, who separated from the group M. Himmer and all the men and youths *over sixteen years of age*. In vain did M. Himmer refer to his position as Argentine Consul; without inquiry, without a trial, he was shot with his clerks, workmen, and foremen.

And in every direction this unhappy little town was the scene, on this day and the whole of the next day, of pitiless butcheries.

M. Xavier Wasseige, manager of the *Banque Centrale de la Meuse*, was led with his two elder sons—they were boys—to the Place d'Armes, where they were executed. One of these children (he was fifteen) lay dying for hours, begging for something to drink.

Four young men were shut up in a first-floor room; the Germans opened the windows and warned their victims that they would fire upon the first who leaned out; then they set fire to the house. Twelve persons were massacred in a cellar in which they had taken refuge. A poor old man, Edmond Manteaux, aged sixty-one, an invalid who had not for months left his room, was carried out in his armchair and shot in front of his house.

Six old women, all over seventy-five, and eight old men, all over seventy, were murdered in cold blood. Whole families were wiped out. In the list of the victims of this hideous butchery I find the names of *ten children of less than five years of age*. Poor little "*francs-tireurs*"!

At Neffe-lez-Dinant nearly all the men were executed in a body. An old woman and all her children were killed in a cellar. Other inhabitants of this suburb were led as far as Rocher-Bayard, and were there executed without trial.

Such was the case, notably, with M. Alfred Baujot, his wife, and three of their children: Marthe, Marie, and Bertha. M. Baujot succeeded in hiding behind him the youngest of his daugh-

ters, Bertha, a child of three and a half years. . . . On the following day she was found covered with blood, but alive, un-



Les enfants JEANNE, MARCELLE et BERTHA BAUJOT ;

La famille BAUJOT

La famille LOOZE.

ont la profonde douleur de vous faire part de la perte cruelle et irréparable qu'ils viennent d'éprouver en les personnes de

MONSIEUR

**ALFRED BAUJOT**

SON ÉPOUSE NÉE

**ANNE - MARIE LOOZE**

ET LEURS ENFANTS

**Marthe et Maria BAUJOT**

âgés respectivement de 46, 37, 14 et 6 ans, décédés à Neffe-Dinant, le 24 août 1914.

Un service solennel, pour le repos de leur âme, sera célébré le mardi 17 novembre, à 9 heures du matin (heure belge), en l'église Saint-Boniface, à Ixelles.

*Vous êtes prié d'y assister.*

*Ixelles, le 12 novembre 1914.*

*Chaussée de Wavre, 62.*

CARD OF INVITATION TO MEMORIAL SERVICE SENT AFTER THE DINANT MASSACRES.

der the bodies of her parents. And only in November did this tragedy come to the knowledge of relatives living in Brussels. By means of a memorial card, which we reproduce in facsimile, these latter announced to their friends and acquaintances "the



cruel and irreparable loss which they had suffered in respect of M. Alfred Baujot, his wife, *née* Anne Marie Looze, and their children, Marthe and Marie Baujot, aged respectively 46, 37, 14, and 6 years, deceased at Neffe-Dinant, the 24th of August, 1914."

And what moral tortures were suffered in connection with these massacres! How many tragic episodes there were of which the whole can never be told!

Here is the case of Dr. L—— who was torn from the bedside of his wife, brought to bed only the day before. He was led out into the public square, and there put against a wall with three fellow-townsmen.

The Germans were about to shoot him, when suddenly he saw his wife appear, his wife, with her child, carried on a mattress by four soldiers! He begged the officer in command of the executions to allow him to embrace them one last time; he obtained this favour, and was even permitted, after much entreaty, to accompany them to the prison to which they were being taken. Just as the sad procession reached the Place d'Armes a lively outburst of rifle-fire was heard. "It's the French!" cried the soldiers. They abandoned the mattress, taking to flight. The little family was saved!

Dr. L—— carried his wife and child to the entrance of an aqueduct recently constructed beside the Meuse. He lived there with her for three days and three nights, stifling the cries of the poor infant lest they should betray their retreat, venturing out at night, along the river, to pluck the weeds which were their nourishment, and to scoop up in his hat the dirty water which quenched their thirst. . . .

Then there were those unhappy women who, imprisoned at first in the Convent of the Premonstrants, where there was no food for so many people, were afterwards compelled, themselves half-dead with starvation, grief, and terror, to bury their husbands and fathers and brothers and sons.

And while they were engaged in this cruel task German troops went by in parade order, with bands playing at their head!

But, indeed, was not their triumph complete? Was not this, if ever, the time to shout a hymn of victory: *Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles?*

Nearly 700 Belgians, of whom 73 were women and 39 children, had been killed; and some 600 others who had been made prisoners had been sent to Germany, where they would be taught

to live. Of the 1,400 houses which Dinant contained 1,200 were destroyed, burned from top to bottom, having first been pillaged; and the factories which had afforded a livelihood for several hundreds of hands, were now but heaps of ashes.

ROUND ABOUT DINANT.—Those who succeeded in escaping during the massacres in Dinant did not all escape death.

Some were hidden in the surrounding mountains, living on roots and herbs. When they ventured to leave their retreat they were tracked and shot down like beasts of prey. And of those who crossed the Meuse and sought asylum in the villages which occupied the plateaux of the left bank, many had no happier lot.

From Namur, which had just fallen, and from Dinant, the Germans had overrun all the country between the Sambre and the Meuse. And wherever they met with opposition on the part of the French—who, alas! were all too few, and were always, despite their heroism, compelled to fall back—wherever the Germans had been received by the fire of the French, they avenged themselves, as at Dinant, upon the civil population, drenching whole villages with blood and fire.

So, if we climb the heights of the left bank where it faces Dinant, we shall everywhere encounter desolation and devastation.

Of 200 houses which formed the wealthy agricultural village of *Onhaye* we shall find that hardly 20 were spared. Further, at *Anthée*, where there were at least 150 houses, we shall see that only five have remained standing.

And further still, in whatever direction we go, we shall again and again encounter the same spectacles of “the day after the cataclysm.” Everywhere, even in isolated spots, we find nothing but ruins and charnel houses.

Here, for example, is what hapened at the end of August, 1914, in a pretty, well-to-do village of 600 inhabitants situated in the canton of *Florennes*.

*Surice*—this was its name—lay apart from the main highways, and was traversed only by roads of secondary importance. It would have seemed, therefore, that this little village should have remained a peaceful oasis in the midst of this ravaged countryside, which was turned into a desert. “So,” says a witness, *Mlle. Dierix de Tenham*, “whole caravans of fugitives arrived there on Sunday, the 23rd of August, from

Dinant and the surrounding district. We gave them shelter. However, on the following day a great many of our refugees thought better of it, and decided to go to Romedenne.

"On Monday afternoon, about 6 o'clock, we heard shots. It was the French machine-guns installed on the height between Surice and Romedenne; they were firing on the Germans coming from Soulme.

"This lasted about an hour, and when the French fell back they had, it was said, killed great numbers of their enemies.

"During the night there was more firing; guns were thundering. The Germans invaded the village and set fire to a number of houses. It was a night of dread for us.

"About 6 o'clock in the morning of the 25th some soldiers broke our doors and windows into fragments and, with fixed bayonets, they entered our house and forced us to leave.

"We were driven into the middle of the road and sent to the church, our lamentable procession increasing as it advanced. Among those who came to join us in this way were our curé, M. Poskin, with his aged mother, who was eighty years of age, his sister Thérèse, and his other sister Marie, with her husband, M. Schmidt, the Inspector of Schools from Gerpennes, and their four children. The Schmidt family had come to the Surice presbytery on the previous day, thinking to take refuge there.

"Soldiers were setting fire to houses as yet untouched, and committing all sorts of atrocities before our eyes.

"We saw M. Ch. Colot, an old man of eighty-eight, shot on his doorstep. Further on, as we were passing the house of the postman, Léopold Burniaux, we heard piercing shrieks; Mme. Burniaux, whose husband had just been killed, was imploring mercy for her sons. Her supplications were useless; her sons, Armand, a young priest who had come to spend a few days' holiday with his parents, and Albert, were both murdered before her eyes. And as Albert Burniaux had just broken his leg, so that he could not stand, he was shot sitting in a chair. The unfortunate woman had one son left, Gaston, a teacher in the Collège de Malonne; clinging together, more dead than alive, they were forced to join our procession. . . . A little further on we saw in a garden, which was at a lower level than the road, two little children crying by the body of their mother.

"From the church we were despatched along the Romedenne road, and were thus brought to a field of fallow land which lay beside this road.

"There were fifty to sixty of us there, men, women, and children.

"It was a little after 7 o'clock in the morning.

"An officer came up, who informed us: 'A young girl has fired on one of our superior officers; you ought all to be executed, but the court-martial (*sic*) has decided that only the men are to be shot.'

"Then the men, and even the boys, were detached from our mournful company, and what was done then cannot be described.

"There were eighteen. Besides the curés of Onhaye and Anthée, who had arrived the day before from their burning villages, besides Abbé Gaspard, who had come from Dinant, there was our good curé, M. Poskin, and his brother-in-law, M. Schmidt; then there was Dr. Jacques, of Anthée, who had taken refuge at Surice with all his family; there was Dr. Jacques' eldest son, a boy of barely sixteen; in addition to these, among those whose names I knew, there was Gaston Burniaux, the only man surviving of the unfortunate postman's family, M. Billy and his son, aged seventeen, and, among others, a man from Dinant and one from Onhaye. . . .

"A few minutes elapsed. Then, before our eyes, and in spite of our pleading, the unhappy victims were drawn up by the side of the road.

"At this moment—I say it in all sincerity—I saw one young soldier who was so affected that great tears were falling on his tunic. . . .

"Young Henri Jacques cried out: 'I am too young to die. . . . I have not the courage to die.' The others made us signs of farewell, some with their hands, other with their hats or caps. . . ."

"And from the tragic, bewildered group of women and children, who were kept at a distance from the men by the German rifles, a voice was heard, the voice, infinitely sweet, of a little girl. 'Papa, papa!' she said, 'you are going to die; forgive me if I have sometimes given you trouble.'

"Unable to bear the sight any longer," writes Mlle. Dierieux, "I turned away, covering my eyes with my hands.

"The soldiers fired a volley, and all the men fell. Someone said to me: 'Look, they have fallen!' But some, who were not killed outright, were still moving; the soldiers finished them by blows of the rifle-butt on the head. . . ."

“ Our hearts were wrung with agony and fear.

“ There was not one of us but witnessed, in that unforgettable moment, the death of someone dear to her. The aged mother of our good curé saw her son and her son-in-law killed; Mme. Jacques witnessed the deaths of her husband and her eldest son; but the most sorely tried was the wife of the postman: this unhappy woman had witnessed in succession the violent deaths of her husband and her three sons—men brought into the world and educated at the cost of what sacrifices God alone knows. . . .

“ The moment the massacre was over the Germans began to despoil the bodies, taking their watches, rings, purses, and pocketbooks. Many of the victims were refugees, who had brought with them all the notes or securities they had at hand; Dr. Jacques and M. Schmidt in particular were carrying on them relatively large sums of money, of which their widows and children were deprived. . . .

“ Our beloved village was still burning. Our house caught fire in its turn; then the church and the school. And seeing so many things disappear for ever to which, for me, so many dear memories were attached, I felt more heart-broken than ever.

“ Not all the men had been brought together in this place of torment. There were some—like my brother—who had succeeded in making their escape; others were killed in their own homes; the sick were even burned alive in their beds.”

Of one hundred and thirty houses only eight escaped burning. And all this because a young girl of fifteen, a child, was said to have killed a German officer. All without trial, without any sort of inquiry.

Mlle. Aline Dierix asserts, moreover, that from the first days of the invasion the authorities had demanded the surrender of all weapons. “ Even old fowling-pieces were thus collected and placed under lock and key in the communal offices.”<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore highly improbable that the young girl in question could have committed the offence imputed to her. But, after all, how many women in our poor, ravaged, bruised, polluted Belgium, how many women and young girls were the victims of assaults which would legitimise any means of defence!

If, instead of climbing the hills of the left bank of the Meuse

<sup>1</sup> One German newspaper at least referred to the piles of arms, all ticketed with the names of individual citizens, which were found in the communal offices, as proof that the Belgian Government had organised the entire nation as *francs-tireurs*.—B. M. See p. 93.

opposite Dinant, we had ascended the course of the river, we should have heard of and observed the same crimes, the same abominations.

There is not one of these charming villages of the Meuse basin, so peaceful and smiling in ordinary times, that has not suffered cruelly from the passing of the German troops.

At *Anseremme* fifteen houses were burned, and some of the inhabitants were assassinated.

At *Waulsort* six men were executed, and twenty houses were destroyed.

Farther up the river, at *Hastièrre-par-delà*, that delightful village which was the favourite summer residence of many citizens of Brussels, twenty persons were shot, one of whom was Dr. Halloy, a Red Cross physician. One unhappy woman saw her husband, son, and father-in-law killed. Only some ten houses and the old church were left standing. But this church, a beautiful monument of the fourteenth century, which the curé, M. Schloegel, had loved with intelligent solicitude, causing it to be restored according to the original plans, was pillaged and polluted in a hateful fashion. Not only did it serve, as many others, as a lodging for men and horses, but the tables of the altar were broken, the relics were scattered, and the sacerdotal ornaments were subjected to the basest usage.

On the opposite bank of the river, at *Hastièrre-Lavaux*, some houses were destroyed.

Further still up-stream we come to *Hermeton*, where of a hundred and ten houses eighty were burned and ten civilians were put to death. This was on the 24th of August, about 5.30 p.m. The curé of *Hastièrre-par-delà* was in the basement of the church with his brother-in-law, M. Ponthière, Professor in the University of Louvain, Mme. and Mlle. Ponthière, and two servants; the communal schoolmaster was there also, with his wife and children, and a few more inhabitants of the village. The Germans, having discovered them, made them all come up into the road, where they were confronted by some officers, some of whom were drunk. "Are you the curé here?" one of these scoundrels inquired of the Abbé Schloegel. "No, I am the curé of *Hastièrre*." "Ah, we've got you at last! They've been firing from your village!" At this the women were separated from the men; the curé, M. Ponthière, the schoolmaster, and seven or eight other men were shot. Now if shots were fired from *Hastièrre* it was because the French troops had taken up their

position in this village and defended it until the 22nd of August. Not a single shot was fired by the inhabitants.

Below Dinant what happened was equally atrocious.

IN THE PROVINCE OF LUXEMBURG the Germans burned, without any military necessity, more than 3,000 houses. Here are some details:—

*Neufchâteau*, 21 houses burned; *Etalle*, 30 houses burned; *Hondemont*, 64 houses burned; *Rulle* is half destroyed; *Ansart* is completely destroyed; at *Tintigny* only three houses are left; *Jamoigne* is half destroyed; *Les Bulles* also; at *Moyen* 42 houses are destroyed; *Rossignol* is entirely burned; at *Mussy-la-Ville* 20 houses are destroyed; at *Bertrix*, 15; *Bleid* is largely burned; at *Signeux* there is the same almost complete destruction; at *Ethe* five-sixths of the village is burned; at *Bellefontaine* 6 houses are destroyed; at *Masson* half the village is destroyed; at *Baranzy* 4 houses are left; at *Saint-Léger* 6 houses are burned; *Semel* is razed to the ground; at *Maissain* 64 houses out of 100 have been burned; at *Villance* nine houses are burned; at *Aulay*, 6. . . .

As for the number of inhabitants shot, it amounts to about 1,200.<sup>1</sup> Here are some figures:—

*Neufchâteau*, 18 shot; *Etalle*, 30; *Houdemont*, 11; *Tintigny*, 157; *Izel*, 9; *Rossignol*, 106; *Bertrix*, 21; *Ethe*, about 300 shot, while 530 persons are missing; at *Latour*, 11 shot; at *Maissain*, 10 men, 1 woman, and 1 young girl shot, 2 men and 2 young people wounded; *Villance*, 2 men shot, 1 young girl wounded; at *Auloy*, 52 men and women shot; at *Claireuse*, 2 men were shot and 2 hanged. Everywhere hostages were taken.

At *Arlon*—the chief town of the province—300 persons were publicly shot, “in order to make an example,” who were brought expressly for the purpose from the communes of *Ethe* and *Rossignol*. They also shot without trial, and for a reason which was afterwards recognised as unfounded, a gallant police-officer.

At *Le Pin*, near *Izel*, some Uhlans captured in passing two young boys whom they found on the road. They tied them by the arms to their horses, and put the latter to the gallop. . . . The bodies of the unfortunate children were found in a ditch, at a distance of some miles; their knees, a witness reported, were “literally worn through”; one of them had his throat cut and his breast laid open; both had been shot through the head.

<sup>1</sup> The province of Luxemburg, which is the least densely populated in the kingdom, contains only 232,500 inhabitants.

“Near *Lisogne*,” relates an officer of the 178th Saxon Regiment in his note-book, “a chasseur of Marburg placed three women one behind the other and killed them with the same shot”; and at *Villers-en-Fagne* the same officer saw “curé and other residents shot” because “grenadiers of the Guard had been found killed and wounded.”

In Luxemburg, as in the other Belgian provinces, the German troops pillaged, burned, and decimated the villages on whose territory certain of their soldiers had been killed, even when they knew that these deaths resulted from battles with regular troops of the enemy army. This is why the north of the province was spared, while the south, on the contrary, was abominably treated: here the French opposed the advance of the German Army while there the way was open.

Poor French soldiers! How they, too, were maltreated!

At *Gomery*—the cradle of my family—on the 23rd of August, some Germans broke into a hospital in which were numerous French wounded. “*Es ist der Krieg des Tods!*”—“It is the war of death!”—they bawled. And they immediately gave themselves up to the most horrible carnage, killing wounded and surgeons indiscriminately, and ending by burning the hospital. Those victims who attempted to escape from this hell were shot by sentinels posted outside. Many remained in the furnace, and over one hundred were shot!

LOUVAIN.—When the entrance of the Germans into Louvain appeared immediate, the burgomaster, M. Colins, had a notice posted on the walls of the city exhorting his fellow-citizens to keep calm. Quite needless advice, for that matter, since those who had had the courage to remain were fully determined to submit to the inevitable occupation with dignity and composure. Moreover, all firearms, and even fencing foils, had been handed over to the communal administration, which had them stored in the Church of Saint-Pierre.

On the 19th of August, about two in the afternoon, a German advance-guard entered the city.

It immediately proceeded to make enormous requisitions of provisions. About 2.30 p.m. the bulk of the troops arrived, making a triumphal entry with bands at their head.

Officers and soldiers billeted themselves, by preference, in the houses of the citizens, leaving the barracks unoccupied, as well as the majority of the public buildings which had been placed at



their disposal. They forced their way into deserted houses, breaking in the doors with their hatchets.

On the following day, the 20th of August, M. van der Kelen, senator, and M. Colins, burgomaster, were detained as hostages. Proclamations were posted on the walls: these forbade civilians to move about the city after 8.00 p.m., required them—under pain of death—to deliver at the Hôtel de Ville all weapons, munitions, and benzine for motor-cars, and ordered the inhabitants of certain streets to leave their doors open all night and their windows lit up.

Moreover, Major Manteuffel, the "District Commandant," demanded the payment of a war indemnity, and liberated all offenders of German nationality who were confined in the prison for offences against the common law.<sup>1</sup>

During the succeeding days fresh requisitions were made and more hostages were taken: the Rector of the University, the Vice-President of the Law Courts, a notary, and other notabilities. There were numerous cases of rape.

On the 25th, at nightfall, groups of non-commissioned officers and privates of the 165th Hanoverian Regiment began to scour the principal streets, entering some of the houses, and firing through the windows in all directions. A panic followed, and indescribable confusion. Fires broke out (12). The infuriated soldiery broke in the doors and started fires on every hand by means of incendiary grenades or rockets, or pastilles of gelatinous nitro-cellulose. If the unhappy townspeople tried to escape they were shot; many were thus killed on their doorsteps. Others, hidden in their cellars, were stifled, or even burned alive.

It was a tragic night, which I do not feel competent to describe.

On the 26th of August, in the morning, a group of a hundred persons, including priests and various notabilities of the city, was led to the Place de la Station. The men were brutally separated from their wives and children; and, after having been stripped of all their possessions and subjected to the most abominable treatment, they were driven in front of the German troops as far as the village of Campenhout. There they were confined in the church. On the following morning, about 4 o'clock, an officer came to say that they would be shot in half an hour's time. But about 4.30 they were simply set free! However, they were not at the end of their trials; shortly afterwards they

<sup>1</sup> Louvain prison is one of the largest in the country.

were again arrested, and were forced to march in front of the troops in the direction of Malines. "They are going to give you a taste of Belgian machine-gun fire in front of Antwerp," an officer told them. Nevertheless, they were released in the afternoon, at the gates of Malines.

The women and children remained, without food, in the Place de la Station (17), during the whole of the 26th. They were present at the execution of twenty of their fellow-townsmen, among whom were several priests. A pretended execution of the Vice-Rector of the University was gone through in front of them. Convinced of the reality of the tragedy, they were forced to applaud when the volley rang out. . . . These women and children were released during the night of the 26th.

A large number of persons were escorted to the railway station, crammed into cattle-trucks, and taken to Cologne, in order that the Cologne public might be able to see these famous "*francs-tireurs*." The following passages from a letter sent by a Belgian physician to his friend, Professor Deboir, Permanent Secretary of the Academy of Medicine in Paris, gives some idea of the adventures of these unfortunates:—

"You ask me for news of my father- and mother-in-law. Here it is:

"They were in Louvain at the time of the sack of that city. The Germans separated them; my father-in-law, who is sixty-five years of age, was sent, although a civilian, to Cologne, as a prisoner of war. First, they forced him to make . . . a tour of the city, in order to show him the fires; then they crammed him with thirty-nine other prominent citizens into a cattle-truck. . . . After four days' confinement in this truck they reached Cologne. Three of them had become insane. During these four days they had nothing but a loaf of black bread and a litre of water.<sup>1</sup> They were released owing to the representations of the United States Consul.

"As for my mother-in-law, who is also sixty-five years of age, the Germans forced her for four days to wander through the countryside. As each party of troops passed she had to kneel and raise her arms. . . . Finally, exhausted, she fell into a ditch. There the horde left her. She was able, by dragging herself along, to reach Brussels, where she still is.

"I have not told you the half of their sufferings, for all this

<sup>1</sup> Not quite three tumblersful.—B. M.

was accompanied by blows of clubbed rifles, threats of death, etc."

Finally, among those who were arrested on the 20th, several persons, and especially some of the priests, were led in the direction of Brussels. One of them, Father Dupierreux, was shot by the roadside.

The officer in charge of the escort had observed that Father Dupierreux possessed a note-book. He seized it, examined it, and read in it the following observation: "Omar destroyed Alexandria; the Huns have destroyed Louvain." No more was required to decide the fate of the unhappy priest; he was placed against a wall; on his back the officer drew with chalk a white cross, which the firing platoon were to take as their target. The other priests, drawn up in line a few paces distant, were forced to witness the sufferings of their colleague. Those who lowered or turned away their eyes, they were told, would be shot on the spot.

The pillage, the incendiarism, and the wholesale orgies of drunkenness continued for several days. Reinforcements arrived.

"We came to Louvain," wrote Gaston Klein, of the *Land-sturm* of Halle, in his note-book, "on the 29th of August. . . .

"Blazing and falling houses lined the streets. . . . The battalion went forward with close-packed ranks to break into the nearest houses, to steal wine and other things too—pardon, to 'requisition' them. They were like a pack of hounds broken loose; everyone did as he pleased. The officers led the way and set a good example." And another German soldier wrote to his wife, Anna Manniget, at Magdeburg:—"We reached Louvain at 7.00 in the evening. I could not write to you on account of the dismal appearance of the city. It was burning in all directions. Where it was not burning there was nothing but destruction; we got into the cellars, and we got well filled up there!"

In order that the Germans might proceed to plunder the city more easily, the inhabitants were expelled from their houses.

Six to eight thousand persons—men, women, and children—were escorted to the riding-school, where they had to pass a night before they were released. They were so closely packed, crushed one against another, and endured such sufferings, that several women became insane, and young children died in their mothers' arms.

More than 10,000 other townfolk were driven as far as Tirlémont, which lies at a distance of 12 or 13 miles. How describe their Calvary—how speak of all the outrages to which they were subjected? Here is one example: Having been subjected to the grossest insults, thirteen priests, of whom one was a professor in the University of Louvain, were imprisoned in a pig-sty, from which the Germans had expelled the pig before their eyes; then certain among them were forced to remove all their clothing. All were robbed of the money and valuables which they had on them.

Finally, several hundred inhabitants of Louvain and the surrounding parts were deported as prisoners to Germany, where they were confined in concentration camps; a certain number of these became insane and had to be confined in cells.

The work of devastation lasted a week, pillage, as a rule, preceding incendiarism.

And here is the balance sheet:

Eighteen hundred houses were destroyed in Louvain and its suburbs (13). The Palais de Justice and the theatre were burned down. The majestic Church of Saint-Pierre, dating from the fifteenth century, has been severely damaged.

Of the University buildings nothing is left but a few of the columns of the crypt and a heap of bricks, stone, and calcined beams. Here is a description of these buildings from the pen of M. Paul Delaunoy, librarian of the University:—

“The ancient halls of the library and the ‘Hall of Promotions’ occupied all the upper story; they were at once a gem of eighteenth-century architecture and a museum of relics collected by generous hands since the foundation of the University.

“The principal hall of the library (14), which was of enormous size, was altogether imposing in appearance; superb oak wainscoting, covering all the walls, presented a series of porticoes, with columns, of composite order, surmounted by canopies enshrining life-size statues of the most famous philosophers of antiquity; a ceiling covered with stucco decorations, a floor of oak parquet, and an iron door, a remarkable piece of workmanship, completed this wonderful interior. Another hall full of books, transformed a year ago into a workroom for the professors . . . presented, with its fine oak woodwork and its graceful arches, a most delicate and intimate aspect.

“The so-called ‘Hall of Portraits’ was a real historical

museum, in which were assembled the severe and sombre portraits of the illustrious professors of the ancient University. . . . I see them all, these masters who made the chairs of our University illustrious! There, in the centre of the hall, was Justus Lipsius; there, among so many others, Erasmus; Puteanus Jansenius, whose ascetic features lead us back as at a bound into the midst of the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century; and that old gloomy canvas of Andraeus Vesalius, which an English scientist had just had photographed as being one of the best of the creator of anatomy.

“The collection of books and manuscripts in our library formed a collection which was too little known; every visitor was shown one small manuscript from the hand of Thomas à Kempis, and the example on vellum of the famous work of Vesalius: *De humani corporis fabrica*, given to the University by Charles V.

“Five years ago the original bull of the foundation of the University in 1425 came into our possession. But I will pass over these bibliographical curiosities, which formed a trust that any ancient foundation would have esteemed an honour. At Louvain it was the collection of old printed books which formed the rarest and most precious possession of the University: old books on theology, old historical volumes, old works of literature.

“Two years ago we were able to begin the cataloguing of these treasures, and we received surprise after surprise; the whole religious history of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century was comprised in this ancient medley of documents, these *Varia reformatoria*.

“Our collection formerly contained more than 350 incunabula, and every day almost we discovered new editions. What a beautiful catalogue we could have published a few years hence! My private residence having suffered the same fate as the library, nearly all the notes collected on this subject have perished. . . .”

Here is a detail which at once forced itself on the attention of those who were able to visit Louvain shortly after the disaster:

On many of those houses which were spared, and principally on those belonging to the Duke of Arenburg, a German subject, was observed the small adhesive placard which we reproduce in facsimile—a placard which, even if it had not been printed in

Germany well in advance of advents, would yet have been evidence of premeditation.

Certain houses which were spared, in Louvain as well as in Héverlé, where the château of the Duke of Arenburg stands, merely bore in large letters the word "Héverlé."

# Dieses Haus ist zu Schützen

Es ist streng verboten, ohne  
Genehmigung der Komman-  
dantur, Häuser zu betreten  
oder in Brand zu setzen.



Kaiserliches Garnison-Kommando.

PLACARD (REDUCED) FOUND ON HOUSES LEFT INTACT.<sup>1</sup>

These facts, with many others, enable us to assert that the burning of Louvain was carefully prepared.

Confronted by the indignation of the whole civilised world, the Germans, of course, pretended that the "punishment" inflicted on Louvain was perfectly justified, that "*francs-tireurs*" had fired on the German troops. They have even gone so far as to pretend<sup>2</sup> that at Louvain many of the houses were prepared in view of a war of *francs-tireurs*; that they had openings in the house-fronts through which the barrel of a rifle could be passed,

<sup>1</sup> "This house is to be Protected. It is strictly forbidden to enter Houses or to set fire to them without permission of the Kommandantur.

"IMPERIAL GARRISON COMMAND."

<sup>2</sup> *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg*, p. 60.

and which were closed by movable metal covers.<sup>1</sup> These openings must have been contrived by technical specialists (*sic*) with a view to the systematic (*sic*) organisation of the war!

If we are to believe our adversaries, we must certainly have entertained the most singular ideas as to the means of defending ourselves against their colossal and formidable military organisation!

The fact is that not a single civilian was found with weapons in his hands—neither in Louvain, Visé, Aerschot, Andenne, Dinant, Tamines, nor in any of the other martyred towns or villages.

However, I propose to relate, a little further on, a few episodes of this pretended “war of *francs-tireurs*,” which will enable you to judge of the value of German assertions.

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LOUVAIN.—On the 25th and 26th of August the Belgian troops made a sortie from the entrenched camp of Antwerp, and succeeded, after desperate fighting, in repulsing the Germans who were before Malines as far as Vilvord and Louvain.

Unfortunately the Germans, as they retreated, destroyed everything in their path, and in this district, which had been one of the most prosperous and thickly populated in Belgium, our soldiers found nothing but ruins. Villages had been given over to pillage; then they were wholly or partially burned, their populations were dispersed, while of such inhabitants as were met by chance many were arrested and shot without trial and without apparent motive.

At *Hofstade*, on the 25th of August, our soldiers found the body of an old woman who had been killed with the bayonet; she still held in her hand the needle with which she had been sewing when she was struck down. A woman and her son, aged fifteen or sixteen years, were lying side by side, pierced through by bayonet-wounds; and a man had been hanged.

At *Sempst* were found the partially carbonised bodies of two men. The legs of one had been cut off at the knees; the other had had his legs and arms cut off. A woman had been killed as she was leaving her house. A workman, whose body had been drenched with petroleum, had been shut up in a house to which the Germans had set fire. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The reference is obviously to those apertures which are found directly under the cornice of most Belgian houses, and which serve to support scaffoldings when the house-front is to be painted or repaired. As a rule, of course, they are as old as the houses!—B. M.

At *Bueken* many of the inhabitants had been killed, including the curé, who was over eighty years of age. Horrors were committed here such as the pen refuses to describe.

Everywhere about the countryside were found the bodies of peasants lying in attitudes of supplication, their arms raised or their hands clasped. . . .

OTHER CRIMES.—I might go on to tell you of what happened in many another village of Brabant or Limburg; and of the doings at Liége, where the Germans, one night at the end of August—why, no one ever knew—set fire to the houses on the *Quai des Pêcheurs* and the *Place de l'Université*, and fired on those who emerged from their burning houses, killing seventeen of them; <sup>1</sup> of what passed at Charleroi, too, and in many parts of Hainault; here, in particular, many well-equipped workshops and factories were burned, on the pretext that French soldiers were hiding in them. And I might tell you of the abominable tortures inflicted on many of our wounded soldiers. But I should never come to an end were I to give you the full details of the martyrdom of my country. I will therefore refer those who wish to be more completely informed as to this painful subject to the reports of the British and Belgian Commissions of Inquiry.

\*                     \*                     \*

Although I have scrupulously confined myself to the relation of such facts as are irrefutably established, and although, on the other hand, I have abstained from recording here such actions as were—although only too real—too incredibly cruel or unnatural, I think I ought to put before you, in the way of confirmation, some passages from the courageous pastoral letter of Cardinal Mercier, the Archbishop of Malines.<sup>2</sup>

“I have travelled through the majority of the worst ravaged districts of the diocese,” says the eminent prelate, “and what I saw in the way of ruins and ashes exceeds all that I could have imagined, despite my apprehensions, although these were sufficiently keen. . . . There are certain parts of my diocese which I have not yet found time to revisit which have suffered the same devastation. A considerable number of churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, convents are rendered useless or are in ruins.

<sup>1</sup> For full details of all that happened in Liége and the surrounding countryside see *The Road to Liége: the Path of Crime*, by Gustave Somville, translated by B. Miall, published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pastoral Letter* written by His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, at Christmas, 1914, the reading of which in the churches was prohibited by the German Governor-General.



“Whole villages have all but disappeared. At Werchter-Wackerzeel, for example, of 380 homes 130 remain; at Tremeloo two-thirds of the commune are razed to the ground; at Bueken, of 100 houses 20 are left; at Schaffen, of a total of 200 houses 189 have disappeared and 11 are left. At Louvain a third part of the city has been destroyed; 1,074 buildings have disappeared, and in the area of the city and its suburban communes combined the total of houses destroyed by fire is 1,823.

“Of that beloved city of Louvain, which I cannot put out of my mind, the superb collegiate church of Saint-Pierre will never again recover its pristine splendour; the ancient college of Saint-Ives, the Municipal School of Arts, the commercial and consular college of the University, the old market buildings, our wealthy library with its collections, its early printed books, its unpublished manuscripts, its archives, and the gallery recording its glories since the first days of its foundation, the portraits of rectors, chancellors, illustrious professors . . . all is annihilated.

“Many parishes were deprived of their shepherds. I still hear the sorrowful tones of an old man of whom I asked if Mass had been held on Sunday in his battered church. ‘It is two months,’ he told me, ‘since we have seen a priest.’ The curé and the vicar were in a concentration camp at Münster.

“Thousands of Belgian citizens have thus been deported to the prisons of Germany, to Münster, Celle, Magdeburg. The Münster camp alone contains 3,100 civilian prisoners. History will record the physical and moral torments of their long Calvary.<sup>1</sup>

“Hundreds of innocent persons were shot;<sup>2</sup> I do not possess the whole of this sinister necrology, but I know that 91 were shot at Aerschot in particular, and that their fellow-citizens were forced, under the menace of death, to dig the pits for their burial. In Louvain and the adjacent communes 176 persons, men and women, old folks, and children still at the breast, rich and poor, sick and whole, were shot down or burned.

“In my diocese alone I knew that thirteen priests or monks were put to death. One of them, the curé of Gelrode, in all probability died as a martyr. . . . To my actual knowledge more than thirty were killed in the dioceses of Namur, Tournai, and Liège. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Concerning civil prisoners see Appendix IV. (Author.)

<sup>2</sup> The number of Belgian civilians massacred by the German troops in 1914 is estimated at about 6,000—six thousand. (Author.)

“We can neither count our dead nor measure the extent of our ruin. What would it be were we to turn our steps toward the districts of Liège, Namur, Andenne, Dinant, Tamines, and Charleroi; toward Vitron, La Semoy and the whole of Luxemburg? . . .”

Cardinal Mercier continues:

“Many circumstances lead us to believe that the curé of Hérent Van Bladel, a venerable old man of seventy-one years, has also been killed; up to this present, however, his body has not been found.”

Since then the bodies of those persons have been exhumed who were shot at Louvain and buried in the Place de la Gare, in the space surrounding the statue of Sylvain Van de Weyer.<sup>1</sup> A correspondent of the great Dutch Catholic newspaper, *De Tijd*, was present at the mournful operation, and here are some extracts from the account he gives of it:—

“Twenty bodies were exhumed; it was a horrible piece of work. Twenty bodies crammed into a hole which did not measure more than four yards square! We were all overcome by emotion. . . . The majority of the victims lay there with fractured skulls—fractured not only by bullets, but by blows of the clubbed rifle as well! And that was not enough. All the bodies recovered had been thrust through with the bayonet. Some had the legs and arms broken. . . .”

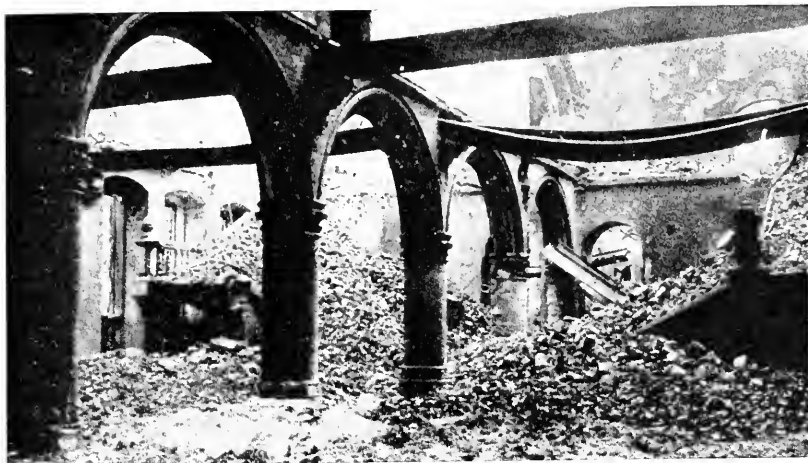
The correspondent of *De Tijd* gives the names of the victims; among them were old men, and “a little boy not fifteen”; he tells how, beside this grave, they found a second, “which contained seven more bodies hidden beneath a foot of earth.” Finally he ends his dismal narrative as follows:—

“On the following day the work was resumed; two more bodies were brought to light from quite a small grave; they were those of Henri De Corte, a working-man of Kessel-Loo, and M. Van Bladel, the curé of Hérent. Not a sound was heard when the tall body of the unfortunate priest was exhumed. Only Father Claes uttered these words: ‘*The curé of Hérent!*’”<sup>2</sup>

Have we not here a striking but wholly accidental proof of the extreme circumspection with which Cardinal Mercier formu-

<sup>1</sup> Sylvain Van de Weyer, born at Louvain, was one of those who most ardently prepared the way for the events of 1830. It was he who signed, in the name of Belgium, the treaty of 1839. His statue still rises intact in the midst of the Place de la Station (17), which is destroyed on every side.

<sup>2</sup> *De Tijd*, Amsterdam, 23rd of January, 1915.



14. THE CRYPT OF THE LIBRARY, LOUVAIN, AFTER THE TRAGEDY. (Page 78)



15. A BRABANT FARMHOUSE, AFTER THE GERMANS HAD PASSED.



16. FOUNDRY AT MONTIGNY-SUR-SAMBRE, BURNED BY THE GERMANS. (Page 76)



17. PLACE DE LA STATION, LOUVAIN. (Page 76)



18. A "FAKED" GERMAN POSTCARD. (Page 94)



19. MM. DE SADELEER, VANDERVELDE, CARTON DE WIART, DE LICHTERVELDE AND HYMANS, PILGRIMS OF JUSTICE. (Page 105)



20. ANTWERP RAIDED BY A ZEPPELIN. (Page 104)  
(From a German Postcard.)



*Le Collège des Préviseurs de Saint-Julien-des-Belges a l'honneur de vous inviter au service religieux qu'il fera célébrer le Vendredi 22 Janvier, à 11 heures, pour le repos de l'âme des Prêtres et Religieux, mis à mort par les troupes allemandes au cours de l'invasion de la Belgique.*

*Vous en trouverez ci-contre une première liste.*

*A cause de l'exiguïté de l'Église Nationale, le service religieux aura lieu dans l'ÉGLISE DES STIGMATES, à l'angle de la Via del Costazi et du Corso Vittorio Emanuele.*

Le PRÉSIDENT :

BARON D'ERP, Ministre de Belgique près le Saint-Siège.

Le SECRÉTAIRE :

C. DE T'SERCLAES, Président de Collège Belge.

M. VAES, Recteur de Saint-Julien-des-Belges.

OSCAR BOLLE.

C. KURTH, Directeur de l'Institut historique Belge.

A. POTTIER, Chanoine de Sainte-Marie-Majeure.

#### DIOCÈSE DE LIÈGE.

L'abbé O. CHABOT, curé de Forêt.  
L'abbé J. DORSOENT, curé de Hockey.  
L'abbé F. JANSEN, curé de Heuvel-le-Romain.  
L'abbé R. LAGEYE, curé de Blegny.  
L'abbé B. RICHONNET, vicaire d'Olne.  
L'abbé E. TIELEN, curé de Haccourt.

#### DIOCÈSE DE MALINES.

L'abbé R. CALETTE, professeur au Collège Saint-Pierre à Louvain.  
L'abbé H. DE CLERS, curé de Boelen, près de Louvain.  
L'abbé P. DEBOUT, curé de Celliers.  
L'abbé J. COSSY, curé de Aougarden.  
L'abbé E. LOUBAERTS, curé de Bovenloo, près de Louvain.  
Le R. P. DUPONTIER, jésuite de Louvain.  
Le R. P. VINCENT SOMBRAGE, conventuel, de Louvain.  
Le R. P. VAN HOLMEN, espévin, de Louvain.  
Le R. Chanoine-Prémostré J. WOUTERS, curé de Post-Bredé.  
Le Frère ALLARD (dans le monde: F. Forger), religieux jésuite de Louvain.  
Le Frère STASSTIEN (dans le monde: Mr Straetman), religieux jésuite de Louvain.  
Le Frère CANDIDE (dans le monde: Mr Pivet), des Frères de la Miséricorde de Blauwput, près de Louvain.

#### DIOCÈSE DE TORNAL.

L'abbé E. DRUET, curé d'Acoz.  
L'abbé J. FOLLAET, curé de Rosfles.

#### DIOCÈSE DE NAMUR.

L'abbé J. ALEXANDER, curé de Mossy-la-Ville.  
L'abbé A. AMBROISE, curé d'Onhaye.  
L'abbé BILAUDE, éumôier des sourde-muets à Bouge.  
L'abbé BURMIAUX, professeur au Collège Saint-Louis à Namur.  
L'abbé DOCO, professeur en Collège de Virton.  
L'abbé C. GASPAS, professeur au Collège de Belle-Vue à Dinant.  
L'abbé J. GEORGIS, curé de Tintigny.  
L'abbé P. GILLE, docteur en Théologie de l'Université Catholique, vicaire de Couvin.  
L'abbé CLOUDEM, curé de Latour.  
L'abbé HOTTLET, curé de Les Allouas.  
L'abbé J. LAISSE, curé de Spontin.  
L'abbé MARDENAL, séminariste, de Messines.  
L'abbé PATRON, vicaire de Deux.  
L'abbé PIETET, vicaire d'Erleux.  
L'abbé PLEAUX, curé de Charillon.  
L'abbé PIET, curé d'Anthée.  
L'abbé POSKIN, curé de Surice.  
L'abbé E. SCHLÖGEL, curé de Hastières.  
L'abbé ZENDER, curé retraité.  
L. R. P. GILLET, bénédictin de l'abbaye de Maréchaux.  
Le Chanoine NICOLAS, de l'abbaye des Prémontrés de Leffe.

Le Collège des Préviseurs recommande également à vos charitables prières l'âme de Monsieur N. PONTNIEUX et de Monsieur V. LEMERTZ, professeurs à l'Université Catholique de Louvain, fusillés par les troupes allemandes.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FUNERAL SERVICE CELEBRATED IN ROME, IN MEMORY OF THE BELGIAN PRIESTS KILLED BY THE GERMANS.

lated the accusations which I have just reproduced in support of my own?

Another proof: In a letter addressed on the 24th of January, 1915, to Colonel Count Wengersky, District Commander at Malines, the eminent prelate says:—

“ . . . Other figures mentioned in my pastoral letter must to-day be increased; thus for Aerschot I gave the number of victims as 91; now the total number of the inhabitants of Aerschot whose bodies have been exhumed had increased, a few days ago, to 143.”

In this same letter Cardinal Mercier says again: “The moment has not come to lay stress upon these individual facts. Their relation will find place in the inquiry which you give me grounds to hope for. It will be a consolation to me to see the full light thrown on the events to which I was forced to refer in my pastoral letter and others of the same kind. But it is essential that the results of this inquiry should appear to all as invested with indisputable authority.

“To this end I have the honour to propose to you, M. le Comte, and to propose, through your kindly offices, to the German authorities, that the Commission of Inquiry should be composed in equal proportions of German delegates and Belgian magistrates, and that the president should be the representative of a neutral country. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The Germans would not hear of any such commission—and with reason!

But the British Government, which wanted to know what to think of “the crimes which are said to have been committed by the German troops,” instituted a Commission of Inquiry on the 15th of December, 1914, which Commission was composed of eminent lawyers, and presided over by Viscount Bryce.

It commenced its labours in a spirit of scepticism bordering on incredulity. Then, as it heard the depositions of more than

<sup>1</sup> This proposal was repeated verbally on the 8th of February, 1915, by Mgr. Van Rosy, Vicar-General, who was sent for by the Malines *Kommandantur*. Cardinal Mercier repeated it in writing on the 10th of February.

On the 12th of April the Bishop of Namur proposed to the Military Governor of his province the formation of a court of inquiry composed of German and Belgian arbitrators, the president to be a delegate from a neutral State.

Finally, on the 24th of November, 1915, the Cardinal-Archbishop and the five bishops of Belgium addressed to the cardinals and bishops of Germany, Bavaria, and Austria a letter full of circumstantial details which contained the same proposals. This collective letter—which, despite the great sobriety of its tone, constitutes the most crushing indictment against the whole German procedure in Belgium—received no reply.



twelve hundred witnesses, Belgian civilians who had entered the United Kingdom as refugees, with British soldiers and officers who had taken part in the military operations in Belgium, and as it analysed this evidence and compared it with the service notebooks found on German soldiers, its conviction of the truth was established and confirmed. And its report, which appeared a few months ago, corroborated the Belgian Commission in every respect.

Although numbers of priests were either killed—sometimes with incredible refinements of cruelty—or led into captivity, there were also, among the thousands of Belgian victims of this German war, a number of doctors. Dr. Philippe, of Brussels, the President of the “Association of Belgian Physicians refugees in England,” writes to me on this subject: “Thirty-seven doctors were shot in the small communes (they were nearly all burgomasters). A large number of doctors’ houses were burned. In the large towns more than 150 doctors have disappeared.”

As for the military doctors, if those who fell into the hands of the Germans had their lives spared, they were, nevertheless, subjected to all sorts of exactions. Many of them were even taken to Germany. The *Oberarzt* who was in charge at Namur at the beginning of September, 1914, declared, moreover, that it was plainly in the interest of the Germans to refuse to allow the Belgian doctors to rejoin the army in Antwerp, for by depriving the army of medical attention the Germans would find yet another trump card in sickness and epidemics!

### FRANCS-TIREURS

I promised the reader some stories of *francs-tireurs*. Here they are:—

On the 8th of August, 1914, the beautiful village of *Francorchamps*, which lies in the neighbourhood of Spa, quite close to the frontier, was drenched with blood and fire. Why?

For four days the German columns had been passing through the village in a perfectly peaceable manner. It was hot weather, and the peasants had placed pails of water along the roadside so that the men might quench their thirst. The officers ate at the hotel; already the villagers and the holiday visitors from Brussels were growing accustomed to the passing of the troops.

But then, suddenly, about 9 o'clock in the morning, a few

shots rang out. And at once the fatal cry was heard: "*Man hat geschossen!*"

The innocent must suffer for the guilty. The Germans began to shoot<sup>1</sup> and plunder and burn. The village was wiped out.

Now it happens that we know to-day what was the origin of the few shots fired at Francorchamps on the morning of the 8th of August.

"Until mid-August," M. Waxweiler tells us,<sup>2</sup> "small detachments of Belgian cavalry pushed their reconnaissances to the rear of the German lines, thanks to the woods, which are very plentiful in this district. This is how it was that early on the morning of the 8th of August two gendarmes and two lancers were hidden in the thickets of Francorchamps. Seeing a German column, they fired upon it.

"On the other hand, the Germans, not having encountered any Belgian troops in these parts since entering the country, immediately imagined that the shots fired could only be the work of civilians, and at once, without inquiry, a pitiless collective repression broke upon the village."

Another episode of the same kind:—

On the 10th of August a German detachment found, upon entering Linsmeau, a little village in Brabant, a few peasants gathered about a freshly dug grave. Beside them lay the body of a German officer, which they were about to bury. The body was examined: the temple was pierced by a revolver bullet, and the wound was not such as would be received in battle. And the watch, the papers, and all the personal belongings of the dead man had disappeared. Thus there was no possible doubt: it was these peasants who had killed the German officer.

Now this is what the Germans would have learned had they made the slightest inquiry:—

On that very morning a Belgian patrol, on the outskirts of Linsmeau, had encountered an officer and some German soldiers on reconnaissance. Shots were exchanged; the German officer fell, and his men fled. The Belgians, whose first taste of action this was, were much affected; they drew near to the officer who lay stretched upon the ground, and their own officer bent over

<sup>1</sup> Among the victims of this "collective repression" was M. Laude, a young advocate of Brussels, full of talent.

<sup>2</sup> Emile Waxweiler, member of the Royal Academy of Belgium, author of *La Belgique neutre et loyale*. Paris and Lausanne: Payot et Cie, 1915.

him with solicitude. Then the German suddenly raised himself, and, seizing his revolver, took aim at the Belgian officer. After this it was the most legitimate thing imaginable for the latter to fire. Struck in the temple, his treacherous adversary fell, this time to rise no more.

However, before this lifeless corpse the pity of the little party of Belgians increased; and their commander compassionately conceived the idea of having all the personal belongings of the dead man taken to the curé of a neighbouring village, in order that they might be sent to his family. Then, calling some peasants who were passing, and who were inhabitants of Linsmeau, he instructed them to dig a grave for the body.

This is what an inquiry would have revealed.

But the Germans made no inquiry; they never do make inquiries, for that matter, until it is too late, when the supposedly guilty persons can no longer be heard.

No inquiry was made; but ten farms were immediately given to the flames; the entire village was sacked; women were raped, and fifteen persons, of whom one was a woman, were shot!

At *Dolhain* a German sentinel, fatigued by the long day's march, fired into the darkness, obsessed by some hallucination.

The guard immediately turned out, there was a terrible burst of firing, and the principal street was burned.

At the end of August Liebknecht was travelling by motor-car to Louvain. He came to a place where great excitement prevailed; he inquired what was happening; the Germans there had found three of their soldiers killed in the road, and accused the peasants of having shot them. Liebknecht questioned the peasants, and proof was quickly forthcoming that the German soldiers had been killed by Belgian carabineers. This intervention on the part of the Socialist deputy saved the supposed *francs-tireurs* from death.

At *Huy* shots were fired during the night; two Germans, a non-commissioned officer and a soldier, were seriously wounded. Naturally the civil population was immediately accused of the crime. The burgomaster was arrested. "Shoot me," he said, "but I beg you will not do so before the bullets have been extracted from the wounded."

His request was granted. The bullets were found to be German.

Thanks to the burgomaster's presence of mind, thanks also,

one must admit, to the good will of the district commander, the pretty little town was spared.

One of the highest dignitaries in the kingdom was dragged from his château and imprisoned all night in a cellar, with all his family, because of a rumour that twenty-five German corpses had been discovered in one of his woods. On the following day he and his only escaped the death hanging over their heads thanks to his insistence in causing it to be established that there was not a single corpse either in the wood in question or anywhere round about!

One last anecdote—wholly horrible this time. The Saxon officer from whom we have already cited a few notes will tell it:

“August 26th.—The delightful village of *Gué-d’Hossus* (Ardennes) was given over to the flames, although innocent, as it seems to me. I was told that a cyclist fell from his machine, and that in the fall his rifle discharged itself; whereupon they fired in his direction. At this they simply threw the male inhabitants into the flames.”<sup>1</sup>

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The truth is that the German troops, who were, with extreme skill, “suggestionised” at the time of their entrance into Belgium, went about, while within our frontiers, in constant dread of the *franc-tireur*. “Away from the battlefield,” says the Commission of Inquiry (12th Report), “the least sound makes them start and tremble. A bicycle tyre bursting; a detonator exploding under a tram, as at Jurbize; the explosions of a gas-engine, as at Alost; the detonation of chemical products in a burning laboratory, as at Louvain, invariably result in the cry, ‘*Man hat geschossen!*’ with all its sinister consequences.

“Throughout the Aerschot district it was forbidden to grind the corn necessary for the sustenance of the inhabitants, on the pretext that the sails of the windmills might be used for signalling. At Limburg it was pretended that the reflection of the moon in the windows of the church was providing the enemy with information. At Izel a flag which had been floating above the belfry provoked the same fear. At Sitaert the bows and arrows of an archery club were confiscated, on the pretext that the arrows might be poisoned and employed against the German troops!

“Is it surprising that in this mental condition the soldiers, suspecting ambushes in every direction, eventually get to firing

<sup>1</sup> J. Bedier, *op. cit.*

at one another, or even at their officers . . . while the civil population, previously disarmed by the care of the local authorities, are the trembling witnesses, through the cellar air-holes, of a bloody struggle of which it will presently have to pay the price?

"Directly order is restored the first care of the military authorities will be to conceal, or rather to distort, the incident, and the legend of an attack by civilians will be created."

One unhappy woman, confronted by the body of her husband, asked an officer: "What had he done to you?"—"He fired."—"And that one?" she cried, pointing to the body of a little child, massacred by the side of his father. "Did he fire too?" The officer made off without replying.

No, it is not pleasant to contemplate, and it is not the mark of a truly strong nation, the manner in which the Germans have made war upon us!

No, there was no war of *francs-tireurs* in Belgium. Everything goes to disprove the German allegations in this connection.

The Belgian Government did not "publicly encourage the population to take part in the war,"<sup>2</sup> as the Kaiser asserted

<sup>1</sup>"Provincial Government of Namur.—Most Important Notice.—The civil Governor draws the most serious attention of the inhabitants of the province to the very grave danger which might result if civilians were to make use of weapons against the enemy. In this respect they must observe, as is, moreover, proper, the most complete abstention. It is for the national forces alone to defend our territory. Any infringement of this prohibition would be likely to provoke reprisals, incendiarism, etc.—Namur, the 7th of August, 1914. Baron de Montpellier. Seen and approved by the Military Governor, Michel."

<sup>2</sup>But it might have done so with perfect legality, according to The Hague Conventions and the German *Usages of War on Land*. The *levée en masse* and the arming of irregular troops is perfectly lawful in case of invasion.

## Gouvernement Provincial de Namur

### Avis très important

Le Gouverneur civil attire la très sérieuse attention des habitants de la province sur le très grave danger qui pourrait résulter pour les civils de se servir d'armes contre l'ennemi.

Ils doivent à cet égard, observer, comme il convient du reste, l'abstention la plus complète. C'est à la force publique seule qu'il appartient de défendre le territoire.

Toute inobservation de cette recommandation serait de nature à provoquer, le cas échéant, des représailles, des incendies, etc.

Namur, le 7 août 1914.

Baron de Montpellier.

Vu et approuvé :

Namur, le 7 août 1914.

Le Gouverneur militaire,

MICHEL.

Imprimé de l'Etat par A. FAYARD & FILS, AGENS - Téléphone 170

PLACARD POSTED AT NAMUR URGING CIVILIANS TO KEEP THE PEACE.<sup>1</sup>

in a message to the President of the United States;<sup>1</sup> it had not "for a long time been making careful preparations for such participation."

## AVIS

Tous détenteurs d'armes à feu (fusils, carabines, révolvers), particuliers et négociants, sont tenus obligatoirement d'en faire remise à l'Hôtel de Ville, au plus tard Lundi 17 courant, de 10 heures à midi.

Les armes déposées devront porter l'adresse du propriétaire. Il sera délivré récépissé du dépôt.

Le Ministre de l'Intérieur recommande aux civils et l'ennemi se montre dans leur région

De ne pas combattre :

De ne parler ni injures, ni menaces :

De se tenir à l'intérieur et de fermer les fenêtres afin qu'on ne puisse dire qu'il y a eu provocation :

Afin les soldats occupent, pour se défendre, nos maisons ou un hameau isolé, de l'éviter, et qu'on ne puisse dire que les armes ont été tirées :

L'acte de violence commis par un civil serait un véritable crime que la loi punit d'arrêté et de condamne, car il pourrait servir de prétexte à une répression sanglante, au pillage et au massacre de la population innocente, des femmes et des enfants.

Fleurus, le 14 Août 1914.

Le Bourgmestre  
D'EVERAERTS.

Fleurus, Imp. Louis Hoequet-Wotiau

PLACARD POSTED AT FLEURUS REQUIRING THE INHABITANTS TO SURRENDER ANY WEAPONS IN THEIR POSSESSION.<sup>2</sup>

—surances—have been made by one of those Powers which guaranteed our neutrality and our independence!

Probably the bad record of the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war prevented the Belgian Government from meditating any such step.—B. M.

<sup>1</sup>Who might well have seized this occasion to ask his Imperial correspondent—in the name of the signatories of The Hague Conventions—what his troops were doing in this "perpetually neutral country."

<sup>2</sup>"Notice.—All persons in possession of weapons (rifles, carbines, revolvers), private persons or dealers, are required under compulsion to deposit them at the Hôtel de Ville, on Monday, the 17th, at latest, between 10 o'clock and noon.

"The arms deposited must bear the address of the owner. Receipts will be given upon deposit.

"The Minister of the Interior urges civilians—should the enemy appear in their district—

"Not to fight.—Not to offer insults or threats.—To keep indoors and close the windows so that no one can say that provocation was given.—If the sol-

But this is a matter of the past, and we must confine ourselves to present facts. Now these are such facts, essential and undeniable: the German invasion surprised the Belgian Government as it was beginning to reorganise its army, and, far from being able to distribute arms to the civil population, it was unable, owing to an insufficiency of rifles, to accept at the moment all the volunteers who offered themselves, or to call to the colours the class of 1914.<sup>1</sup> Far from organising the armed resistance of the civil population—although by the terms of The Hague Conventions such “organisation” would have been perfectly lawful<sup>2</sup>—the Government, on the 4th of August, sent to the 2,700 communes of the kingdom the most categorical instructions which absolutely forbade civilians to take part in the hostilities. Everywhere, on the approach of the enemy, the governors of provinces and the burgomasters communicated these instructions to their fellow-citizens by means of placards such as those we have reproduced. Lastly, if the Germans discovered “stores of weapons in which each rifle bore the name of the citizen for whom it was intended,” it was precisely be-

diers occupy a house or an isolated village to defend themselves, to evacuate it, so that no one can say civilians have fired.—An act of violence committed by a single civilian might be a veritable crime which the law would punish by arrest and would condemn, for it might serve as pretext to a bloody repression, pillage, and the massacre of the innocent population, women and children included.—Fleurus, the 14th August, 1914.—The Burgomaster, Dr. Everaerts.”

<sup>1</sup> Several weeks after the opening of hostilities I saw ten thousand Lebel rifles arrive at Ostend, for which the Belgian Government had been obliged to apply to France. Munitions of French manufacture, of course, accompanied these weapons, which explains why, at the time of the fighting round Antwerp, our enemies were able to pick up French cartridges dated 1912—from which they inferred that we had conducted secret arrangements with France at that date.

<sup>2</sup> *Convention Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, signed at The Hague, the 18th of October, 1907.

*Regulation respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.*

Article I.—The laws, rights, and duties of war apply not only to the army, but also to militia and volunteer corps fulfilling all the following conditions:—

1. They must be commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates;
2. They must have a fixed distinctive sign recognisable at a distance;
3. They must carry arms openly; and

4. They must conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.

Article II.—The inhabitants of a territory not under occupation who, on the approach of the enemy, spontaneously take up arms to resist the invading troops without having had time to organise themselves in accordance with Article I., shall be regarded as belligerents if they carry arms openly, and if they respect the laws and customs of war.

(See *Manual of Military Law*, War Office, 1914.)

(These Articles, it may be remarked, are practically the modern equivalent of the old German law of the Landstrum. As usual, Germany claims for herself rights which she regards as criminal in others.—B. M.)

cause, as a measure of precaution, the communal authorities had ordered private individuals to surrender such weapons as they possessed. Did not the very fact that these rifles bore the names of individual citizens prove most obviously that they were weapons which, having been taken from private persons, would be restored to them at the close of hostilities? It is not the custom, in arsenals, to mark weapons in advance with the names of the soldiers who are to bear them.

In reality, the extremely prudent measures which were taken by the Government and the communal authorities most unhappily delivered thousands of defenceless victims to the rage of the invaders.

### A SYSTEM

It was the regular forces alone which, valiantly and loyally, resisted the advance of the invaders.

Is it not significant, by the way, that, excepting at Aerschot, where—wholly without justification—they accused the burgo-master's son of killing one of their officers,<sup>1</sup> the Germans never designated any guilty or supposedly guilty person by name?

But supposing that it could be established that Belgian civilians had fired on the German troops: nothing would authorise the latter to commit collective reprisals.<sup>2</sup> Here, by the way, is one of the numerous drawings—not from life—by means of which our treacherous enemies have spread the legend of Belgian *francs-tireurs* through Germany (18). In the matter of composition and execution there is not much to be said for it. But let us suppose for a moment that it is genuine, and corresponds with some actual event. Well, frankly, considering the two soldiers with spiked helmets, and the “civilian,” armed with Heaven knows what blunderbuss, who is emerging as an avenger from the ruins of his village, do you not think the civilian would make the best showing in face of the universal conscience?

But in the majority of cases, and precisely in the worst cases of all—it was not in expiation of crimes, imaginary or real, that the German Army drenched my poor country with blood and

<sup>1</sup> It is infinitely likely that this officer was struck by a stray German bullet.—For the happenings at Aerschot see the moving letter from the widow of Burgomaster Tielemans (Appendix).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, Art. L.—No collective penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible. (*Manual of Military Law*, p. 344.)



fire; but in virtue of a system, of a rigorous application of the principles of Bismarck: to do the greatest possible injury to the civil population of the enemy country, to torture it in every possible way, in order to force it to bring pressure upon its rulers in favour of capitulation. These principles, I may say, have been codified. "The horrible things which have happened in Belgium," says an Italian publicist, Luigi Barzini, a close observer of that work of devastation of which I have been able to give but the slightest notion, "the horrible things which have happened in Belgium were merely the application of a rule established by the German Great General Staff. It rejects as detrimental all the chivalrous, generous, and noble elements which had survived in warfare. Germany has created her own theory of war, absolute, rigid, inhuman, monstrous; . . . it comprises, from the military point of view, all those elements which are able to contribute to a speedy victory: terror, suffering, deportation. . . .

"It was desired to give the soldier the momentum, blind, awful, and impetuous, but direct and efficacious, of a projectile. He must no longer be a man, but a pitiless machine; no feeling must hamper or divert his actions; his individual consciousness must be replaced by the collective consciousness, a thing of just, meritorious, and necessary fury. Tradition is suppressed; the law of nations is suppressed; sensitiveness, compassion, and humanity are attacked as an evil, a weakness, a mistake. The moral code of war has been simplified by instituting a new and facile concept of the lawful and unlawful: all that may conduce to success is lawful, all that may fetter it is unlawful. . . . This enormity was prepared without hatred, in the midst of peace, assiduously, scientifically, not in a spirit of violence, but as a matter of calculation, contemning all that does not conduce to victory, and insulating military matters from all considerations unconnected with efficacy of action. . . .

"Led onward by the rigid, implacable, and ferocious logic of its formulæ, the Great General Staff, in its *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, has finally created a hideous code of reasoned and disciplined savagery, which proposes the application of many means which can produce a stupendous outbreak of systematic atrocity, all the more terrible because impersonal, mechanical, and inevitable. The German military conscience is based upon the concepts of this system. The soldier burns and massacres in certain pre-determined cases as in others he fights and manœuvres. For

him this is warfare, the only warfare, the true warfare. He obeys; he does not judge, because to judge is an offence. The word of command is as sacred as a dogma. The regulations of the Staff are the soldier's Bible. He acts within the law.

"What does the world accuse him of? *Krieg ist Krieg!*"<sup>1</sup>

Some women of Dinant were lamenting over the bodies of their husbands. One of the officer-executioners approached them, and spoke to them almost with courtesy: "Come, look you, ladies, you must be reasonable; it is war!" And to the women of Andenne some soldiers spoke, saying: "Don't cry like that. We aren't doing the quarter of what we ought to do!"

The German Army was marching to victory—or believed that it was doing so—and the end would justify the means—*any* means! When the Bishop of Liège told Marshal von der Goltz his opinion of the crimes committed in his diocese by German soldiers, and remarked that History, the impartial, would record these crimes to the eternal shame of Germany, the gentle Marshal replied: "History, Monseigneur? We shall be the ones to write it, for we shall be the victors!"

Now as it was conceived and anticipated by the military leaders and the rulers of Germany, victory meant the territorial diminution of France and Russia, together with their material and political ruin; in the meantime, until something better could be accomplished, the prestige of England would be seriously damaged; Belgium was to be annexed, and—to begin with—Switzerland, Holland, and Denmark. The political vassalage of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire being from the outset an accomplished fact, the dreamed-of victory would have meant, little by little, and without long delay, the certain domination of the whole of Europe: a glorious goal in the eyes of the German rulers, which to their thinking was well worth the employment of *all and any means*.

Yes: the German troops resorted to terrorism according to system, in order to induce us to capitulate, to leave them "an open road."

Apart from the similarity of the methods employed and the coincidence of dates, there are facts which enable us to assert that the massacres and burnings at Dinant, Andenne, Namur, Aerschot, and Louvain, in particular, were premeditated in cold blood.

On the 17th of August a German officer found lodgings in

<sup>1</sup>Luigi Barzini, *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 22nd and 23rd of April, 1915.

the house of a Belgian magistrate in the Ardennes. In conversation, speaking of various charming spots in the Walloon countryside, my compatriot mentioned Dinant. "Dinant, a town condemned," said the officer, perhaps unthinkingly. This was a week before the martyrdom of the charming little city.

M. X——, of Dinant, at the time of the invasion, was in another part of the country. There he made the acquaintance of a German officer. Now about the 20th of August this officer said to him: "You come from Dinant? Don't go back then; it is a bad place; it will be destroyed." At the same time he asked M. X—— for details as to his home in Dinant. He went away, but returned after the 23rd. Extracting a statuette from his luggage, he showed it to M. X——, saying, "Do you know this?" "Why, yes, it comes from my house!" "In that case I was not mistaken: I have saved your house; it has not been burned."

The German troops marching toward Andenne announced, in the villages which they passed through, that they were going to burn the town and massacre the inhabitants.

At Louvain, on the 25th of August, an officer who had been received with courtesy and kindness by a family of good standing called at the house of his hosts about 11.00 o'clock in the morning and urged them all to leave for Brussels without delay. While apologising for the fact that he could give them no explanations, he insisted so that they finally decided to go. A soldier advised M. R—— van K—— to leave "because the town was going to be burned and levelled to the ground." A witness heard by the Commission of Inquiry declared upon oath that he heard an officer tell some of his men—this again was on the morning of the same day—that so far they had only seen villages burning, but that soon they would see a city ablaze.

And on the outbreak of the fire the German authorities had the fire-engines and fire-escapes destroyed.

At Aerschot, several hours before the massacre, a soldier advised one of the residents to escape. "They are going to smash the town to pieces," he said.

At Namur the chief of the fire brigade was arrested in the street just as he was making ready to do his duty and was sent home under escort!

It seems established, moreover, that Louvain was sacrificed in order to spare Brussels. At first the people of Brussels were most obligingly permitted to go to Louvain, there to contem-

plate the smouldering ruins. It was a wonder that they were not urged to do so! No doubt it was considered that Louvain formed a salutary and educative spectacle for this refractory population. We read in the *Kölnische Zeitung* for the 10th of February, 1915:—

“The burning of Battice, Herve, Louvain, and Dinant had the effect of public warnings. The destruction effected, the rivers of blood shed during the first days of the war in Belgium, had saved the great Belgian cities from the temptation of attacking the weak garrisons which we were obliged to leave in them. Does anyone imagine that the capital of Belgium would have tolerated us, who to-day are living in Brussels as though in our own country, if the Belgians had not trembled, and did not still tremble, before our vengeance?”

Finally, it is asserted that all the great fires were started by *specialists*, who were stationed at given points, and who had at their disposal special implements and materials which were particularly effectual: pumps to throw petrol, incendiary grenades and rockets, and compressed tablets of gelatinised nitro-cellulose. These implements and materials were not improvised. The invaders were furnished with them when they entered Belgium on the 4th of August. Such things formed part of their munitions of war.

## VI

### STILL ERECT!

“ALREADY defeated Belgium has fallen on her knees!” So cried a great and semi-official Berlin newspaper the day after the Imperial troops had entered Brussels; <sup>1</sup> and all Germany rejoiced at the idea.

On her knees! No, not yet!

The German Army had passed, formidable and gigantic; it had devastated and soaked with blood a great part of the country; everywhere it had left its uncouth garrisons; the capital itself was occupied; Belgium was assuredly sorely wounded, but with a dignity equal to her valour she still kept her footing, proud and erect, her sword in her hand.

For that matter, would any Power declare war upon a “defeated” nation—even if that Power were Austria? For Austria, in turn, declared war upon us.

On the 28th of August Count Clary und Aldringen, H.I.M. the Austrian Emperor’s Minister at the Belgian Court, despatched to M. Davignon, through the agency of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, the telegram which I here reproduce:—

By order of my Government I have the honour to notify Your Excellency as follows: Seeing that Belgium, after refusing to accept the proposals addressed to her on several occasions by Germany, is lending her military co-operation to France and Great Britain, both of which have declared war upon Austria-Hungary, and in consideration of the fact that, as has just been ascertained, the Austrian and Hungarian subjects in Belgium have, under the eyes of the Royal authorities, been forced to submit to treatment contrary to the most primitive requirements of humanity, and inadmissible even in respect of the subjects of an enemy State, Austria-Hungary finds herself compelled to break off diplomatic relations and to consider herself from this moment in a state of war against Belgium. I am leaving the country with the staff of the legation, and am confiding the protection of my countrymen to the United States Minister to Belgium. On the part of the Imperial and Royal Government passports have been handed to Count Errebault de Dudzeele.

<sup>1</sup> *Lokal-Anzeiger*, Berlin, 21st August, 1914.

To the allegations contained in this Note the Minister of Foreign Affairs immediately replied as follows, through the agency of the Belgian Minister at The Hague and the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs:—

Belgium has always maintained friendly relations with all her neighbours, without distinction. She has scrupulously fulfilled the obligations imposed upon her by neutrality. If she considered that it was impossible to accept the proposals of Germany, it was because these had as their object the violation of the engagements into which she has entered in the face of Europe, engagements which were the conditions of the creation of the Belgian Kingdom. She did not consider that a nation, however weak it may be, should disregard its obligations and sacrifice its honour by bowing to force. The Government waited not only for the delay involved by the ultimatum, but for the violation of its territory by the German troops before appealing to France and to England, the guarantors of her neutrality, with Germany and Austria-Hungary, to co-operate, in the name and by virtue of the Treaties, in the defence of Belgian territory.

In repelling the invaders by armed force Belgium was not even committing an act of hostility, according to the terms of Article X of The Hague Convention concerning the rights and duties of neutral Powers.

Germany has herself recognised that her aggression constitutes a violation of international law, and being unable to justify it she has invoked her strategic interest.

Belgium meets the assertion that Austrian and Hungarian subjects have been subjected in Belgium to treatment contrary to the most primitive requirements of humanity with an explicit denial.

The Royal Government gave the strictest orders at the outbreak of hostilities as to the protection of the persons and property of Austro-Hungarian subjects.

M. Davignon might have added—but perhaps he was not then aware of it—that Austria-Hungary had virtually commenced hostilities already, since Austrian batteries of automobile howitzers had taken part in the bombardment of Namur, and very greatly contributed to the fall of that position.

Does this assertion seem a little hazardous? Here are some proofs:—

In a bulletin of victory posted up in Brussels on the 3rd of September, the Germans themselves declared that “when the barrier-forts situated on the rocky heights of Givet were captured, just as at Namur, the heavy automobile batteries sent by Austria distinguished themselves by their mobility, the accuracy of their fire, and their effectiveness.”

Another proof: The Austrian Colonel Langer, who commanded the batteries in question, himself related, in Vienna, on

the 17th of February, 1915, that these batteries, coming from different directions, were concentrated at Cologne on the 15th of August, and that it was there that he received the order to proceed, on the night of the same day. "We were first of all sent to Verviers, where we detrained," he said; "from Verviers we set out on the 21st of August for Namur, where we went into action. Two days later, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, the outer fort of Namur, the 'Cognelée,' fell; an hour later the next fort followed suit. The 12-inch howitzer was employed against the Cognelée fort; the 16.5-inch against the other."<sup>1</sup>

Thus these famous batteries arrived in Belgium on the 16th or 17th of August; that is eleven or twelve days before the Austrian declaration of war, and in the meantime Count Clary und Aldringen continued to live in our midst as though nothing had happened; he even carried his impudence to the length of endeavouring to correspond with his Government in cipher!

#### ANTWERP

Withdrawn into the shelter of the forts of Antwerp, after meeting the invasion by an admirable effort of resistance, the Belgian Army might have remained on the defensive. Neither our brave King, nor our upright Government, nor our heroic soldiers desired this, and the whole nation approved of their decision. Belgium considered that she was henceforth the comrade-in-arms of Great Britain and France, and that she must to the end co-operate with them toward the liberation of her national territory.

Our Army, therefore, did not remain inactive. It harassed the enemy without respite, and even made important sorties.

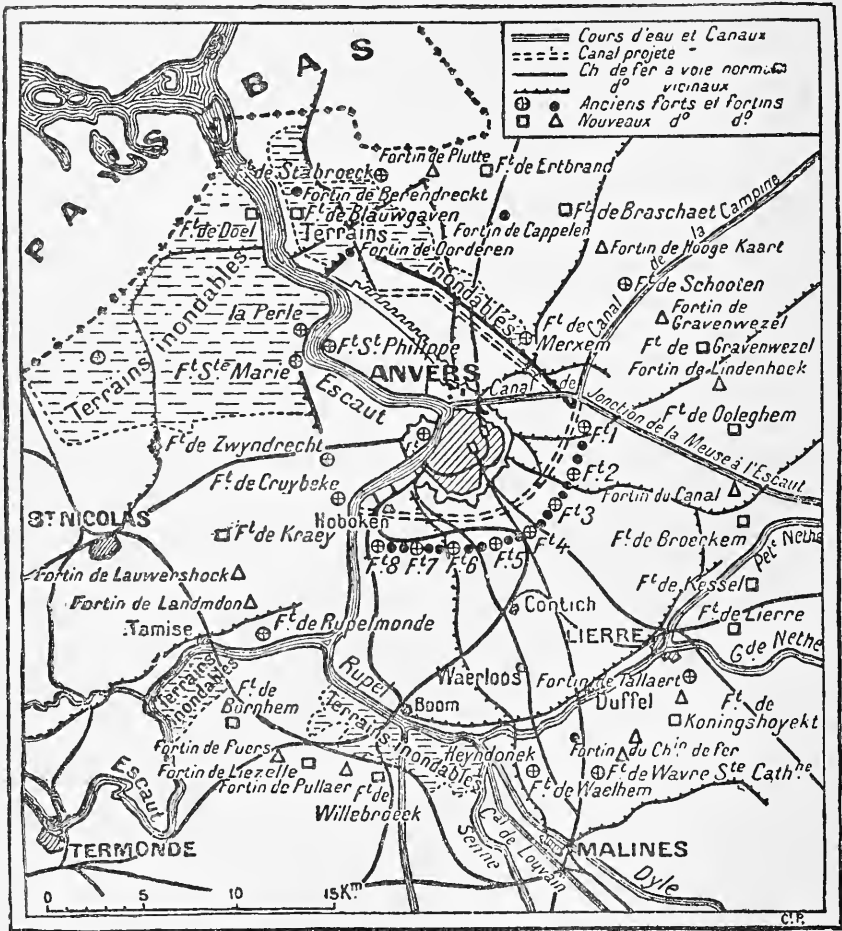
On the 25th and 26th of August—while the bulk of the German armies were at grips on the Sambre and in the vicinity of Mons with the French and British forces—the Belgian troops emerged from the entrenched camp and successfully attacked the German forces, which consisted of the IIIrd and IVth Reserve Corps, which were on the watch before Malines, and were forced to fall back on Louvain.

An officer who took part in this sortie published (in the *Courrier de l'Armée*—Belgian—for the 28th of November, 1914) an interesting account of his experiences:—

"In August," he says, "marches and counter-marches, which

<sup>1</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 18,136, Vienna, 18th February, 1915.

finally brought us, on the 25th, to the Château Grisar, between Malines and Sempst, where we had our first 'affair.' Two commandants were killed there, and five men. I was in the front



THE ENTRENCHED CAMP OF ANTWERP AND ITS APPROACHES.

rank. In taking possession of a house which was to serve as a point of support I was fired at by a machine-gun, and received two bullets through my cloak. A young corporal behind me was hit in the throat. Before me I saw an officer, with legs a-straddle, examining us through his binoculars. I threw my rifle to my shoulder and brought him down. The soldier accompanying me, one Toussaint, killed the officer's companion.



“ But we were overwhelmed, and had to fall back to the trench skirting the Château Grisar. Once there, Toussaint informed me that he was going to fetch the wounded corporal. He went, sure enough, and brought him back on his shoulders, despite a hail of bullets. Plucky lad! . . . A few moments later I turned round; I saw him lying on the ground, dead, a bullet through his brain.

“ Then, too, Major de Gerlache was wounded, behaving like a Stoic. . . .

“ At Hopstade I saw, in a small house, an old white-haired woman murdered, her throat gashed open. In a corner a boy of sixteen was on his knees, his hands still clasped as though to implore mercy; he had received more than twenty bayonet thrusts in the body. In another place I saw a woman—*enceinte*—who had been disembowelled behind the counter of her grocery shop.

“ So it was to the end, as far as Berlaere and Schoonaerde, where I was wounded. . . . Marches, counter-marches, trenches held and abandoned, machine-gun fire, atrocities and sights unheard-of, like that of the field near the ‘ Jack Op ’ brewery at Werchter—the Germans had passed that way—which was littered with thousands and thousands of empty bottles. . . .”

Our enemies displayed an increasing contempt for the law of nations and the laws of war. Attacks upon ambulance convoys; the bombardment of hospitals and ambulances, over which the Red Cross flag was floating and plainly visible; civilians forced to dig trenches or to march in front of the troops in order to screen them from fire; terrible acts of vengeance committed upon unoffending peasants for the slightest reverse suffered in battle or skirmish; pillage and incendiarism; all these crimes, and many others also, were becoming more and more frequent.

At the end of August the Germans inaugurated a fresh system of terrorisation.

On the night of the 24th of August a Zeppelin appeared above Antwerp, dropping, upon the slumbering city, nine bombs, which were obviously intended for the Palace, where the Queen and her children were in residence, and for the buildings which housed the various Governmental Departments. These bombs fell near these various buildings, or in the street, or on private houses, which were either entirely destroyed or badly damaged. Ten persons were killed; many more were grievously wounded.

The “ raid ” had succeeded! As is shown by the German

postcard which is reproduced on a subsequent page, Germany applauded it, and in her enthusiasm associated the Emperor himself with the glorification of this criminal crew (20). Note that the picture reveals the true character of the Zeppelin's work—which was the bombardment, from the upper sky, of the city itself, and not of the forts of Antwerp.

Measures, of course, were taken—and they proved extremely efficacious—to render fresh attempts of the kind more difficult; all lights were extinguished by 8 or 9 o'clock at night, and at certain elevated points powerful searchlights and guns were installed.

As a matter of precaution the young Princes were taken to a place of safety. The Queen herself accompanied them to England; but as soon as she had accomplished this maternal duty our courageous and beneficent Sovereign returned to Antwerp, to lavish her care upon the wounded, who day by day increased in numbers.

There were then several bombardments of the open town of Malines—no previous warning was given, and no real strategic purpose was served; and these bombardments were accompanied by the further destruction of archæological prodigies and inestimable artistic treasures. (In the beautiful church of Notre-Dame-au-delà-de-la-Dyle, which dates from 1255, and which was badly damaged, an admirable example of Rubens, the *Pêche miraculeuse*, was riddled with splinters of shrapnel.)

And amid this material destruction, what human tragedies! In the prison at Malines, on which the shells fell thick and fast, the little son of a warder, a child four years of age, became insane with terror. The prison had to be evacuated, and you can imagine what the march to Antwerp of prisoners and warders must have been beneath this rain of shells. But how imagine the transfer—which had to be effected under the same dramatic circumstances—of the inmates of a lunatic asylum?

In order to inform neutral countries—and America in particular, where the statements of German agencies were designed to mislead the public—what was our actual *rôle* in the great European conflict, the Belgian Government decided to send an official mission to the United States. This mission was composed of M. Carton de Wiart, Minister of Justice—who was president of the mission, with the title of Envoy Extraordinary of His Majesty the King of the Belgians to the President of the United States—and of three Ministers of State, representing the three

great Belgian political parties: MM. de Sadeleer, Hymans, and Emile Vandervelde. Count Lichtervelde was secretary (19). The mission left Antwerp on the 30th of August, and on the 1st of September was received in special audience by the King of England, to whom it bore the expression of the gratitude of the Belgian nation for the fidelity and alacrity with which England had fulfilled her obligations as a guarantor of Belgian neutrality.

The day before the mission landed in New York, with a view to discounting the impression it should have produced, the Emperor of Germany sent to President Wilson his notorious telegram, in which he denounced the pretended acts of violence committed by the Belgians, and notably by women, upon the German wounded. He added that such violence had necessitated acts of repression which pained him extremely: "My heart bleeds for Louvain!" he said in this telegram, of which the most indulgent critic will admit that, at all events, it constitutes a masterpiece of effrontery.

The Belgian mission was received at the White House on the 16th of September. Replying to the speech of M. Carton de Wiart, the President of the United States expressed, in significant terms, his keen admiration for the Belgian people and his respect for their King. It was only after he had received the Belgian mission and conferred with it that President Wilson replied to the Emperor's message, and his reply was couched in terms which betray neither admiration nor respect.<sup>1</sup>

The Belgian mission was then received by the principal Universities of the United States: New York, Harvard, and Chicago. Then, having received in Canada a truly triumphant welcome from the authorities and the population of the Dominion, it had opportunities of conferring with a number of American notabilities—and with Mr. Roosevelt in particular—enlightening them as to the situation in Belgium, her loyalty, her courage, her misfortunes, and thereby contributing to create throughout the United States that potent and wonderful current of sympathy and solidarity which presently found expression in the organisation of relief for the population of the occupied provinces.

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Further raids of German dirigibles upon Antwerp and the surrounding country were followed by the senseless destruction of Termonde.

<sup>1</sup> The text of this speech and of the reply to the Imperial message will be found in the second Belgian Grey Book.

Situated on the confluence of the Dendre and the Scheldt, Termonde, with the communes of Lebbeke and Saint-Gilles, numbered a total population of some 26,000 inhabitants.

On the 2nd of September, 1914, a German patrol penetrated as far as Lebbeke. Under the pretext of avenging the death of six soldiers killed by the Belgian troops on the territory of this commune, it set fire to three farmhouses.

On the 4th of September the Germans arrived in force. Lebbeke, Saint-Gilles, and the little village of Appels were bombarded, pillaged, and burned. Horrible massacres were committed; 25 civilians were killed by axe or bayonet.

On the same day, about 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning, our enemies bombarded Termonde; then they entered the town. They came to the civil hospital, where they seized—as hostages—Dr. Van Winckel, who was tending the sick, Father Van Poucke, the chaplain, and M. Schellekens, secretary to the Hospitals Commission. They also arrested a few townsfolk in the street and led them away.

Twice over, at point-blank range, German soldiers fired at Dr. Hemeryck and his bearer, both of whom wore the Red Cross brassard. The bearer died five days later; one of his wounds was the work of an explosive bullet.

While they were accomplishing these heroic feats of arms, and while the pillage of confectioners' and bakers' shops, groceries, and, above all, of taverns and wine-cellars was at its height, General von Boehn, standing proudly on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, was posing before the lens of a photographer. His descendants will know that he "was at Termonde"!

In the afternoon—to keep their hand in—the "pioneers," those sinister specialists in incendiarism (21), set fire to the "Ateliers de Construction de Termonde," and a few houses as well. About 5 o'clock a German major released all the prisoners at common law who were then in the prison—they numbered about 135. At the same time the inhabitants were urged to depart, as the town was to be destroyed. And, indeed, on the 5th of September the Germans began a pitiless and systematic destruction of the town by fire.

Yes, systematic; for the pioneers had at their disposal "central reservoirs at which each man, carrying a pneumatic apparatus affixed to his body, obtained a quantity of incendiary fluid with which to sprinkle the outer woodwork of the houses; another man, provided with a special glove smeared with phos-

phorus, passed along the sprinkled houses, rubbing his glove on the woodwork, so that a whole street could be fired in a quarter of an hour. To accelerate the burning of the houses men threw inflammable matter into them." <sup>1</sup>

Pitiless, too. To the burgomaster, who begged him to spare what remained of the already mutilated town, the major in charge of this "military operation" replied, with a surly jeer: "*Nein! Razieren!*"

Old and valuable communal documents were implacably given to the flames. Such was the case, in particular, with a charter of the thirteenth century, which granted the population certain privileges. The communal authorities were forced to witness the sacrifice without a word. One of them, who ventured to protest, was at once arrested, and had to pay a heavy ransom to escape execution; he was deported to Germany, there to learn to submit himself to the demands and caprices of Pan-Germanism.

The hospital met with no more consideration than the rest of the town. There was hardly time to get the patients out; one of them, an unfortunate epileptic, remained in the furnace.

And now for three days there were truly infernal scenes. For two days the pioneers worked unremittingly, setting fire, by preference, to wealthy houses, whose previous pillage had been most fruitful.

Here is the epilogue of this episode of the martyrdom of Belgium: the curé of Lebbeke, his vicar, and 450 of the inhabitants of Termonde were taken away to Germany. On the journey three of them, exhausted by hunger, began to rave in delirium; they were at once massacred with the bayonet.

As for General von Boehn, who was on his way to France, he left it to his valiant pioneers to *razieren* Termonde, making only a short stay there himself. On the 6th of September, with the bulk of his troops, he appeared in the neighbourhood of Gand, some 12 miles to the south-east. He despatched a large detachment in the direction of Gand, but they encountered some Belgian infantry at Mille, and were forced to fall back after suffering serious losses.

On the following day he threatened to bombard Gand; but the matter was arranged, thanks to the intervention of the burgomaster and the payment of large requisitions.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Belgian Military Authority (19th September, 1914).

A second sortie from the entrenched camp of Antwerp (9th-13th of September) took place on a wider front than the first. Our troops once more made for Malines and the country to the south, but they also bore eastward as far as Aerschot. They inflicted serious losses on the enemy, and advanced so far that they were able to destroy the railway from Brussels to Liége at several points.

A volunteer, incorporated in a regiment which formed part of the 3rd Division—which at Liége won the nickname of the “Iron Division”—gives the following details of this sortie:—

“The 3rd Division was placed about the centre of the attacking front, near Haecht, and had to face a formidable position, strengthened by means of concrete and iron plating, at the place called Over-de-Vaart. The battle lasted four days and nights.

“First day: Aerschot was retaken. Many Germans remained in our hands.

“Second day: The village of Haecht was taken by assault by the 3rd Division. The valiant General Bertrand marched at the head of his men, his eternal cigar between his lips! It was then that a great friend of mine was killed, Lieutenant R. L——. Poor fellow! He had not been married a year! Carried toward the rear of the battlefield, in the direction of Keerburghen, he died crying: ‘*Vive le Roi! Vive la Belgique!*’ I had an opportunity to pay my last respects at his grave. The King himself went the following day, baring his head before the little mound, which was adorned by a few flowers.

“The battle raged for two days longer. The guns were fired with terrifying rapidity. The rifle fire was practically continuous. . . .

“However, on the afternoon of the fourth day the 3rd Division was given the order to retreat, as it was on the point of being turned. The regiment, which was placed in the trenches of the Nèthe bridgehead, had to co-operate with the cyclists in order to protect this movement. Night came, pitch dark, and with it rain—cold, unending rain. . . . We remained a long time in the trenches, crouching in the mud, without capes or protection of any kind. . . . Before us the crepitation of the rifles never ceased. At last we were replaced by the 12th Regiment of the Line. These good fellows had been led to the rear, towards Keerberghen, where they expected to be able to rest, when the order was given them to retrace their steps through the mud and the rain. We marched along past this column of heroes,

who were about to be sent back into the trenches after three days and nights of battle, and I did not hear a word of complaint; not a murmur. . . .”

A neutral eye-witness, Mr. Alexander Powell, war correspondent of the *New York World*, writes of the second sortie from the entrenched camp of Antwerp:—

“For the strategic reasons the size and significance of the great four days’ battle which was fought in mid-September between the Belgian field army and all the German forces in the north of Belgium were withheld, at the time, in the official *communiqués*, and in the rush of subsequent events its importance was lost to view. Yet the great flank movement of the Allies against the invaders of France owed its success to this energetic offensive on the part of the Belgians, who, as has since been proved, were acting in close co-operation with the French General Staff. This sudden offensive, which took the Germans completely by surprise, forced them to concentrate all their available forces in Belgium. . . .

“It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the success of the Allies on the Marne was largely determined by the sacrifices made in this emergency by the Belgian Army. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

This operation not only forced the enemy to recall the 6th Division of the IIIrd Reserve Corps to the Belgian front, but also, as was learned later, to delay the southward march of the IXth Reserve Corps by two days, and this precisely at the moment when the German armies, effecting their retreat from the Marne, had a pressing need of reinforcements. Moreover, even in Brussels it caused the enemy serious alarm.

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However, the Belgian troops did not confine themselves to these sorties in force. Acting in small parties, they did not cease for a moment to harass the enemy in every possible manner.

The “Minerva” workshops in Antwerp started building armoured motor-cars, which soon rendered great service. “Although the French and the Germans,” says Mr. Powell, “had for some years been making trial of various types of armoured motor-car, the Belgians, who had never until then seriously considered the question, were the first to produce and to send into action a really practical vehicle of this kind. . . . Driven by the most spirited chauffeurs in Belgium, manœuvred by young men who had ‘the devil in their bodies’; and armed with auto-

<sup>1</sup> E. Alexander Powell, *The War in Flanders*.

matic guns, these 'rolling forts' rushed easily through the enemy's lines, decimated an outpost, wiped out a cavalry patrol, dynamited a bridge or a tunnel, and returned to the Belgian lines before the enemy had time to realise their ruthless attack."<sup>1</sup>

The cyclists and motor-cyclists also distinguished themselves in expeditions of this kind, and certain of their exploits, incredibly audacious in conception, were also incredibly skilful in execution.

But civilians, alas! often paid with their lives or the loss of their possessions for the exploits of their fellow-countrymen.

On the 25th of September, ten motor-cyclists pulled up a few rails on the railway from Bilsen to Tongres. Two hours later a train full of German troops was derailed. To avenge themselves the Germans shot eight civilians and burned a portion of the neighbouring village.

On the same day a similar expedition, composed of 200 Belgian cyclists, destroyed the railway from Brussels to Paris not far from Montigny-lez-Lens. In reprisal the Germans burned the house of the burgomaster (having first—need I remark?—broken open the safe and taken all they could carry away); they also set fire to the presbytery and to a few farmhouses in the neighbourhood.

Then gendarmerie and the civic guard sometimes took part—and with brilliant success—in battle or skirmish; but they were also employed in searching for the spies who continued to pervade the country. Numbers of suspected persons were arrested, despite the ingenuity of their disguises. Some were arrested who were disguised as Belgian soldiers, as priests, as postmen, or even as nuns!

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About the middle of September fresh overtures—which on this occasion were indirect and semi-official—were made to M. Broqueville, who was in Antwerp.

Someone who came expressly from Brussels, through the enemy's lines, had an interview with the President of the Council, in the course of which he insisted on the military power of Germany and the poverty of our chances of further resistance. The obliging messenger at the same time insinuated that Marshal von der Goltz would probably not refuse to enter into "conversations" if the Belgian Government showed itself willing, and he even went so far as to sketch the foundations of a pos-

<sup>1</sup> E. Alexander Powell, *The War in Flanders*.



sible settlement. But the President, that *parfait gentilhomme*, and our King, *sans peur et sans reproche*, who preside over the destinies of Belgium, received these suggestions with the disdain which they deserved, and all those who were aware of the incident entirely approved of this attitude.

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On the 16th of September, about half-past five in the afternoon, the Germans, who had appeared in great strength before Termonde, once more bombarded what was left of this unhappy town. At 7.30 p.m. they entered the town. They immediately began to empty the cellars of a few houses of the better class which had been left intact during the events of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th of September.

Bonfires were lit, and all night long the officers presided over one of those ignoble bacchanalian orgies such as the gentry from beyond the Rhine understand how to organise.

On the 17th, in the afternoon, Termonde was again bombarded for three-quarters of an hour; one shell fell upon the Hôtel de Ville, which caught fire (23).

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The murderous raids of the Taubes and Zeppelins increased in frequency. They were directed not only against Antwerp and its suburbs, but also against Flanders.

During the night of the 24th of September a Zeppelin flew over Ostend, releasing four bombs, which fortunately effected only material damage.

Two days later, again under cover of darkness, a Zeppelin dropped its bombs on the little Flemish town of Deynze. Three of these bombs fell on a convent which was sheltering some two hundred sick. They did not result in any serious accident, but the alarm which they caused may be imagined.

On the 29th there was another raid of the same kind, quite as futile from the military point of view; this time bombs were dropped on Dottignies and Thielt, towns as open and as undefended as Deynze and Ostend.

And what ruses the Germans employed—"frauds not in use among gentlemen and cavaliers," as Brantôme would have said! In the course of a battle near Termonde a German officer headed his troops by a group of fifteen civilians, among whom were three ladies and two young girls. Lieutenant Soudart, who was entrusted, on the 26th of September, with the defence of a bridge

at Klein-Antwerpen, noticed that a German major of infantry, who was acting as observer not very far away, had surrounded himself by three children. Of course, the German ruse succeeded; the Belgian officer refrained from giving the order to fire. On the 27th of September, at Alost, a company of German infantry attacked the bridge at Zwartenhoek, driving before them thirty civilians, behind whom they were concealing a machine-gun. Two civilians were killed.

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In Antwerp, where for weeks the heart of Belgium had been throbbing, preparations were being made for a desperate resistance.

To facilitate the defence the dykes of the Scheldt, the Rupel, and the Nèthe had been opened at several points, and in this way a large area of low-lying land had been inundated. Within a radius of many miles the Belgians had blown up luxurious country houses, ancient châteaux, charming villas, farms and windmills, and—which was an even more painful sacrifice—the thousands of superb trees, which were the only ornament of this level region, were felled.

Trenches had been dug and works of all kinds had been constructed. The armament of the forts had been completed and improved, as far as was possible, by means of cannon sent from France by way of Ostend.

Two armoured trains, veritable moving fortresses, had been built in the Cockerill works at Hoboken-lez-Anvers; they were armed with British naval guns of 4.7 inches calibre.

On the other hand, as the Scheldt had remained open to merchant vessels, and as all sorts of provisions had been arriving in abundance, the city was secured against the rigours of a long siege.

But how many things we had to think of; what anxieties were ours, from which our powerful enemies were exempt, and what distressing problems we had to solve!

Measures had to be taken to preserve from the risks of a possible bombardment the most valuable of the paintings which adorned the churches, the museums, and certain private houses. The "Descent from the Cross," the "Assumption of the Virgin," and other masterpieces of Rubens, the "Entombment of Christ" by Matsys, the "Temptation of St. Martin" by De Vos, and a number of no less inestimable treasures were transferred to places of safety (22).

The metallic funds of the National Bank and the blocks used in printing paper-money was sent to England.

All German prisoners were also evacuated and sent to England and the Belgian wounded were gradually transferred to Ostend and other places on the coast.

A further complication: homeless refugees were arriving in ever-increasing numbers from the surrounding country. It was not possible to allow them to remain more than three or four days in Antwerp, and it was therefore necessary to facilitate their exodus toward the coast or to Holland or England.

On the 26th and 27th of September the Germans made fresh demonstrations in the direction of Termonde, obviously with the intention of crossing the Scheldt at this point.

On the 26th they encountered at Andeghem (some two or three miles to the south-west of Termonde) a small body of Belgian infantry, which, although it had no artillery to support it, resisted them heroically until the arrival of reinforcements, which put the Germans to flight in the direction of Alost.

The battle of Lebbeke was fought on the following day under similar conditions: the Belgians were at first weak in numbers, but resisted valiantly despite heavy losses; then reinforcements arrived, and the Germans finally scattered toward Maxenzele and Merchtem.

But on the same day—it was Sunday, the 27th—additional German forces reached Malines. The cathedral was bombarded while full of worshippers (25); there was a general flight of the population toward Antwerp (24), which by no means facilitated the task, already so heavy, of the civil and military authorities.

On the 28th heavy siege howitzers, coming from Maubeuge, German and Austrian, went into action, and thenceforth the *tempo* of events was accelerated. These terrible guns, which nothing could resist, were installed—as we afterwards discovered—upon concrete foundations prepared for that purpose long before the invasion of our too confiding country. Their fire was in the first place directed against the Waelhem and Wavre-Sainte-Catherine forts.

On the 29th the Wavre-Sainte-Catherine fort was already reduced to silence; by 6 o'clock in the evening the survivors of its valiant garrison were forced to evacuate the works.

The German fire was then concentrated upon the Waelhem, Koningshoyckt, and Lierre forts.

On the 30th the great reservoirs at Waelhem, which supplied Antwerp and the suburbs, were damaged by shells, and the water supply was seriously jeopardised. The Waelhem fort held out as long as possible, and when all that was left of its brave garrison at last abandoned it, it was only a heap of ruins.

It became evident that the entrenched camp of Antwerp—contrary to the ideas generally entertained—would not prove invulnerable. The supreme command foresaw the moment approaching when the army would be forced to abandon the fortress in order to avoid a surrender *en masse*. It was decided to transfer the base of operations westward to Ostend, and immediately the work of removal began: the transport of wounded, of sanitary material, of army corps dépôts, of the recruits of the new levy, as well as the corps of volunteers, who were as yet untrained, the army service corps,<sup>1</sup> and more besides than I can tell. . . .

Antwerp lies wholly on the right bank of the Scheldt, and there is no bridge to connect it with the left bank, whence a railway runs to Gand and Ostend. For freight of an awkward nature, which would not allow of trans-shipment, it was therefore necessary to make use of the line which crosses the river by the Tamise railway bridge—some 12 miles up-stream—and which crosses the Rupel at Willebroeck—that is, within range of the enemy's guns. But the railway precautions were so well conceived that trains were able to run every night—of course with all lights extinguished—as late as the 7th of October.

The forts of Koningshoyckt and Lierre were silenced in turn on the 2nd of October. The Belgian infantry fell back beyond the Nèthe, blowing up the bridges across that river (26).

On this day General de Guise, Commander-in-Chief of the fortress of Antwerp, published the following proclamation addressed to the people of Antwerp:—

I consider that it is my duty to inform the population inhabiting the territory of the fortress that the siege of the latter has for some days past entered upon an acute phase.

As is proved by military history, in the course of a siege the fortified city itself may be exposed to the effects of the besieging artillery. Thus, in the present campaign, the fortified cities of Liège and Namur have been

<sup>1</sup> *Service d'intendance*, practically answering to our Army Service Corps.—B.M.

subjected to the early stages of bombardment. Aware of the patriotic sentiments of the valiant population of Antwerp, I am certain that it will maintain the calm and composure of which it has given so many proofs since the commencement of hostilities, and that it will thus assist me to accomplish the great task which has fallen to my lot.

That same day—the 2nd of October—a Taube flew over Antwerp, dropping numerous copies of a strange bi-lingual proclamation, of which the more significant passages are here translated<sup>1</sup>:—

BRUSSELS, 1 *October*, 1914.

BELGIAN SOLDIERS!

Your blood and your whole salvation—you are not giving them to your beloved country at all; on the contrary, you are serving only the interest of Russia, a country which only desires to increase its already enormous power, and above all the interest of England, whose perfidious avarice has given birth to this cruel and unprecedented war. From the outset your newspapers, paid from French and English sources, have never ceased to deceive you, to tell you nothing but lies about the causes of the war and about the battles which have ensued, and this is still happening every day. . . .

Each day of resistance makes you suffer irreparable losses, while after the capitulation of Antwerp you will be free from all anxiety.

Belgian soldiers, you have fought enough for the interests of the Russian princes, and for those of the capitalists of perfidious Albion. Your situation is one to despair of.

If you desire to rejoin your wives and children, if you desire to return to your work, in a word, if you want peace, put an end to this useless struggle, which will only end in your ruin. Then you will quickly have all the benefits of a fortunate and perfect peace.

VON BESELER,

(*Commander-in-Chief of the besieging Army.*)

Need I say that there was not one “Belgian soldier,” nor one inhabitant of the besieged city, who did not read this impudent message with disdain?

The outer forts once demolished, the German artillery was able to approach the Nèthe. On the 2nd of October German shells fell on the village of Waerloos and set it on fire. On the 4th Contich was shelled and burned.

Under cover of their guns, which were so superior to ours in number, and, above all, in range, the Germans tried first to cross the Nèthe by Waelhem; but the Belgian infantry, entrenched upon the opposite bank, offered a brilliant resistance, and

<sup>1</sup>I have translated this very literally, to preserve the original flavour; this accounts for the peculiar style.—B.M.

they were forced to transfer their efforts to Duffel and Lierre.

At Lierre our enemies came into conflict with the English. England had sent us some reinforcements: a brigade of marine infantry and two naval brigades, or some 7,000 men in all. Seven thousand men: it was not much; yet this scanty help meant to our exhausted troops, which were completely worn out, a material assistance, and, above all, an inestimable moral support.

Ah! if the left bank of the Scheldt had been ours all the way to the sea, how much more favourable the situation would have been! Our noble river would have been open to the warships of the Allies, which could have ascended it as far as Antwerp and beyond, and if a few gunboats of light draught, but powerfully armed, had been able to enter the Rupel and the Nèthe, these two rivers would have been really impassable, and our "national fortress" would have been absolutely impregnable. . . .

On the 4th of October the Communal Council unanimously voted a resolution which expressed to the Government and the military authorities "the unshakable desire of the population to see the defence of the fortified position of Antwerp continued to the end, without regard to anything but the national defensive and without considering the dangers incurred by private persons or property."

The civil population of Belgium was truly admirable! Careless of danger, it thought only of the national defensive! And you must remember that, in order to facilitate the defence of Antwerp, it had been necessary within a radius of no less than twelve miles to raze to the ground hundreds of buildings, and that the officers who superintended these operations had the satisfaction of reporting that they did not hear a complaint—not a single complaint!

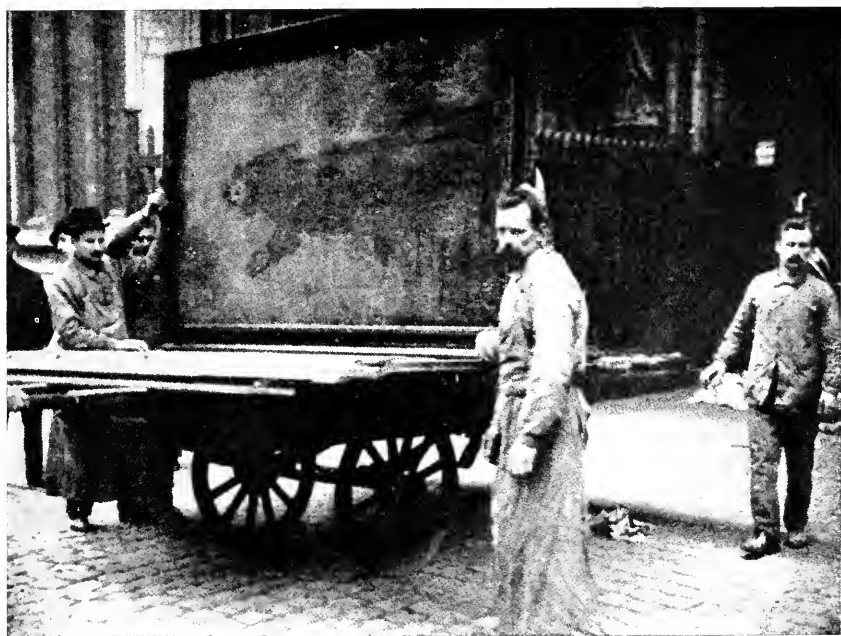
Now what the Belgians themselves had not thought it necessary to demolish was being fired by the German shells, and they accepted the sacrifice with the same composed resignation "without regard to anything but the national defensive." It mattered little that the countryside which had formerly been so pleasant and cheerful was being transformed into a desert so long as it still remained Belgian soil!

However, the situation grew worse from hour to hour.

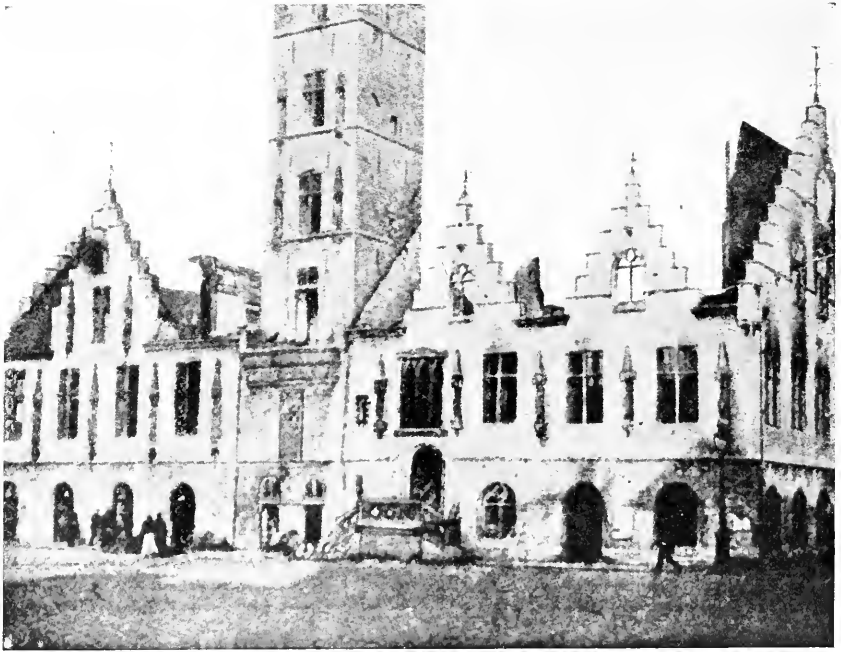
Shrapnel fell without intermission on the Belgian and English trenches; the hail of fire was infernal.



21. A SAMPLE OF THE WORK OF THE GERMAN "PIONEERS" AT TERMONDE. *(Page 106)*



22. ARTISTIC TREASURES WERE REMOVED TO A PLACE OF SAFETY. *(Page 113)*

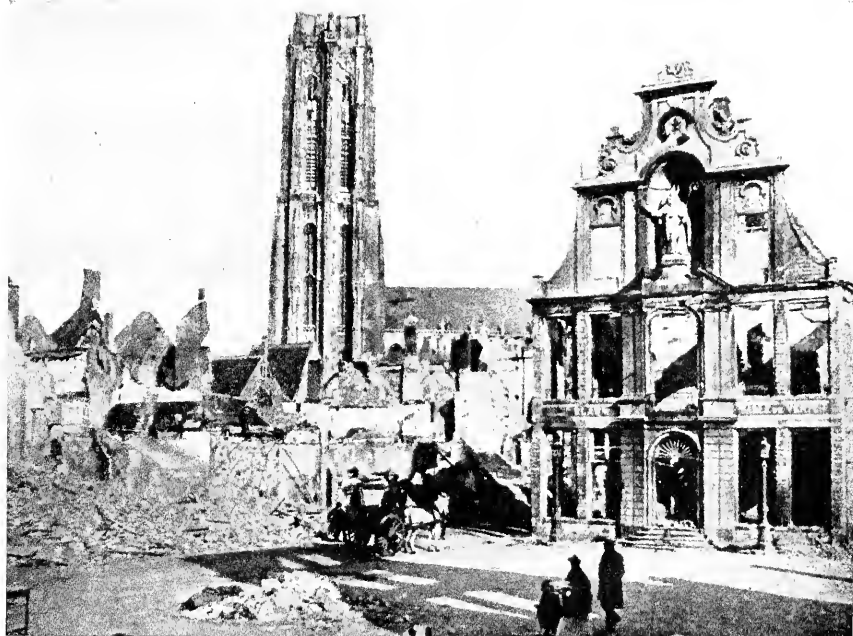


23. THE HOTEL DE VILLE, TERMONDE, AFTER THE 17TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1914. (Page 111)



24. EXODUS FROM MALINES, 27TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1914. (Page 113)





25. AT MALINES, AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT OF 27TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1914.  
(Page 113)



26. THE DUFFEL BRIDGE OVER THE NÈTHE, DESTROYED BY THE BELGIANS.  
(Page 114)



27. OUR SOLDIERS HELPING THE POOR FUGITIVES AS FAR AS THEY WERE ABLE. . . .  
(Page 120)



28. THE BATHING MACHINES . . . LIKE SO MANY LITTLE CARAVANS.  
(Page 122)

On the 6th of October, about 4 o'clock in the morning, the Germans succeeded in crossing the Nèthe. The defenders of Antwerp had to fall back to the forts of the inner defences. And the circle of steel and fire grew ever closer and closer. Soon there would be nothing for it but to seek to evade its embrace and save all that could be saved.

General de Guise warned the population of Antwerp that the bombardment of the city was imminent, and urged all who could do so to leave without delay.

Early on the 7th the members of the Government, the legations, and the officials of the Central Administration left by water for Ostend.

That morning the local newspapers openly admitted the gravity of the situation. But they suffered no loss of dignity. "Whatever fresh sacrifice the salvation of the country requires of us, we accept it." This, in substance, was what they said: "Belgium will emerge the greater for her trials." But the Belgian newspapers of Antwerp had been issued for the last time.

During the day measures of precaution were taken in view of the bombardment; those who did not leave the city installed themselves in their cellars. At the Zoological Gardens, those beautiful gardens whose rich collections were the pride of Antwerp, the animals were slaughtered and the reptiles poisoned. This meant a sacrifice of many hundreds of thousands of francs; but that was a trifle with matters as they were!

One of my compatriots, M. R—— de B——, attached to the wireless telegraph service, has kindly favoured me with the following personal narrative of the bombardment of Antwerp:—

". . . My superior officer had left two days earlier, sent into Flanders on a special mission. I remained alone at the 'main post,' with our mechanic and a few men. We were in constant communication with the barracks of the engineers and the central telegraph and telephone office.

"Late in the afternoon of the 7th I was given the order to make preparations for blowing up the whole post; we bored holes in the great masts, which would hold a good charge of powder. . . .

"I was hardly in bed, about midnight, when I heard a formidable explosion—the discharge of a heavy gun—followed by a shrill whistling, and then another explosion. Then the banging

and whistling became continuous . . . shrapnel first, then shells—and what shells! . . .

“A telephone message to the Engineers—yes, we could blow the place to smithereens; some soldiers were sent with the necessary explosives.

“We dismantled the petrol motor and the dynamo and the essential parts of the apparatus. In the transmitting and receiving rooms we did the same, removing the precious instruments without which our apparatus would be useless to a place of safety. All the wires of the antennæ were carefully cut and the secondary masts were sawed through. . . . For four hours we were working under an infernal rain of fire and steel. . . . I was wounded, but not enough to prevent me from working.

“Before leaving my beloved post I telephoned to the Engineers and then to the central office. The latter gave me the order to come at once with my men. It was at least thirty-five minutes' march, in the line of fire. . . . So that we should not all be wounded simultaneously, supposing we had bad luck, we moved off in Indian file. I was at the head. Besides our personal baggage—wretched little bags which didn't hold much of importance—we carried our precious receiving apparatus, which we wanted to save. . . . My feet caused me horrible suffering. I did not yet know that I was wounded in the leg. But how tell you all that we went through during that trying march?

“Near the point known as ‘Warande’ in particular the spectacle was impressive. The shells, which were falling thick and fast, were demolishing whole houses, starting conflagrations before us and behind. . . . Everywhere there were great black holes, twisted tram-lines, broken gas-mains, bits of glass, zinc, and broken tiles, and the remains of furniture. Explosion after explosion—the din was frightful! And in the midst of all this, in the darkness, a general *sauve-qui-peut*; poor folk making for the quays, carrying or dragging after them terrified children, taking with them what they could in the way of clothing or other belongings. . . . We saw a military forage-waggon blown into the air; the two horses were killed outright; one of the men was hideously mutilated, the other untouched.

“A little further we were able to breathe again; the shells were falling behind us only.

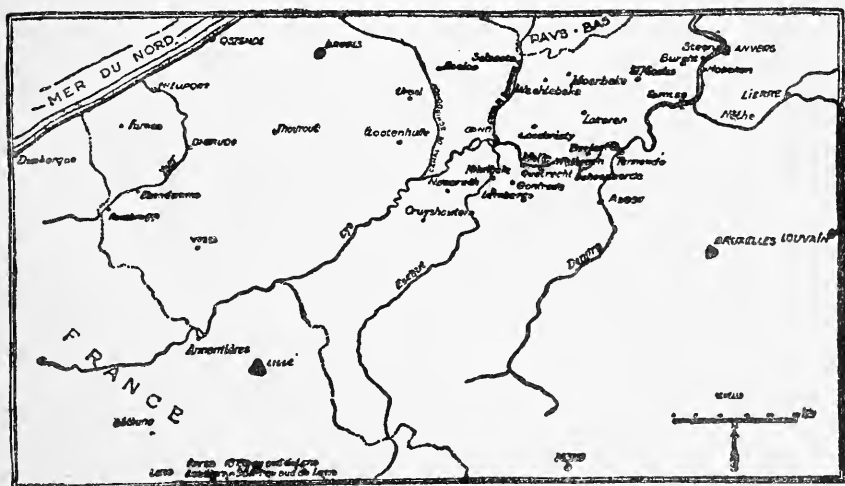
“At the Central Office we were sent into the cellars; they cheered us up, and gave us the opportunity to get a little rest . . .

"About 7 o'clock on the morning of the 8th we took our treasures and set out for Ostend.

"What an unforgettable spectacle in the streets of Antwerp! The crowd making for the quays; the thousands of women and children and elderly men who wanted to escape from this hell, to take ship and sail for Holland!

"My feet hurt me more and more, and my wounded leg began to trouble me too. I dragged myself along as best I could. . . .

"As we were on service we were allowed to pass over the



MAP SHOWING THE LINE OF RETREAT FROM ANTWERP TO THE YSER.

great bridge of boats thrown over the Scheldt opposite Stien, by which the army retreated. . . .

"Having reached Beveren-Waes, I could manage no longer; I kept with me one of the telegraph employés who were accompanying me, and instructed my other companions to push forward, arranging to rejoin them at Ostend. And I painfully continued my journey.

"The German guns did not cease to thunder. . . . The enemy had crossed the Scheldt at Schoonaerde in order to envelop the Belgian troops and cut off their retreat toward the coast, and advanced toward Lokeren, which he was already bombarding. . . .

"My companion and I turned our steps toward the northwest.

“At Moerbeke-Waes we saw a train full of wounded soldiers and refugees of all ages and conditions. They were everywhere—on the roofs of the carriages, on the engine, on the tender. . . . Despite my wounds, I preferred to continue on foot. . . .

“I learned later that this train was attacked; a British battalion, which had already distinguished itself at Lierre, was in this engagement, and behaved heroically.

“On the 9th, about 5 o'clock in the evening, we finally reached Gand, where we were able to rest in the house of some friends. I was covered with mud and blood, and exhausted after this march of 34 miles.

“I shall never forget what I saw by the way; here, an old peasant woman dragging a cow after her; there, some townfolk transporting a piano and a bundle of clothing on a little hand-cart; then a young man who had put his old mother on a bicycle and was walking beside her, supporting her and pushing her forward as best he could. I saw respectable burghers eating turnips which they had pulled up in the fields. All along the road were anxious crowds. And troops—infantry, artillery, cavalry, motor-cars by the hundred, carrying wounded soldiers from the forts, and thousand of vehicles of every description. All these making for Gand: our soldiers helping the poor fugitives as far as they were able (27)—these brave fellows who were so exhausted and who had to make such long marches. . . .”

The bombardment of Antwerp—by this I mean that of the city itself—commenced on the night of the 7th of October, towards midnight. It lasted all the next day and all the following night.

“On the 9th of October, about 6 in the morning, there was a moment's respite,” reports a native of Antwerp in a private letter. “Was this the end of it? No; the bombardment was resumed, and attained such an intensity that it was almost impossible to distinguish the direction of the shells, which were now arriving from all sides at once. The enemy had been advancing, which explained the respite.”

About 8 o'clock MM. Frank, deputy and President of the Intercommunal Commission (for Antwerp and the surrounding communes), De Vos, the burgomaster, and Ryckmans, a senator, left the city in a motor-car to visit the German authorities and request them to put an end to this henceforth useless bom-

bardment. The Consul-General for Spain accompanied them. After exciting adventures, over which I will not linger here, they had, at Contich, an interview with General von Beseler. The Commander of the besieging army hesitated for a long time to treat with these "civilians," stating that a fortress had never been surrendered under such conditions, etc., etc. However, he finally yielded, and a treaty was signed, known as the Treaty of Contich, which settled the conditions under which the German troops were to enter Antwerp.

On the afternoon of Friday, the 9th of October, the Germans entered the great commercial city, for whose conquest they had schemed and prepared for a number of years.

"They showed by their attitude," said an ocular witness, "that they were by no means comfortable in their minds. The deep silence which hung over the city made them uneasy. They carried their rifles handy, ready to fire as they went forward. . . ."

Their booty must have caused them some disillusion. Before its cautious retreat the Belgian Army had destroyed all it could not carry away; a number of forts were blown up; the bridge of boats was destroyed; the German merchant vessels seized at the commencement of hostilities were sunk or rendered unnavigable; and the great petroleum reservoirs were fired. In a word, they had destroyed all they could, and had in every way done their best to reduce the significance of the German victory to a minimum.

The retreat from Antwerp was covered and masked until the last moment, not only by the fire of the second ring of forts and by that of a few field batteries, but also by the Belgian and British detachments which courageously occupied the trenches between Contich and the Scheldt through the whole of the 8th.

Nevertheless, the Germans, who had succeeded in crossing the Scheldt at Wetteren, Schoonaerde, and Termonde—where they had repaired the bridge destroyed by the Belgians—were exerting a strong pressure in the direction of Lokeren. The British and Belgian troops, in order to avoid being cut off, were obliged to divert their march across Flanders sensibly toward the north.

Unhappily, despite the admirable order which presided during this henceforth famous retreat, several thousands of men avoided surrender only by entering Holland. A portion of our

fortress troops was also forced to retire into Dutch territory in order not to surrender to the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

The number of buildings damaged or destroyed during the bombardment of the town and its suburbs amounted to fourteen hundred.

As for the total of the material losses experienced by the nation in Antwerp and the district, it may be estimated at £40,000,000. But what matter these losses, and those, at least five times as great, which the country had suffered during the past two months!—what matter all our grief and mourning even, if honour was saved!

Moreover, the King—the soul of our resistance—and the bulk of his valiant legions had succeeded in gaining Ostend, where the Government was already installed.

### OSTEND

From the commencement of hostilities Ostend underwent a complete metamorphosis. The “Queen of Watering-Places,” as a rule *en fête* the whole of the summer, became suddenly solemn and austere.

At the height of the season the Kursaal and the great hotels closed their doors. Later, transformed into hospitals, some of these luxurious buildings, created for pleasure, gave shelter to every kind of suffering.

The bathing-machines were removed from the beach and drawn up on a great level space, where—like so many little caravans (28)—they were occupied for some weeks by poor refugees from the invaded territory, nomads against their will.

In the town there were still plenty of people, but it was a world expurgated of every frivolous element, and in part made up of refugees, in ever-increasing numbers, who were awaiting the moment of their departure for England; wounded men, half cured, impatient to go back to the front; young men of the 1914 class, who came to equip themselves as well as they could before joining the little garrison of Flanders where they were to receive their first training; while others, more particularly ambulance men and nurses, were newly landed from England.

The sailings of the mail steamers had been reduced from three per diem to one. A cross-Channel boat left for Folkestone

<sup>1</sup> Some 30,000 men thus entered Holland, where they will remain interned until the end of hostilities.



every morning about 8 o'clock, and returned the same night. It no longer carried to England gay and noisy excursionists, but fugitives, of all classes of society, many of whom were without shelter, totally ruined, and were leaving, silent and gloomy, with the bitterness of death in their hearts. (On certain days these emigrants were so numerous that the service had to be doubled, two boats sailing in place of one.) At night those who disembarked at Ostend were no longer tourists, but doctors, nurses, ambulance-bearers, officers sometimes—all people connected in one way or another with the great drama.

At the harbour station, even between the hours of departure and arrival, there was incessant movement: hundreds of refugees who came to register their names for the next crossing, foreign journalists in search of information, officers, aviators, and what not.

The fishermen rarely put to sea now save to satisfy the requirements of the local market. Most of the fishing-boats remained in the docks, whence, on the other hand, all yachts of every description had departed.

About the 10th of August some officers and men of the British Navy installed a hydroplane station on the beach near the lighthouse. This, however, was abandoned some ten or twelve days later. Then, on the 26th of August and the following days, as a result of the incursion of bodies of Uhlans into Flanders, and a skirmish in the neighbourhood of Ostend which cost the lives of some Belgian gendarmes, British cruisers appeared in the roadstead. (Among them were the *Hogue* and *Aboukir*, torpedoed and sunk a few weeks later.) British marines were landed—3,500 to 4,000 of them—and a superb body of men they were; and they immediately began to organise defensive works all round about the town. However, it was thought, on reflection, that if the Germans were to arrive in force it would be impossible to oppose them by a sufficient defensive, so that it was judged better, in view of such a contingency, to abandon any sort of defence. To the great disappointment of the Ostenders the British troops re-embarked at the end of a few days and the cruisers departed. A fine dirigible, which in the intervals between the reconnaissances which it carried out at sea was anchored on one of the racecourses, returned to England at the same time.

At the end of August several thousands of Belgian soldiers disembarked at Ostend, coming from Havre. They had been

unable, after the fall of Namur, to rejoin the bulk of the Belgian Army, and had been forced to make a roundabout journey through France. They left at once for Antwerp.

In September French and English transports arrived from time to time. Cargoes of arms and ammunition were landed, aeronautic material, and ambulances. Sometimes torpedo-boats or destroyers on special errands entered the harbour.

At the beginning of October came the Naval Brigades which helped in the defence of Antwerp. What a reception they had while they were with us! But that was not long; only until the steam was up in the boilers of the engines which drew their trains. What an ardent welcome it was, and with what a fine enthusiasm they practised the rite they had lately adopted! One of their number, addressing his comrades, would inquire: "Are we downhearted?" and all would reply in unison, with the greatest energy, "No!" Ten times, twenty times over, indefatigably the same question was repeated, always followed by the same reply.

Remounts for our cavalry, which had seen very hot service, reached us from England also. And then there were the pieces of heavy artillery—very difficult to disembark with the insufficient means at our disposal.

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No one had lost confidence! And this optimism hardly diminished when, on the 7th of October, towards midday, a steamer was seen to arrive from Antwerp, bringing the members of the Government, the diplomatic corps, and a number of State officials. No one doubted but that the "national fortress" was holding out, and this migration was regarded merely as a simple measure of prudence, and extreme prudence at that.

Meanwhile an entire British Staff had arrived, in order to organise the "Ostend base"; men of the Army Service Corps came, with their field-kitchens and bread-ovens; and all the wonderful organisation which supplies an army in the field—together with a branch of the Naval Transport Service—was installed in the port. And then, suddenly, there was a great arrival of troops. On the 8th of October alone sixteen transports entered the port. Some were steamers of 5,000 or 6,000 tons, bringing troops, horses (fine blood-horses for the cavalry, and enormous shire horses for draught purposes), munitions, provisions of all kinds (forage, flour, preserved foods,

petrol), guns, motor-lorries and armoured motor-cars—all the imposing apparatus of war.

This time there was no longer any doubt: the famous junction between our field army and the armies of the Allies so long longed for, was at last to be effected. Were not the “runners”<sup>1</sup> from Brussels telling all who would give ear that they had seen “red breeches” on the way? Yes, it was certain: the junction between our army and the French and British forces was at last a possibility; and it would be on the banks of the Dendre and the Scheldt—as far as Antwerp—or, at worst, a little further to the west, all along the Scheldt. . . .

A few trains were still running, maintaining communications between the coast and the as yet unoccupied portion of the country.

And now everything was converging upon Ostend: thousands of fugitives, the clothing depôts and the supply services of the Belgian Army; wounded men, who were taken to the local hospitals, or forwarded to other points along the coast, or were even evacuated to France or England.

Then came trains laden with troops, the first coming from Antwerp—from Antwerp, of whose fall Ostend had heard with stupefaction rather than anxiety. Troops arrived also by all the roads; thousands and thousands of exhausted infantrymen, covered with mud, almost in rags; cavalry, artillery, and an enormous number of waggons.

In the streets and on the quays the swarms of people were incredible; and at night especially, the town being left in complete darkness owing to the accursed Taubes and Zeppelins, the congested little town presented an unprecedented and indescribable aspect.

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The situation at Ostend was in reality extremely precarious, and was soon to become untenable.

Despite the arrival and concentration of French and British troops in Flanders, no effectual “junction” could be accomplished in time to be of service. It was thus essential to take certain requisite measures if the catastrophe was to be prevented which was so skilfully avoided at Antwerp, and these measures would have to be devised and executed without delay.

On the 10th of October a Cabinet Council was held, at which

<sup>1</sup> Intrepid men who, at the peril of their lives, crossed the German lines, carrying letters and messages at a tariff of 2 or 3 francs per letter.

General Pau and the British Commander were present.<sup>1</sup> It was decided to retreat upon the Yser, where the forces would be linked up, and the Government would retire to Havre.

On the night of the 10th of October I saw for the last time, for a few moments only, that were all too short, my beloved brother, who, not yet wholly recovered from a wound in the knee, was leaving for Cherbourg, where, while waiting until he could return to the front, he was to direct the training of new recruits with the help of two or three comrades. We even visited—not that we could see much of it—one of the famous armoured trains, which had arrived from Antwerp and was then on a siding on the quay, close to the English steamer on board of which my brother embarked with his pupils, to sail at day-break.

Yes, I lived every moment of those last days at Ostend, and I shall always remember them. I was acting as interpreter between the British military and naval services and the Belgian administration, and I was, in particular, in constant communication with the Commissariat and the Naval Transport Service.

We were continually meeting with every sort of difficulty, most of them resulting from the insufficient equipment of the port and the haste with which we had to do everything. But then, on the other hand, what universal good will we encountered in all those for whose assistance we had to apply—clerks and officials of the Marine, the Railways, the Telegraphs and Telephones,<sup>2</sup> officers of all sorts of civil and military departments—contractors, pilots, mechanics, dock labourers! What a fine spirit of solidarity inspired all these people, and, above all, how swiftly and completely they adapted themselves to the most unforeseen circumstances!

When, on the 12th of October, the order was brought from London by the Naval Transport Service to evacuate the town completely by the following day, there were forty steamers in the outer harbour and the docks—six or seven times as many as usual. Some of these, which had served for the transport of troops or horses, were able to leave in ballast immediately. None the less, what block in that little port! Moreover, those vessels which left were soon replaced by others which came from England to evacuate the wounded. And on the

<sup>1</sup> M. Carton de Wiart and his companions had just returned from their American mission. The Belgian Ministry was thus present in its entirety at this memorable meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Belgian Governmental Departments.

quays, too, there was an accumulation of the most varied materials, which had to be embarked with all possible speed, while all this chaos had to be reduced to order and all this disorganisation organised.

Besides the boat which had just sailed with recruits, the British Admiralty had placed at the disposal of the Belgian military authorities four great steamers, on which we had to embark and despatch to the north of France the inventory and stores of the supply corps and the clothing department; pneumatic tyres—representing a large sum of money; motor-cars, and all the equipment for repairing them; documents of all sorts, etc., etc., as well as 200 gendarmes who had to report themselves at Havre. Another steamer, the *Orange Prince*, was to carry the horses and carriages of the Court to England.

Troops were still passing through Ostend, to continue their exhausting retreat towards Nieuport: Belgian and British troops coming from Antwerp, and British artillery which had landed at Zeebrugge.

There was a great movement of wounded too; thousands had to be sent into France by the light railway, or to England.

And there was one interminable convoy of vehicles of every kind: private motor-cars, loaded with luggage and smothered with dust; lorries, drays, waggons, furniture removers' vans, carriages, motor-buses (yes, the motor-buses of London "mobilised"!), field-guns, machine-guns drawn by dogs (many of these poor brave dogs were lame). To complicate everything, there was an incessant movement of motor-cars on military service passing at a meteoric speed, and in the afternoon a Taube, flying over the town and harbour, dropped its bombs, which, happily, wounded no one, and did not even create the slightest panic.

The *Indépendance Belge*, that valiant Brussels newspaper, which was first removed to Gand, and had now for some weeks been published in Ostend, appeared for the last time on Monday, the 12th of October. Its editors were aware of the gravity of the situation, but they said nothing; only a short, sober "Editor's Note" made the simple announcement: "Communications being frequently interrupted for military reasons, we are no longer obtaining paper, and it also happens that we cannot send out our issues. To-day we were able to obtain, at the last moment, paper for the present number, but the late hour at which it arrived has allowed us to set up only one page. Under these conditions we

notify our subscribers and readers that the publication of our journal will be interrupted for the time being."

About 8 o'clock that evening we received, through the Transport Service, a fresh order from London: the English steamers were to put to sea not on the following day, but that very night!

So we had to do in five or six hours what we thought it impossible to complete in twenty or twenty-four!

Counter-orders were immediately given everywhere. We had to split ourselves in two, to be everywhere at the same time . . .

There were not enough men to work the cranes, not enough pilots for all these departing steamers; but we managed it, all the same. It was a matter of self-respect with everyone to save all that was in his charge; but it had to be insisted that only what was strictly necessary should be put on board, and in many cases one had to speak a trifle harshly to all these busy people, so full of good will, but so inexperienced; these good people, of whom many had never seen a ship, and who were now entrusted with the stowing away of the most precious cargoes!

What a night! And what painful sights I witnessed during those last hours as I hurried along the quays!

Here were valiant but weary troopers, arriving on foot from Brussels; some questioned me, asking me where they would find a little water to drink. There were a score of unfortunate wounded soldiers, some of whom were walking painfully with the help of crutches; it was impossible to remove all the wounded in motor-cars or stretchers; so that those who could hobble had to look after themselves. These had mistaken their way; the vessel on which they have to embark, alas! is yonder, a long way from them.

And the embarkation, effected in all possible haste and in the darkness, of the beautiful Royal horses! An end of all things, one might have been tempted to say, if one had once lost heart!

About 5.30 in the morning of the 13th of October I had to go to the harbour station. Day had hardly begun to dawn, yet there, crowded on to the quay, were 15,000 persons. Certainly there would be—as on the preceding days since the exodus from Antwerp—two, or perhaps even three, steamers leaving for Folkstone in the course of the morning; but, none the less, it was impossible to think of embarking a fourth part of all these poor people (29).

There were people I knew there, friends even, but no way of helping them. I advised them to leave, without hesitation, by the light railways running to France and Holland; although this was no longer easy, as much of the rolling-stock had been requisitioned by the army.

At 7 o'clock the packet-boat *Pieter de Coninck* got under way, proceeding to Havre with the members of the Belgian Government (excepting M. de Broqueville, Minister of War, who remained near the King and the Army), the members of the Diplomatic Corps, the President of the Chamber, some of the Ministers of State, and a few officials.

"How many emotions thrilled us," says one of these distinguished exiles, the Minister of State, M. Hymans, "on this tragic day of exile, when in the morning we saw the beloved shores of our native land grow remote and disappear in the golden mist; and when, in the evening, we came to Havre, passing before the shadowy quays, which were covered with a vast crowd that we guessed at without seeing, and whence rose, in the darkness, shouts of welcome: '*Vivent les Belges! Vive la Belgique!*'"

During the whole of that day, the 13th of October, Ostend continued to empty itself. There was a general exodus: by steamer, by fishing-boats, by the light railways, by every possible means of transport.

In the morning a Taube hovered for a few moments above the town, like a sinister bird of prey. One hardly noticed it.

All day long, and all the following night, boats were leaving, and there was an interminable procession of fugitives, too, on the roads leading to Holland and to France. (It was by way of Holland that I, my task once completed, rejoined my people in England).

And when the Germans, having taken possession of Gand and Bruges, arrived at Ostend about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 14th of October, there were no longer ten thousand persons in this town of 40,000 inhabitants, which had at one moment sheltered some 200,000 souls. As for the harbour, it was absolutely empty.

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Before leaving Ostend the Government addressed to the Belgian people the following proclamation, signed by all the Ministers:—

## FELLOW-CITIZENS,

For nearly two and a half months, at the cost of heroic efforts, the Belgian soldiers have foot by foot defended the soil of our native land.

The enemy felt certain of annihilating our army at Antwerp. But a retreat, whose dignity and order were irreproachable, frustrated this hope, and assured us of the preservation of military forces which will continue without a pause to struggle for the noblest and most righteous of causes.

Henceforth these forces are operating toward our southern frontier, where they are supported by the Allies. With their valiant assistance, the victory of Justice is certain.

Nevertheless, to the sacrifices already accepted by the Belgian nation, with a courage only equalled by their extent, the circumstances of the moment have to-day added a fresh trial!

Lest it should serve the designs of the invader, it is important that the Government should provisionally establish its seat in some locality where it will be able, in touch with the Belgian Army on the one hand, and with France and England on the other, to continue to exercise the powers of national sovereignty and to ensure their continuity.

This is why the Government is to-day leaving Ostend, with a grateful memory of the welcome which the town has accorded it. It will establish itself provisionally at Havre, where the generous friendship of the Government of the French Republic secures for it the plenitude of its sovereign right, and the complete exercise of its authority and its obligations.

Fellow-citizens,

This passing trial, to which our patriotism must for to-day submit, will, we are convinced, be quickly avenged. On the other hand, the public services of Belgium will continue in operation as far as circumstances will permit. The King and the Government rely upon your patriotism and your wisdom. On your side, rely upon our ardent devotion, upon the valour of our army, and the assistance of the Allies in hastening the hour of common deliverance.

Our dear country, odiously treated and betrayed by one of the Powers which had sworn to guarantee its neutrality, is evoking a growing sense of admiration throughout the world.

Thanks to the union, courage, and clear-sightedness of all its children, it will continue to deserve the admiration which encourages it to-day. To-morrow it will emerge from its trials greater in stature and more beautiful, having suffered for justice and the honour of civilisation itself!

Long live free and independent Belgium!

Ostend, 13th October, 1914.

"A proclamation," said M. Gabriel Hanotaux, a few days later, "consisting wholly of statements and records. No complaint, no harking back to the tragic events of yesterday; hardly an allusion to the bitterness of adding a fresh trial to so many others; and then, suddenly, a considered determination, hope, and unshakable confidence in the victory of Justice."

Our confidence in victory—the victory of Justice—was indeed unshakable.



Strong in the justice of her cause, Belgium, violated but not dishonoured, was still erect.

Crushed, pressed back by overwhelming forces, the defence had been continually forced to retire; only a tiny corner of the country was still free; barely the fortieth part. But the national honour was intact. The honour of Belgium had not yielded an inch; neither in mutilated Liége, Namur, or Antwerp, nor in oppressed Brussels, nor in martyred Aerschot, Dinant, Termonde, or Louvain.

Mutilated, oppressed, martyred, Belgium was not enslaved; nor will she ever be.

Germany had not "dismayed" her, nor will she ever do so, because, for Belgium, the stake of the struggle is honour, and her honour is and will remain still erect.

No, in truth the little kingdom was not "on its knees" before the mighty Empire.

Territorially the little kingdom was forty times smaller than of old; but morally it was immeasurably greater than ever before. The King of the Belgians was reigning now over no more than a tiny strip of territory, but never was there Royalty more renowned than his had become.

## VII

### IN THE LANDS OF REFUGE

#### THE GREAT EXODUS

FROM the first days of the invasion thousands of the inhabitants of the provinces of Liége and Luxemburg emigrated: some to the north—where Dutch Limburg, quite close at hand, offered a safe asylum—or to the west, to the rear of the Belgian lines; and others to the south, to France.

Then, as the "Mailed Fist" multiplied its blows and showered them on a greater area of the violated soil, this sorrowful exodus increased. At the same time the "western front" was formed, so that those who wished to enter France had to make a roundabout journey in the west.



THE MAILED FIST  
(A GERMAN VIGNETTE.)

It was a harrowing spectacle to see these poor folk—generally stricken in their dearest affections, and almost all ruined—departing along the roads with all they had managed to save from the rapine of our enemies; little groups or long processions of countryfolk forsaking their burning villages (30); and groups or convoys of townspeople, fleeing in all haste from their towns or cities, for these, too, were given over to pillage and incendiarism. It was an unspeakably painful sight, and to understand all its bitterness one must have known how deeply the Belgian is attached to his native soil and how dearly he loves his home. . . .

Hundreds and thousands of unfortunates had been forced thus to fly in order to avoid death or deportation, and to seek some place of shelter; for whole villages and whole cities had been evacuated.

At the beginning of October this lamentable exodus assumed, for a period of some days, such vast proportions that nothing in

the history of humanity can be compared with it. Between the first days of the month—when a great number of the houses in the outskirts of Antwerp had to be evacuated—and the 14th, when the Germans advanced as far as the coast, nearly a million persons emigrated. Trains crowded with passengers left for the coast and for Holland. On the Scheldt every means of transport was utilised; even lighters, which were towed by small steamers. And on the roads of Flanders, and in the north of the province of Antwerp, there was an unheard-of concourse of pedestrians and vehicles of every species; immense processions in which all classes of society were mingled; in which there were rich people and invalids and wounded soldiers, infants in arms and poor old men at the end of their days, who would certainly never return from exile.

To-day there are Belgian refugees almost everywhere; but it is in Holland, France, and England that they are most numerous.

#### IN HOLLAND

It was first of all Limburg, and then the provinces of Zeeland and North Brabant, which in Holland received the first streams of the Belgian immigration.

Into Dutch Limburg the tide of immigration flowed without great variations; but this was not the case with Zeeland or Brabant, where the Belgian refugees arrived, at the time of the siege of Antwerp, at the rate of some hundreds of thousands (600,000, it is believed) in a few days.

Zeeland received not only the fugitives from Antwerp, who arrived directly by boat, but also those from Gand, Bruges, Ostend, and other parts of Flanders, who had travelled by road to the Dutch territory lying on the left bank of the Scheldt.

Through Sluis, a little frontier town containing only a few hundreds of inhabitants, 60,000 persons passed in October; on certain days the little Zeeland town had its population increased tenfold. At Hontenisse, which contained rather more than five thousand inhabitants, there were, about the 15th of October, 18,000 refugees; certain farmhouses gave shelter to as many as 300.

The 2,000 inhabitants of Aardenburg had to entertain nearly 3,000 immigrants. The 1,200 inhabitants of Hansweert—on the canal which joins the two arms of the Scheldt—saw 175,000 fugitives pass by! On the 21st of December, 2,500 immigrants

were still there, living, for the most part, on the big Rhine boats or barges.

At Flushing, as at Hansweert, numbers of boats arrived from Antwerp, laden to the gunwale. Many people came, too, from Flanders, by steamer from Breskens. The more well-to-do embarked, for the most part on steamers of the Flushing to Folkestone line; the rest remained in Zeeland or scattered through the interior of the country.

In northern Brabant the fugitives made more especially for Roosendael and Bergen-op-Zoom, where they arrived in bodies of thousands at a time.

During the first few days the little town of Bergen-op-Zoom had to entertain 50,000 refugees; about 10,000 of these lodged with the inhabitants, and the rest camped out as best they could, in the churches and schools, in available sheds or barns, in the tents sent as an emergency measure by the Dutch Ministry of War (31), and even in tilted waggons.

At Roosendael, whence the refugees were sent by rail to all parts of Holland, there was at certain moments, especially at the railway station, a congestion and a confusion which no spectator could ever forget.

In the course of this great and hurried exodus friends and relatives lost sight of one another. How were they to find one another again?

At the time of their flight from Antwerp some fugitives were inspired to write in chalk, on the walls of the villages they passed through, such indications as this: "Marie van der Meylen is on her way to Capellen"; "Charles Franken, your little boy is at Capellen with your brother Jean."

This example was followed by many refugees. At Roosendael, a great cross-roads, the walls were covered with these original advertisements. At Roosendael, too, a worthy priest who had collected a few lost children had the idea of exhibiting these little ones, one by one, from the height of the pulpit: "Whose is this pretty little girl? Whose is this nice little boy?"

The Dutch illustrated newspapers—*Panorama* in particular—did their best to facilitate these agonising quests by publishing—under the heading: "Who Will Help Us to Search?" or: (32) "Where is Mama?"—the portraits of lost children, some of whom were too young to give the slightest indication which would facilitate their identification.

At the end of October a portion of these refugees—mostly

inhabitants of Antwerp—returned to their homes. At the same time others began to leave for England. But without counting the interned prisoners—soldiers who crossed the frontier to avoid being taken prisoner by the Germans—there still remained in Holland, at the beginning of 1915, 200,000 Belgian refugees, distributed among 815 communes (there being 1,121 in the country) or in camps constructed for the purpose, which are perfect model villages. To-day this number is reduced to 80,000, of whom 25,000 are indigent.

Occupation is provided, as far as possible, for all these poor uprooted people (refugees and interned prisoners). In some localities the men make articles of furniture, and even portable houses, which are immediately utilised, and will, moreover, be of service when the return to Belgium begins, when everything will have to be “remade”; and the women almost everywhere are employed in dressmaking or tailoring, making clothes for the refugees themselves and also for those interned.

Besides the Central Commission and some 850 local committees or sub-committees, with which the official Commission is constantly in touch, all sorts of societies, inspired by the noblest sentiments, have been established to assist the Belgian refugees.

The refugees themselves have founded several societies; they have established schools, too, and have started a number of newspapers published in French and in Flemish.

Finally, an “Official Belgian Committee for the Netherlands” was established at The Hague some months ago. Its mission is to assist, under the direction of the Belgian Legation, “the numerous organisations which have been formed or will yet be formed for the amelioration of the moral and material position of the Belgians in Holland.”

### IN FRANCE

Just as they fled to Holland, so thousands of Belgians who were driven from their homes by the German invasion entered France in the early days of the war.

When the soil of France was itself invaded, this migration, which had become more difficult, was considerably lessened. But it rose again, attaining extraordinary figures, when the Germans, after the fall of Antwerp, moved onward to the coast and to the Yser.

On the day before the enemy reached Ostend, and even on

the same day, there was a formidable exodus, chiefly along the road from Nieuport to Dunkirk, but also by sea. "At Calais," writes a correspondent of *Le Temps*, "one saw them entering the harbour—a host of small fishing-boats from the Belgian coast, from Blankenberghe, Heyst, Nieuport, Ostend, or La Panne. What a heart-breaking spectacle met the eyes when these poor people landed! They were packed together on the narrow decks of the small sailing-boats, unfortunate families who had been able to save and bring away with them only a little linen and the few trifling objects to which they were most attached."

And what trials many of these unfortunate people had to undergo!

In October, 1914, a train which was carrying several hundreds of Belgian refugees was derailed between Calais and Boulogne; twenty to thirty persons were killed or seriously wounded. A few days later a large French steamer, the *Amiral Ganteaume*, which was sailing from Calais to La Pallice with 2,500 passengers, of whom many were Belgian emigrants, was torpedoed by a German submarine. Thirty persons were either killed by the explosion or drowned during the salvage operations.

On the 11th of December, 1915, the powder works established by the Belgian Staff at Gravelle-Sainte-Honorine, less than two miles from Havre, were destroyed by a terrible explosion, and there were hundreds of victims among the workers—nearly all refugees!

During the early months of the war M. Hymans, Minister of State,<sup>1</sup> visited some of the French centres where numerous Belgian refugees had found asylum. He recorded his impressions in the following words:—

"I was able to form an idea of the profound moral distress of our unfortunate exiles. The refugees whom I have seen are for the most part inhabitants of Hainault, the Borinage, or the Charleroi district, who fled before the horrors of the invasion. As far as is possible they are given occupation. But they are, in general, miners or metal-workers, little accustomed to agricultural labours and unskilled at such, and the total upheaval of all their habits and ways of life has completely disconcerted them. The old people especially are to be pitied. I had only to speak a few words, to refer—in very simple phrases—to their villages,

<sup>1</sup> M. Paul Hymans is to-day the Belgian Minister in London. The King has lately invited him to participate with the two other Ministers of State of the parties of the Left—MM. le Comte Goblet d'Alviella and Émile Vander-velde—in the deliberations of the Council of Ministers.

to their native countryside, to our Belgium, and they all began to shed tears. Many of them moreover are anxious about their relatives of whom they have no news. . . . I attempted everywhere to give details and to reassure them. And everywhere there were the same frantic shouts of '*Vive la Belgique!*' and '*Vive le Roi!*' when I left a group of refugees, having comforted each of them as best I could."

At the present time there are more than 200,000 Belgian refugees in France.

All sorts of committees have been established in France, the most important being under the direction of M. Schollaert, President of the Chamber of Representatives. This is the "Official Belgian Committee for the Assistance of Refugees."

Thanks to the devotion and enterprise of these committees, and thanks also to the fraternal feeling of the French populations, the Belgian refugees are to-day distributed, as judiciously as possible, throughout all the French Departments, and work has been found for nearly all those men whose age or physical inaptitude prevents them from rallying to the colours.

But there are others in France besides the simple "refugees." In the hospitals there are thousands of Belgian wounded, and in the training camps—in Normandy and Brittany—thousands of young able-bodied Belgians have responded with patriotic enthusiasm to this appeal of the Government (66) :—

Driven from their towns and villages by the horrors of the invasion, numerous Belgian families have been forced to seek a refuge abroad. They have found this refuge in hospitable countries where the public authorities, like the populations, have shown them a degree of kindness of which the Nation will retain the most grateful memory.

On all these families the same obligation is incumbent:

Let them never forget their native country, where their kinsfolk, friends, and comrades are suffering so cruelly! Let them endeavour, by their courage and their dignity in these days of trial, still further to increase the sympathy with which Belgium is regarded all the world over by all upright minds and all generous hearts! Let their thoughts, their hopes, and their actions be always directed toward this sacred goal: the liberation of Belgian territory. . . .

In the name of the King and of the Nation we address a solemn appeal to all able-bodied Belgians, and especially to those between the ages of eighteen and thirty years, that they will enlist as volunteers for the duration of the war. . . .

We rely upon all to do their duty.

The victim of a crime to which History affords no parallel, Belgium had never greater claims and a greater right to the help of her children! Let them all, under the leadership of a King of whom we are proud,

endeavour to hasten the hour when we shall once more stand united, free and independent on the soil of that beloved mother-country whose sufferings have rendered her still more dear!

This "Appeal to Belgians Residing Aboard" was issued by the Belgian Government on the 26th of October from Sainte-Adresse, near Havre.

There the Government had been installed since its departure from Ostend.

M. André Tudesq has given in *Le Journal* a picturesque and very accurate description of the Government's temporary quarters. I quote a few passages:—

"It is something better than a mere fiction, something more than a chance refuge: it is a veritable principality!

"Here resides a Government with all its prerogatives. It is able to exercise the least of its rights. Its constitution is in force. It is limited only by its own laws. It is more than a guest; it is a sovereign.

"After the fall of the Antwerp forts and the dangerous halt at Ostend, the Belgian Ministers, on the invitation of France, transferred their Council and their departments to Havre. Then we were in the grip of such perilous events that we regarded it as nothing more than a chance vicissitude of warfare. But this transfer of a Government beyond the frontiers of its country is without precedent in history. Moreover, have we not a monarchical Government operating within the Republic? . . .

". . . Lodging having been found, and the protocol having said its say, a decree of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conferred the privilege of extra-territoriality upon all the buildings which sheltered the Ministers and their staffs. This was not a mere act of politeness, but a genuine concession, with all the rights appertaining thereto. Thus at the very outset, as a sign of occupation, the national colours—the black, yellow, and red—were hoisted above each palace.

"I have visited these administrative buildings and these private houses. Here they are as they appear to-day:

"The Hostelry (37), a charming manor-house in the Norman style, houses the majority of their Excellencies and their families. In a salon on the ground floor the Council of Ministers meets. . . . The Governmental departments, offices, and records are installed in the Place Frédéric Sauvage, in a vast building which had never been occupied. Seven rooms go to each department. At the entrance is nailed the sign: 'Palace of the Minis-



tries.' On the ground floor a vast chamber has been reserved for the Chamber of Representatives; at the present moment a department directed by M. Schollaert, President of the Chamber, and the record department of the Senate are at work here. Two Ministers are separately housed: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of War, which occupy large villas. . . .

"By the entrances of the villas and the Palace sentry-boxes have been erected, painted with the national colours. There Belgian gendarmes mount guard. Five hundred form the garrison. There are also police-stations in the Avenue des Régates, at the Hostelry, and in the Place Frédéric-Sauvage.

"But the principality does not end here. The Belgian Posts and Telegraphs have replaced the old French post-office; and a standard has been erected to carry the telephone wires connecting Ministry with Ministry. Letters arrive daily, by special couriers, from the General Headquarters and from Furnes. Here, too, are sold those curious stamps (36) which will one day be the joy of collectors; bearing the portrait of the King, they are post-marked 'Le Havre—Spécial.'<sup>1</sup>

"Beside every Government, to uphold its sovereignty, is a diplomatic corps. This is not lacking here; with the exception of the representative of France, M. Klobukowski, for whom the Villa Villeroy was reserved on the Boulevard Maritime, the Ministers Plenipotentiary, Ministers, and Military Attachés of other nations are housed in the Hôtel des Régates. Here are represented the Holy See, Great Britain, Russia, Roumania, Holland, Italy, Brazil, Greece, Japan, Norway, Spain, Chili—in a word all the Allied and friendly nations.

"There is also a Royal Palace. Albert I. has not yet inaugurated it; he will come here later on. And this is the reason—a touching one: since the invasion the King has never left the soil of Belgium. He has always remained at the head of his troops, who are defending the last portion of Belgian territory. . . . The King remains in his kingdom; so long as he is there Belgium stands with her face to the enemy, free and sovereign. . . .

"Created in theory, the principality has gradually come to life. Nearly 2,500 Belgians inhabit it, from the Minister to the simple militia-man waiting to be enrolled. Its rebaptised boule-

<sup>1</sup>The Germans having trafficked in the stamps which they found in occupied territory, it was necessary to issue new Belgian stamps, which were given currency on the 15th of October, 1915. The postmark is now "Sainte-Adresse-Poste, Belge."

wards, which will henceforth be known as Boulevard Albert I., Boulevard du Roi-des-Belges, are busy with a hurrying crowd, all of whom bear, in the buttonhole or on the bosom of the dress, the national colours.

“Charity fêtes are organised every week; here the exiled colony assembles. The *Te Deum* is sung in the church for the victory of the Allied arms and the speedy liberation of the mother country.”

In addition to the administrative departments of State there have also been created, in France, all sorts of official or semi-official departments, and a multitude of undertakings of which the mere catalogue would be eloquent of the noble valour and the methodical spirit with which the Belgians are striving to vanquish all the difficulties which confronted them so suddenly and implacably.

#### IN SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland also the Belgian refugees are comparatively numerous; there are some 2,500 who are provided with homes by the care of committees which have been formed in the cantons of Vaud, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Le Valais, and Berne, and 1,000 who live upon their own resources.

After their grievous adventures all find a safe and peaceful shelter on this hospitable soil, where they are surrounded by universal good will. Moreover, our cause has rallied the suffrages of all the citizens of the Swiss Confederation, and their support finds free expression, for of all neutral countries Switzerland has best understood that political neutrality does not exclude the manifestation of the sentiment of human solidarity.

#### IN ENGLAND

Necessarily limited to the capacity of a few cross-Channel steamers, the emigration to England could always be regulated, and it was always relatively moderate.

None the less, at the time of the great exodus, between the 7th and the 14th of October, 1914, no less than 26,000 fugitives were landed in Folkestone harbour. A large number arrived at Tilbury also, and on the 14th of October hundreds of fugitives who had embarked upon fishing-boats arrived at Ramsgate and other small harbours of the south-east coast. Finally, England received the surplus of the Dutch immigration.

At the present time more than 180,000 Belgian refugees are awaiting in England the liberation of their national territory; while many thousands of Belgian wounded are being treated in English hospitals.

Wounded and refugees alike enjoy the most cordial hospitality in the bosom of the great friendly nation; they are surrounded by touching solicitude and exquisite kindness. I have seen, in one of the great London railway stations, a numerous crowd, in which there were frock-coated, silk-hatted old gentlemen, form up in line and uncover at the passing of a miserable procession of humble Belgian countryfolk who had just arrived, and this silent sympathy, which so well displayed the British tact, was singularly affecting. I was by chance present at a little town in Surrey at the inauguration of a home for Belgian refugees. It was a pretty, cheerful villa which a local committee had placed at the disposal of four lower-middle-class families. In the common dining-room there were flowers on all the tables, and on the walls were fine portraits of the King and Queen of the Belgians and of General Leman. And it is the same everywhere.

And our dead, too, are honoured in a touching manner by this truly great nation. I have seen a private soldier, a little volunteer of seventeen years of age, given a funeral worthy of a general. Our poor, beloved dead! They are so many already in certain English cemeteries that they have been united in the same corner of the soil. One day monuments will be erected; in the meantime there are simple crosses, with inscriptions such as this: "Here lie Belgian soldiers who died in defending the honour and the independence of their country."

A number of institutions and societies, and hundreds upon hundreds of committees, of which the "War Refugee Committee" is the most important, have been created in England for the benefit of the Belgian exiles.

Once the first moment of stupefaction was over—and it was over quickly—the refugees themselves initiated numerous organisations for mutual social assistance. They have even formed important professional organisations.

All those who were capable of bearing arms eagerly responded to the appeal of the Government, which was eloquently interpreted in England by M. Vandervelde. Others sought such work as they could obtain in factories, on the railways, etc. Thousands of men and women are to-day manufacturing munitions.

The "intellectuals" and the business men, who are particularly numerous among the Belgians who have taken refuge in England, have from the first displayed remarkable activity, and have manifested in every imaginable fashion that indomitable will to live which will save our nation.

Belgian companies of every nature—colonial and commercial, banks, shipbuilding companies, which build warships and even fishing-boats—are managed from London or other great English centres, while conferences, exhibitions, and all manner of manifestations of Belgian courage and patriotism are continually held in all parts of the country.

Those were truly no idle words with which our great Verhaeren, a few months before the war, ended a lecture on one of the greatest painters of the Flemish school: "There is something about this country which, though it be trampled underfoot by no matter what other of the world's nations, yet it always reawakens, revives, and comes to life again. It is like the great popular hero, Tyl Uilenspiegel, who, in the depths of his tomb, stands erect once more, turning again to life, and who, suddenly taking the hand of the charming and candid Nele, departs under the eyes of the grave-diggers, crying to them: 'Do men bury Uilenspiegel, the spirit, and Nele, the heart of Mother Flanders? They may slumber, but never die!'"

### THE REFUGEE PRESS

One of the most interesting manifestations of that ardent will to live which sustains us amid our misfortunes is the appearance of Belgian newspapers in England, France, and Holland.

Barely a week after the exodus from Ostend the *Indépendance Belge* reappeared in London. "Founded on the creation of the kingdom of Belgium," it said in the first number of the new series (on the 21st of October), "our old *Indépendance Belge* would not and could not disappear." At the end of a week it was printing editions of thirty thousand copies.

During the first days of exile another important Belgian newspaper, the Antwerp *Métropole*, reappeared in London, when the *Standard*, whose circulation is a large one, reserved it a daily page for a period of some months.

Later on a colonial newspaper, the *Tribune Congolaise*, of Antwerp, also appeared in London. Then new journals were

established, *La Belgique Nouvelle* and the *Écho de Belgique*, both of which are weeklies.

I cite from memory the *Franco-Belge* and the *Courrier Belge*, both of which had only an ephemeral existence, one appearing at Folkestone and one at Derby.

In France we have the *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, of Brussels, which has appeared at Havre since the 12th of November, 1914, its object being to "come to the help . . . of the thousands of Belgians . . . driven from their homes and scattered through France, England, Switzerland, and Holland," and its ambition "to contribute to the maintenance of that concord which, from the first days of the war, has mitigated and ennobled our misfortunes, and which, to-day more than ever, is to our compatriots the most precious of all possessions." There are also published at Havre, besides the *Moniteur Belge*, which is an official journal, the *Courrier de l'Armée*, *Het Vaderland*, a Flemish journal, etc.; while in Paris there are the *Patrie Belge* and the *Nouvelle Belgique*.

In Holland the *Écho Belge* is published in Amsterdam. This, in its first number, undertook to maintain in its readers "a patriotic hope and the certitude that our poor country will emerge the greater from the horrible cataclysm"; in Rotterdam appears *La Belgique*; at The Hague *De Vlaamsche Stem*, the *Belgisch Dagblad*, and *Vrij België*; at Bergen-op-Zoom the *Écho d'Anvers*, and at Maestricht *Les Uouvelles*.

All these newspapers are of passionate interest to the Belgians. All speak with calm resignation of our trials and with a warm confidence of our hopes and aspirations. Each one is a free platform from which men of talent, who mean to remain free, attack with a radiant optimism all the social and economic questions which the renovation of our country will raise in the near future.

In the early days of the war these Belgian newspapers appearing abroad used to print, under such headings as "*On cherche*," "*Pour se retrouver*," or the like, advertisements in which husbands, mothers, and children who had become separated sought to let one another know where they had found asylum. Here are a few examples:—

"The Jonckheere children, of Eerneghem, ask for news of their mother and their brother Maurice. Write to —," etc.

"Monfort, Joseph, Leuze, Longchamps, Namur, asks for news of wife and little girl, of whom nothing is known since end

of August. Those who can give any information whatever are begged to write," etc.

"M. and Mme. Feltesse ask for news of their son Lucien, boy scout, motor-cyclist, and orderly; with a Belgian ambulance at the front. Write," etc.

"Dr. Deprez, of Kinshasa, Belgian Congo, asks for news of his parents, living at Wavre, Chaussée de Nivelles, 68. Write," etc.

"Léonie Rousse, aged five years, . . . is looking for her father, Joseph Rousse. The child is now with M. Ilmer, game-keeper, at Sint-Annaland."

"Alphonse Janssen, now care of M. Lasaay, Walstraat, 78, Flushing, is seeking his wife and child."

"Pierre Possemiers, 41 years, seeks his wife, *née* Philomène Hallewaetters, and his seven children. He is at Vollenhoor."

What anxiety, what anguish are expressed in these few lines, taken at random from some of these newspapers six months after the beginning of the war!

## VIII

### INVIOULATE BELGIUM

#### THE YSER

“LESS than a year ago the region of the Yser <sup>1</sup> was assuredly one of the most peaceful and one of the happiest countries under God’s sun (34). A country of rich pastures, intersected by ditches and canals, sown with towns and villages. Here and there, hidden in the verdure, were low, white farmhouses capped by red tiles. Rows of tall poplars, bent by the sea-winds, denote the course followed by the roads. A few thick-set towers, rustic steeples, and adorable belfries, of sculptured lace-like stone, recalled the old traditions—religious, corporative, communal, and artistic—which are still dear to the meditative and industrious Flemish race. Along the western horizon ran the pleasant girdle of the dunes, hiding the fashionable sea-fronts of La Panne, Saint-Idesbald, Coxyde.

“To-day you must picture to yourself a bare, sinister plain, on which falls a rain of bombs and shells and shrapnel. The soil is broken by heavy traffic, ploughed up by projectiles, watered with blood. Here and there the inundations have produced great sheets of water (38), whence emerge the ruins of farmhouses, and on which all sorts of rubbish is floating, and often corpses (35). And on this soil, since the 16th of October, 1914, without respite, without interruption, men have been fighting, and destroying, and slaughtering one another.”

\* \* \*

While the 7th Division of the British troops, which had just disembarked in Flanders, fell back by way of Thourout toward Ypres, and a brigade of French Marine Fusiliers, which was sent to cover the retreat from Antwerp, and behaved so admirably at Quatrecht, fell back upon Dixmude, what was left of the Belgian

<sup>1</sup> Passages from a speech delivered in London on the 21st of June, 1915, at a meeting of *La Belgica*, one of the principal Belgian associations formed in England, by M. Carton de Wiart, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers.

Army re-formed itself hastily on the Yser, between Nieuport and Dixmude, and once more faced the enemy.

For the Germans had been swiftly diverted in considerable numbers from the approaches of Antwerp to West Flanders, in the hope of turning the left wing of the Allies and reaching Calais.

“ Reaching the Yser on the 15th of October,<sup>1</sup> the Belgian Army was attacked on the following day. On this day, indeed, the Germans endeavoured to dislodge the Marine Fusiliers, who had no artillery, from Dixmude; it was the Belgian artillery, so renowned for the skill of its gun-layers and the efficiency of its fire, which supported the French. On the 17th German shells were falling on the whole line of the advanced Belgian positions between Dixmude and the sea. These attacks were the prelude to a terrible battle, which, lasting from the 18th to the 30th of October, was to make the heroic defence of the Yser by the Belgian Army for ever renowned in history.

“ On the 18th the Germans, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in carrying the advanced positions of Keyem and Mannekenvere; but a brilliant attack by the Belgian Army recovered Keyem the same night.

“ On the 19th the intensity of the struggle was redoubled along the entire front. The Kaiser had ordered his troops to break through, cost what it might. Three times the German hordes were repulsed. Nevertheless, in their furious impetuosity the Germans succeeded in carrying the advanced position of Beerst, while that of Keyem held out.

“ The centre of the Belgian Army was the object of violent and repeated attacks. It was then that our Staff, in order to diminish the pressure on the centre, directed the French Marine Fusiliers and a Belgian division to make a sally from Dixmude, delivering a counter-attack on the Beerst—Vladsloo front. On the evening of the 19th we held Vladsloo and the outskirts of Beerst, and were threatening the flank of the enemy army. But it was learned that important German reinforcements were arriving from the direction of Roulers, and we withdrew. Keyem was thus reoccupied by the Germans.

“ The 20th was marked by a violent bombardment of our positions.

“ At Nieuport the Germans captured the Bamburg farm. We retook it the same evening; after a fresh assault the Germans

<sup>1</sup> General X—, *La Bataille des Flanders*.



dislodged us yet again. The same day, at Dixmude, two German attacks were repelled.

“On the 21st, in the morning, a fresh attempt to carry Dixmude; and another check. The Germans commenced a formidable general offensive. In the afternoon their attacks once again spent themselves upon Schoorbakke and Dixmude; they failed before the tenacity of our troops.

“From the sea the British Fleet, which had come to our rescue, enfiladed the German forces with the murderous fire of its guns. But our enemies are courageous, and they sacrificed themselves with the fury of despair. On the 22nd of October, after a terrible bombardment, they succeeded at night in setting foot upon the left bank of the Yser at Tervaete; but we drove them into the river.

“So many repeated attacks, and extremely violent attacks, delivered by a numerous and a desperate enemy would have got the upper hand of an army less brave than ours. French reinforcements had been promised us. Our men knew this, and they held out. But these reinforcements were long in coming. On the 23rd of October, however, the first French reinforcements arrived on our left, and on the 24th the six Belgian divisions were supported by one French division and a few battalions of Territorials. On the night of the 23rd a furious attack upon Dixmude was repelled by the Marine Fusiliers<sup>1</sup> and a couple of Belgian regiments; this was the sixth time that the German Army had attacked Dixmude within a week, and at each of these repeated assaults there were frightful hand-to-hand combats and hecatombs of dead; and each time our valiant soldiers remained masters of the field.

“The area conquered by the Germans on the 23rd, lying within the bend of the Yser between Schoorbakke and Tervaete, was violently bombarded and recaptured. Here it was that a note-book was found on a German corpse in which an officer of the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Corps recorded the dreadful moral and physical sufferings endured in that hell of bullets and fire and blood; companies reduced to half their strength, units mixed together, the officers nearly all killed, famine and thirst and a sense of the uselessness of all efforts against our redoubtable little Army: such was the balance-sheet on the German side.

“Yet the Kaiser's troops seemed to rise out of the ground. Fresh reinforcements came to fill the frightful gaps made by

<sup>1</sup> Whose heroism will for ever remain legendary, and with justice.

our fire and our bayonet attacks. Foot by foot the Belgian Army defended the soil lying between the left bank of the Yser and the railway from Nieupoort to Dixmude, behind which it organised a new line of defence. It was then that the Belgians, in this pitiless conflict, summoned to their aid a terrible and invincible assistant: the inundation of low-lying lands. The canals in the valley of the Yser spilled their water into the fields. The water rose and streamed along the German trenches; while on the left bank, where the level of the soil was higher, the Belgians heroically defended their positions. The Germans, threatened with death by drowning, rushed forward in a terrible offensive, seeking to break our lines, to conquer the dry land (39). In this unprecedented attempt they succeeded, on the 30th of October, in capturing one of our points of support, the village of Ramsappelle; but this essential position was immediately recaptured by two Belgian divisions and a few French battalions. This was the *coup de grâce*. On the 31st, decimated, dejected, defeated, the Germans abandoned their project of crossing the Yser; they retreated, abandoning guns and mortars engulfed in mire, enormous quantities of weapons, thousands of corpses, and many wounded.

“In this epic struggle the Belgians, who numbered 60,000, lost a fourth part of their effectives; but they killed and wounded more Germans than there were soldiers in the Belgian Army; they had covered the left wing of the Allies, and shattered the German effort which had threatened Dunkirk and Calais.”<sup>1</sup>

This long and heroic resistance of the Belgian Army enabled the Franco-British forces to establish a solid front to the south, and thus to form a barrier upon which were shattered all the German attacks delivered during the great battle which took place in the neighbourhood of Ypres at the end of October and during the first half of September, 1914.

After this the war of the trenches began. All operations were reduced to small advances or retirements.

“It was not a fresh army which confronted the Germans on the Yser,” very justly remarked Colonel Repington in the *Times* of the 9th of December, 1914. “It was the remnant of an army, war-worn and weak in numbers. For two months and a half the Belgians at Liège, Namur, Louvain, Haelen, Aerschot, Malines, Termonde, and Antwerp had confronted the Germans almost alone, and it was only the shattered, but still unconquered, re-

<sup>1</sup> From *L'Indépendance Belge*, 10th March, 1915.



29. OSTEND, THE 13TH OF OCTOBER. (*Page 128*)



30. COUNTRY FOLK FORSAKING THEIR BURNING VILLAGES. (*Page 132*)



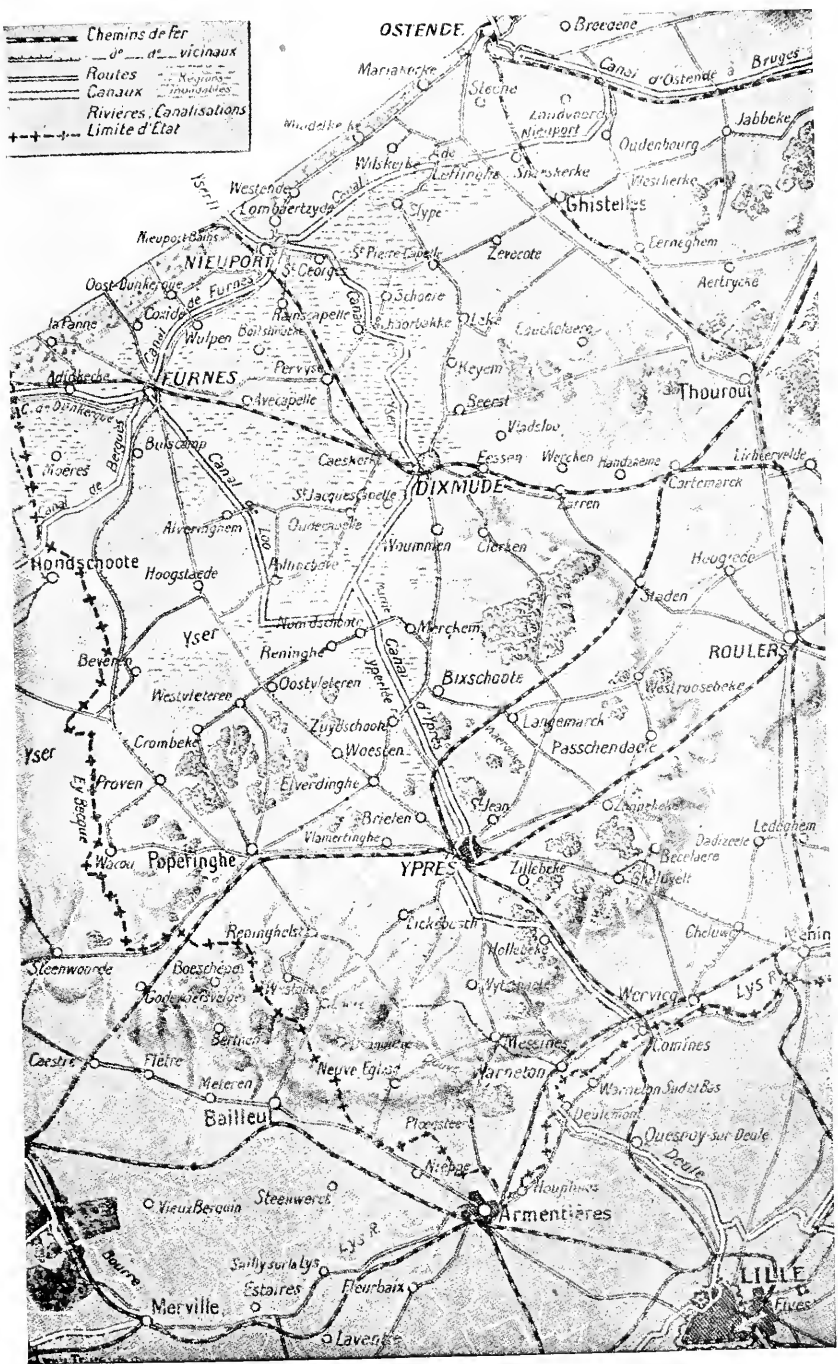
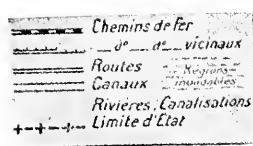
31. REFUGEES' CAMP AT BERGEN-OP-ZOOM. (Page 134)

(From a drawing by M. J. Quisthondt, who with his wife and three children lived in tent No. 2871.)

**? WIE HELPT ONS ZOEKEN ?**

					
Maria Margareta Fabius	Hendrik Fabius	Johannes Fabius geb. te Amsterdam, 21 Mei 1863	Ludwika Fabius	Maria Catharina Fabius	
					
Jan Jozua Fabius	Josephine Fabius geb. te Brussel, 10 Mei 1877	Elisabeth Fabius	Albert Fabius	Cornelia Fabius geb. te Brussel, 10 Mei 1877	Anna Fabius geb. te Brussel, 10 Mei 1877

32. WHO WILL HELP US TO SEARCH? (Page 134)



33. THE YSER COUNTRYSIDE. (Sketch-map by L. Trinquier.)



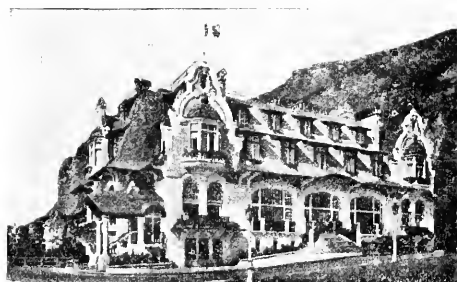
34. THE YSER BEFORE THE WAR. (Page 145)



35. WHENCE EMERGE THE RUINS OF FARMHOUSES, AND OFTEN CORPSES. (Page 145)



30. BELGIAN POSTAGE-STAMP, HAVRE. (Page 139)



37. THE HOSTELRY, SAINT-ADRESSE. (Page 138)



38. THE INUNDATIONS HAVE PRODUCED GREAT SHEETS OF WATER. (Page 145)

mains of the field army which drew up behind the Yser after the retreat from the Scheldt.

“In this fine defence, which did honour to all the troops and commanders engaged in it, the Belgians performed a signal service to the Allied cause.”

As a matter of fact, our enemies, had other advantages over us than those conferred upon them by numerical superiority and the enthusiasm of their advance: they were connected with their base by our splendid network of railways, which they had had plenty of time to repair; their supply services could be organised at leisure in Belgium, which was still a wealthy country, and for the evacuation of their wounded they had at their disposal the excellent, capacious, and very numerous hospitals which we had installed at a short distance from one another at Bruges, Ostend, and all along the coast. Our exhausted troops had no base at all; and not only could they not count upon any immediate reinforcement, but their supply services had not had time, after their hasty retreat, to install or to reorganise themselves; and lastly, to fill the cup of misfortune, they could rely only upon distant hospitals, situated out of the country.

Compare the opposing forces, then, and their means of action; then add to the account, on the one side—I need not tell you which—contempt and continual disregard for all the laws and rules of humanity and honour, and, on the other side, an absolute and religious respect for the same, and you will, I firmly believe, be amazed and full of admiration for the “remnant, shattered but still unconquered,” of this tiny Belgian Army, which checked, on the banks of the Yser, the formidable and all-powerful German Army.

\* \* \*

I have just alluded to the fresh crimes which marked the German advance to the Yser. Here are some details:—

On the 20th of October, 1914, about 3 o'clock in the morning, the Abbé Van C——, chaplain, and a few soldiers of the 12th Regiment of the Line, found on a bridge at Dixmude the body of Second Lieutenant Poncin, of their regiment. The unfortunate man had been bound “by means of an iron wire wound ten times round his legs at the level of the ankles. This operation completed, the victim was shot.”

On the same day the two little hands of a child were found upon a German taken prisoner at Pervyse. Doubtless the

monster intended to carry them home as glorious trophies of the war!

“The curés of Saint-Georges, Mannekensvere, and Vladslou are dead; the Abbé Deman, aged twenty-eight, who was vicar of Eessen, near Dixmude, was shot in his parish burying ground; the burgomaster of Handzaeme was shot because he defended his daughter from the violence of the German soldiers,” relates the Abbé V——, who was the vicar of Dixmude. . . .

On the 19th of October the Germans bombarded the little town of Roulers, where there were a few French soldiers, for three hours. Then they entered the town, in great force, with fixed bayonets. Furious fighting ensued in the streets between the invaders and the retreating French. According to their favourite tactics, the Germans seized upon some unfortunate civilians, and, in order to protect themselves, forced them to march before them. “At the least recoil, at the slightest sign of flagging,” says an inhabitant of Roulers, “they threatened us with their revolvers, shouting: ‘*Kein Mitleiden! Vorwärts!*’ (‘No pity! Forward!’) In this way several civilians—of the middle and working classes—were wounded. . . .”

Having rid themselves of the French, who had fallen back methodically, giving ground only foot by foot, the Germans avenged themselves for the losses which they had suffered upon the civilian population. A large number of houses were pillaged and afterwards burned, and a number of citizens were shot.

“The Hostens-Houtsaegeer, Debeukelaere and Dumoulin oil refineries, as well as the Dammen-Croes workshops, are in ashes,” says an eye-witness of these excesses. “The R—— brewery escaped destruction by paying the Germans—of course, without an acknowledgment—a sum of £800.” And having enumerated houses and farms which were burned, this witness adds: “Among those shot I may mention M. Deboisere, M. Dubois, M. Reynaert, M. Prencel and his wife; Mme. Dekeuke-laere, aged eighty years, was assassinated and her body thrown into the water; the proprietor of the ‘De Tramstatie’ café was disembowelled by bayonet thrusts, having first seen his son, aged sixteen, shot before his eyes. The café-keeper Borri was killed by a revolver bullet on the steps of his cellar. This done, the assassins forced his wife and his two children to look on at the burning of their house with all it contained. . . . Roulers was forced to pay a war contribution of £8,000; Rumbeke, one of £4,000. The Germans emptied all the cellars, requisitioned all



the flour, bicycles, horses, carriages, and waggons, and carried off the furniture of numbers of houses.”<sup>1</sup>

At Staden, a large village which the Germans entered on the 19th of October, at nightfall, more than 200 houses were given over to the flames and a number of civilians were shot.

At Eessen, some two miles east of Dixmude, 500 persons were imprisoned for some days in the underground vaults of a brewery. Ten of them were shot, and fifteen died of privation.

Always, too, there were infamous ruses, methods of warfare unworthy of a self-respecting army.

At Dixmude, during a night engagement, a German Officer, Graf von Pourtalès, cried to the French: “Don’t fire; we are Belgians.” Happily he was betrayed by two words of German spoken by one of his men, and was shot down.

“We have taken prisoners a captain, a lieutenant, and 200 men who ought to be shot, for it was found that they were carrying Dum-Dum bullets,” writes a French combatant to M. Emile Vedel, who tells, in *L’Illustration* for the 17th of April, 1915, the wonderful epic of Admiral Ronarch’s six battalions of marine fusiliers.

And always, and everywhere, there were spies.

“A curious thing,” says M. Vedel, “the sails of windmills begin to turn again after the exodus of the millers, and this every time our marines are preparing for any sort of movement, for the enemy manages to have his spies everywhere.”

Later a number of these individuals were unmasked. In particular, two German officers were arrested who, disguised as British doctors, were moving about Furnes unhindered. Two pretended pedlars were then arrested; one of them was an officer in the German Reserve, who had lived for many years on the banks of the Scheldt. Finally, two “Belgian” gendarmes were arrested just as they were going their rounds near Ramscapelle; they had carried their zeal to the length of soliciting their superiors to entrust them with the duty of watching the Allied lines during the night, “so as to hunt out any suspects who might have managed to slip into them.” These zealous gendarmes were Germans, who had succeeded, no one knew how, in getting themselves incorporated in the Belgian forces.

What shall we say of the villas which were built at various points of the Flemish coast, and which contained concrete plat-

<sup>1</sup> *L’Indépendance Belge*, London, 22nd January, 1915.

forms of extraordinary thickness, which were intended to support the famous heavy howitzers (40)?

What are we to say of all these clandestine preparations, save that they bear witness at once to our innocent blindness and the guilty premeditation of the Germans?

### THE DEAD CITIES OF FLANDERS

“They were not dead;<sup>1</sup> they were only asleep. And what a delightful sleep! After a stirring life they slumbered in a peace which seemed as though it could never, never again be broken. They had retained exactly what was needful for our glory and our joy. Seven or eight centuries of the past lived again in these cities, and all the vicissitudes, all the revolutions, all the catastrophes of this past, disturbed as it was, had not been able to rob them of that which Germanic *Kultur* has but now destroyed—brutally, radically, stupidly.”

DIXMUDE.—“It was a little town of 5,000 inhabitants, the capital of the arrondissement. Many people only learned of its existence from the newspapers which announced its destruction. The little town slumbered in the midst of green meadows; but this rural peace had not always been its portion; in olden times there was a famous harbour here, and an important fortress; sieges and fires desolated it; in the time of the wars of Louis XIV. its Austrian governor surrendered it without striking a blow. Since then peace had never ceased to reign there.

“After the withdrawal of the sea this flourishing maritime city of the Middle Ages gradually relapsed into the modest condition of a butter market, surrounded by rich and verdant meadows in which the milch-cows grazed. For Dixmude had come to this: it had in Flanders a renown like that of Isigny in the Norman country; its ‘Boeter Markt,’ in the angle of the great central Place, was indicated by a written sign affixed to a pole; all round was a crowd of black mantles and white bonnets, groups of grave, silent, motionless women, closely packed together, each having her basket resting on the stones before her, while waiting for customers with that resigned and obstinate patience which is a racial characteristic.

“In this Place rose the Hôtel de Ville; it was not an ancient monument; an architect of Bruges—the creator of the pretty

<sup>1</sup> Jean d’Ardenne (Léon Dommartin) in *Le Figaro*, 3rd December, 1914.

Gothic church at Ostend—had built it about 1875, replacing the building burned in the time of Charles V. But authentic dwelling-houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with stepped gables, had survived on either side of it. Many more might be discovered upon exploring the silent streets and by-ways, and the Digue, which ran beside the canal, and was planted with venerable trees, afforded a bewitching view. A delightful Béguinage stood a little apart, discreetly, as though it had sought to conceal from the gaze of the profane the immaculate whiteness of its little houses, and the coolness of its gardens, still further accentuating the note of silence and religious peace of which the city itself gave an impression.

“The monument whose disappearance is most of all to be regretted, is the church; not so much for its own sake, although it offered a curious specimen of the successive periods of the Pointed style, but on account of two masterpieces to which it gave shelter: its sixteenth-century rood-screen and its picture by Jordaens. The latter—the *Adoration of the Magi*—which adorned the chief altar, was one of the noble religious productions of the powerful Naturalist, who, even in his sacred subjects, expressed only the exuberance of life and the glory of the flesh. . . .

“All this is reduced to fragments, to dust, to smoke. It required the latest productions of science to effect such destruction.”

NIEUPOORT.—“A glorious old fortress,<sup>1</sup> and a famous old port, Nieuport was an adorable example of the deserted, silent, melancholy city, meditating, in a peace henceforth assured, upon the memories of a warlike history.

“Heine said of the dogs of Aix-la-Chapelle that they had the air of imploring the traveller to kick them, in order to obtain a little distraction. Heine never knew Nieuport. But if the dogs there were bored, the mind attuned to dreams found absolute freedom and the full scope of its receptive powers, and no voice rose above that of the witnesses of the past.

“Of these witnesses the most famous was the church of Notre Dame. Its three spacious naves retained the traces of innumerable mutilations, and on its ancient walls the tombstones of all ages, with their suggested epitaphs, told the story of the city under its different rulers through a period of six centuries.

<sup>1</sup> Jean d'Ardenne, *Le Figaro*, 27th December, 1914.

The iconoclasts of the sixteenth century left only the bare walls; but it survived all disasters. However, the soldiers of Wilhelm II. got the better of it.

“The neighbouring market-hall, a monument of the prosperity of Nieupoort during the Burgundian period which preceded the Spanish domination, was built between 1480 and 1484. It was a curious and delightful building of whitish brick, which was cut and moulded, with a high-pitched roof with a rail and a double row of dormer windows. Its lateral front, which faced the market-place, presented a series of projecting gables. In the midst of the principal front rose a square belfry with a graceful outline. The market-hall shared the fate of the church.

“The Hôtel de Ville, in the Grand’ Rue, dated from 1513. It contained precious pictures, portraits, and documents relating to the ancient Nieupoort. I think these objects may have been preserved, but the Hôtel is in ruins, with the majority of the houses round about it. Many of them still had the stepped gables of the Renaissance period. The Orphanage and the Hôtel de l’Espérance were among the number. Others were examples of the old fishermen’s dwellings—simple one-storied buildings with tiled roofs, from which rose tall dormer windows—which seem natural products of the soil, so well do they adapt themselves to it and harmonise with it. But all contributed to the exquisite vision which a brutal aggression has now destroyed.

“Only the Templar’s Tower—the remnant of the ancient convent of the Order—the only relic of the primitive city, created and fortified in the twelfth century by the Count of Flanders, Philip of Alsace—seems to have resisted the supreme aggression. Its massive structure, the thickness of its walls, have always preserved it. It rises, isolated, from the ancient rampart; a path leads to it across the shorn grass of the glacis. From the fifteenth century it formed a portion of the enclosing walls. In 1826 the Dutch, providing the town with a new system of bastions, used it as an arsenal. In 1856 the fortress was dismantled and the old town was abandoned. It now represents the phantom of a remote past in the midst of ruins.”

YPRES.—“ . . . The indisputable queen<sup>1</sup> of these beautiful forsaken cities was Ypres, with its enormous market-place, bor-

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, in *Le Figaro*. The above translation is from “The Wrack of the Storm,” by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by A. Teixeira de Mattos, pub. Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1916, p. 28 *et seq.*

dered by little dwelling-houses with stepped gables, and its prodigious market buildings, which occupied one whole side of the immense oblong. This market-place haunted for ever the memory of those who had seen it, were it but once, while waiting to change trains; it was so unexpected, so magical, so dream-like almost, in its disproportion to the rest of the town. While the ancient city, whose life had withdrawn itself from century to century, was gradually shrinking all round it, the Grand' Place itself remained an immovable, gigantic, magnificent witness to the might and opulence of old, when Ypres was, with Gand and Bruges, one of the three queens of the Western world, one of the most strenuous centres of human industry and activity and the cradle of our great liberties. Such as it was yesterday—alas, that I cannot say as it is to-day!—this great square, with the enormous, unspeakably harmonious mass of these market buildings, at once powerful and graceful, wild, gloomy, proud, yet genial, was one of the most wonderful and perfect spectacles that could be seen in any town on this old earth of ours. While of a different order of architecture, built of other elements and standing under sterner skies, it should have been as precious to man, as sacred, and as intangible as the Piazza di San Marco in Venice, the Signoria in Florence, or the Piazza del Duomo in Pisa. It constituted a peerless specimen of art, which at all times wrung a cry of admiration from the most indifferent—an ornament which men hoped was imperishable, one of those things of beauty which, in the words of the poet, are a joy for ever. . . .”

“The doorway of the Halles is a good hundred feet longer than Notre-Dame de Paris, seen from the side,” says Michelet. “And there is something which we do not find in Notre Dame, nor in any other monument of the Middle Ages: this is, that all the windows and all the ornaments of the Market-Hall of Ypres are rigorously of the same style—the triple-rose style of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—so that all this fairyland of stone seems to have gushed forth from a single source. . . . A structure so spacious, so colossal as this would not have been intelligible had it been only a simple municipal hotel, or the seat of sovereignty, or even a place of popular assembly in this rainy climate. The arrangement of the building in itself indicates a different function; it is in two storeys. The first floor was intended to house the handicrafts of weaving—the weaving of cloths and serges. The ground floor was occupied by the comb-

ers, carders, clothworkes, fullers, and dyers. The commune, at once the protector and the judge of their work, approved or rejected it without appeal.

“In the year 1200 the tower of Ypres was commenced. In 1304, over a century later, the whole colossal building was thrown open to industry.”<sup>1</sup>

“In the finest of the halls of the Clothmarket<sup>2</sup> there was a vast mural painting, which was strikingly effective. It represented the terrible plague which, in the middle of the fourteenth century, desolated, ravaged, and destroyed this flourishing city, which then contained 200,000 inhabitants. In this painting one saw a man, one of the few survivors who, with haggard eyes and terror-stricken face, is fleeing at the top of his speed, casting a last glance at the accursed city where no living person would henceforth linger. The title of the fresco was ‘The Death of Ypres.’

“The Death of Ypres—I have just seen it take place before my eyes. The Kaiser’s shells and the savagery of his army have at last attained the desired result. The Cloth Hall and the magnificent Cathedral of St. Martin, which stood close by, and which were coldly and ferociously aimed at by the German guns, have been set on fire, and are now only a heap of ruins.

“It was 3 o’clock in the afternoon, and I was returning from forwarding an order some distance to the north of Ypres, when my attention was drawn to a high column of very dense smoke which was rising into the heavens.

“Astonished and anxious, I made for the town as quickly as possible. At the entrance of one of the suburbs, at the railway-crossing, there was, trailing on the ground, a quantity of iron wire torn from the telegraph poles. As I slackened my pace an old man appeared on a doorstep. ‘They have burned the Cloth Hall,’ (41) he told me, with an expression of infinite sadness.

“Now I was in the Grand’ Place, and the horror of the thing was suddenly apparent. The whole of the interior of the building was nothing but a gigantic furnace. Only the outer shell, the Gothic side-walls, with the delicate curves of their arches, their mullioned windows, the statues which adorned the façades, and the light turrets which flanked the angles, were still resisting. But how long would this last? For the whole roof, outer

<sup>1</sup> Michelet, *Sur les chemins de l’Europe*.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from the narrative of an officer of the Staff of the Reserve of the French Army, published in *Le Figaro*, 27th November, 1914, under the heading, *La Mort d’Ypres*.

and inner, was afire. It was a rare and precious example of carpenters' work, such as the artists of the Middle Ages knew how to construct; a prodigious forest of beams, skilfully clamped and jointed, of joists and rafters. . . .

“ . . . Now the fire was gaining more and more. . . . The flames bit greedily at the ancient stones, which were all disjointed; through the thousand openings of the façade they began to lick at the statues, which seemed to be bound upon some infernal pyre. From time to time one of the huge beams would detach itself from the roof and collapse with a great crash.

“ A cloud of sparks escaped from the furnace, whirling in eddies. These sparks, falling upon the houses opposite, did their work. It was not long before the conflagration was raging on every side. . . . ”

After this first bombardment Ypres was subjected to several others, which were equally devoid of any strategic interest. But it was not until the latter part of April, 1915, that the Germans gave it the *coup de grâce*, and finally murdered the dying city, which for five months they had been slowly and scientifically torturing with occasional projectiles.

Mr. Arnold Bennett terminates by the following reflections a striking description of this “ dead city,” through which he wandered for several hours without encountering a living soul:—

Ypres is entitled to rank as the very symbol of the German achievement in Belgium. It stood upon the path to Calais; but that was not its crime. Even if German guns had not left one brick upon another in Ypres, the path to Calais would not thereby have been made any easier for the well-shod feet of the apostles of might, for Ypres never served as a military stronghold and could not possibly have so served; and had the Germans known how to beat the British Army in front of Ypres, they could have marched through the City as easily as a hyena through a rice-crop. The crime of Ypres was that it lay handy for the extreme irritation of an army which, with three times the men and three times the guns, and thirty times the vainglorious conceit, could not shift the trifling force opposed to it last autumn. Quite naturally the boasters were enraged. In the end, something had to give way. And the Cathedral and Cloth Hall and other defenceless splendours of Ypres gave way, not the trenches. The yearners after Calais did themselves no good by exterminating fine architecture and breaking up innocent homes, but they did experience the relief of smashing something. Therein lies the psychology of the affair of Ypres, and the reason why the Ypres of history has come to a sudden close.

A few miles on the opposite sides of the town were the German artillery positions, with guns well calculated to destroy Cathedrals and Cloth Halls. Around these guns were educated men who had spent years

—indeed, most of their lives—in the scientific study of destruction. Under these men were slaves who, solely for the purposes of destruction, had ceased to be the free citizens they once were. These slaves were compelled to carry out any order given to them, under pain of death. They had, indeed, been explicitly told on the highest earthly authority that, if the order came to destroy their fathers and their brothers, they must destroy their fathers and their brothers: the instruction was public and historic. . . .

The whole organism has worked and worked well, for the destruction of all that was beautiful in Ypres, and for the break-up of an honourable tradition extending over at least eight centuries. The operation was the direct result of an order. The order had been carefully weighed and considered. The successful execution of it brought joy into many hearts high and low. "Another shell in the Cathedral!" And men shook hands ecstatically around the excellent guns. "A hole in the tower of the Cloth Hall!" General rejoicing! "The population has fled, and Ypres is a desert!" Inexpressible enthusiasm among specially educated men, from the highest to the lowest. So it must have been. There was no hazard about the treatment of Ypres. The shells did not come into Ypres out of nowhere. Each was the climax of a long, deliberate effort originating in the brains of the responsible leaders.<sup>1</sup>

FURNES.—Of the four venerable cities drowsing in the plain of the Yser Furnes alone was as yet not mortally wounded. Completely aroused by the uproar close at hand, suddenly animated by an intense life, this little town of 6,500 inhabitants enjoyed for some months the assuredly unforeseen privilege of being, in a sense, the capital of independent Belgium. Furnes became acquainted with military convoys, with motor-cars passing at full speed, with the incessant coming and going of troops, with convoys of prisoners. Its Grand' Place—exquisitely contained by the Hôtel de Ville and the Palais de Justice, delightful specimens of Flemish architecture, and by delicious gabled dwelling-houses—was often the scene of fascinating and exciting reviews, in which Belgian troops marched past, and also French or British troops, both English and Colonial.

It was at Furnes that the King of Belgium, on the 2nd of November, 1914, received a visit from the President of the French Republic, and here again, two days later, he received at the hands of King George the investiture of the Order of the Garter. It was in the midst of the Grand' Place—a scene well worthy of such ceremonies—that our Sovereign conferred the National Order upon the colours of the most intrepid of his regiments, while at the same time he decorated the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers who, brave among the

<sup>1</sup> "The Unique City." *Illustrated London News*, 25th September, 1915.



brave, had displayed most valour in the course of the "affairs" in which these regiments had distinguished themselves.

Since November, 1914, Furnes has frequently experienced the horrors of bombardment, and finally had to be almost completely evacuated. The troops avoid it now, in order to give the Germans no least pretext for fresh bombardments, and there are barely a few hundred inhabitants remaining: tenacious, not to be uprooted. Furnes has relapsed into slumber.

### THE BELGIAN ARMY OF TO-DAY

After the sanguinary battle of the Yser the Belgian military authorities left no stone unturned to reconstitute our Army after its cruel ordeal.

The efforts of the King and his lieutenants were crowned with success. The Belgian Army, which entered the field on the 4th of August, 1914, with six divisions of infantry and one division of cavalry, has consisted, since the first few months of 1915, of six divisions of infantry and two divisions of cavalry. Each unit possesses its normal effective and the necessary *cadre*. The artillery is at its full strength; it has even been reinforced by guns of large calibre; and the number of machine-guns has been sensibly increased. All the supply services are perfectly organised, and, lastly, many thousands of young men, many of whom have already risked their lives in escaping from occupied Belgium, are now trained in our instruction camps, which are situated in Brittany and in Normandy.

Here is what a neutral observer, M. Georges Batault, says of our troops:—"The Belgian Army, whose moral condition is excellent—one cannot imagine more resolute and energetic troops—is admirably revictualled and abundantly provided with artillery and munitions.

"I expected to find an army diminished by privations, decimated by the terrible battles which it has had to sustain, and by the rigours of winter; I found an army composed of vigorous and resolute men, perfectly equipped, animated by a spirit of valour and heroism which never belies itself.

"On the other hand, thanks to the patriotism of the young Belgians and the measures taken by the Government, recruiting continues, and fresh troops are being trained in several camps, which makes it possible to fill gaps as they are formed and to maintain effectives at full strength.

“Despite all obstacles and menaces, the Belgian Army continues to exist, stronger than it has ever been, proving the vitality of the country and the indomitable tenacity of its sons.

“The spectacle which it offers to humanity is a noble one, and one encouraging to small nations, for it proves that courage and determination are always stronger than adversity.”<sup>1</sup>

Even when it was reduced to half its strength, this valiant little army never failed for a moment to hold its place in the van.

Since the Battle of the Yser it has been occupying and guarding, without faltering, its share of the “Western front.” At the time of the violent thrust which the Germans made toward Ypres—behind a curtain of poison-gas—the Belgians played a most effectual part in the defence.

Yes; as my eminent friend, M. Carton de Wiart, recently remarked, with patriotic pride, it is there, on the Yser, “on this strip of sacred soil to which all our vital energy and all our certitude of victory cling, that our little army, whose gaps are daily filled by fresh recruits, must be seen. What a determination to hold out, an unshakable determination, transferred like a torch from the hand of the dying to that of the survivor. . . . And what pride to serve under a young King who never, on the Yser any more than at Antwerp or at Hofstade, leaves his army for a day nor an hour (44), who has no better palace for the moment than a modest presbytery; but who braves with his soldiers the dangers of the front and the trenches, and whose name will be blessed so long as honour shall blossom in the hearts of men.”

The youngest soldier of this national army is Prince Léopold Duke of Brabant, born in Brussels on the 3rd of November, 1901, who enlisted in the ranks as a simple infantry soldier at the beginning of April, 1915.

It was the 12th Regiment of the Line—a wonderful regiment which has covered itself with glory in many and many a battle—which the young Prince joined, at his own entreaty, on the occasion of the King his father’s birthday. Do not imagine that this was the result of a mere juvenile caprice, nor even that of a very touching filial regard. Prince Léopold of Belgium is the worthy son of this model King, who is the very incarnation of civic duty; this philologist and sociologist of whom Bergson could say that because of him “We shall henceforth feel prouder of being a philosopher.” The children of Albert and Elizabeth

<sup>1</sup> *Gazette de Lausanne*, 8th of May 1915.

of Belgium never "played at soldiers," never wore any sort of uniform; and if the eldest has decided, although so young, to become a soldier, it was due to a decision which was duly deliberated; because he was moved by a very high sense of civic duty. This is why the ceremony of the enrolment of the young Prince was, despite a great simplicity of form, imbued with a very profound and very moving moral significance.

An eye-witness of this noble patriotic manifestation gave a charming account of it in the *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, from which I quote these few lines:—"The King spoke. He spoke the proud words of a general who is giving a soldier to the army, and also the words, full of feeling, of a father who is entrusting his young son to his elders. And when the King had finished speaking, and the Prince, with a deliberate step, leaving his parents, had taken his place in the ranks of the 1st Company, ah! then indeed their heads remained erect, and the soldiers continued to gaze straight in front; but there were tears in their eyes, and their lips vibrated with a hoarse acclamation. . . ."

Not only is our Army not annihilated, as our treacherous and implacable enemies have so often rumoured, but it has been possible to spare from it, and to send to Russia, the best of our gunsmiths, whose reputation is world-wide. The skilled technique and the methodical spirit of these Belgian auxiliaries are disciplining the Russian effort, and their assistance is enabling our Allies on the Eastern front very largely to increase their output of arms and munitions.

What is more, a large detachment of the Belgian corps of armoured motor-cars, armed with machine-guns and guns of larger calibre, is also with the Russian Army, where it will strike the Germans many a blow!

### THE QUEEN'S HOSPITAL

During the tragic days at the end of October, 1914, the majority of the Belgian wounded had to be transported to Calais, where Dr. Depage, the eminent Brussels surgeon, had hastily installed the Jeanne d'Arc Hospital. Now Calais is over forty miles from the Yser, and one may imagine the suffering that some of our brave fellows endured in the course of this long and difficult journey.

In addition to the splendid hospitals which are at our disposal in France and England, it was therefore important that we

should have a well-organised hospital close to the front, where major operations could be performed and serious and urgent cases treated. Accordingly the "Ocean" Hospital was installed in a huge hotel standing by the sea-shore at La Panne. It was established as a result of the beneficent initiative of the Queen (45), and our soldiers call it the "Queen's Hospital."

This hospital, by adding improvement to improvement, has become a model of its kind. It now comprises, in addition to the principal building, which contains 150 beds, a number of portable wards, which contain altogether nearly a thousand beds, ten villas, which have been turned into wards for contagious diseases, a pharmacy, a laboratory, a linen-store, a laundry, a clothing-store, and various other stores. Simple but well-arranged baths have been installed close at hand; nearly a thousand soldiers can be accommodated in the course of the day. "Everywhere," writes M. Georges Paquot, who has examined this fine hospital in detail, "we find the same love of order and hygiene, combined with the most delicate sense of philanthropy. Thus, while the wounded are in hospital, their torn and bloody garments are disinfected with formol in an oven, washed, repaired, and at need replaced. Professor R. Petrucci, secretary to Dr. Depage, showed us a room in which, arranged in rows upon sets of shelves, there were more than 150 sacks containing the clothing of patients now under treatment in the hospital; there was not the slightest odour. Each soldier, as he leaves, receives his little bundle of clothes thoroughly cleansed and in perfect order; he understands that he is being looked after, that his services are appreciated, and his heart is warmed by the knowledge and his enthusiasm stimulated."

Dr. Depage was at first actively assisted by his wife. Then Mme. Depage courageously departed to America, where she wished to collect funds for the Belgian Red Cross, and particularly for the Queen's Hospital.

Active, enterprising, and a good organiser, she had already collected nearly 100,000 dollars, when a Belgian friend who was in the States, and who was returning to Europe, urged her to return with her. "I should very much like to do so," replied Mme. Depage, "because I am anxious to see my husband and my children again; but I consider that my task will not be finished until I can take home a round sum of 500,000 francs for our wounded."

The noble and courageous woman finally obtained her £20,000, and sailed on the 1st of May, 1915, on the *Lusitania*.

To-day she is at rest for ever in that little corner of free Belgium in which she had worked so much and so well. . . . Her name will always be mentioned with emotion among those of the noblest heroes of our great epic, for she was heroic to the end; after the first explosion—which was already fatal—instead of throwing herself into a lifeboat, as she was urged to do, she lingered to dress the wounds of a sailor who had just been wounded by her side. . . .

It was in the Queen's Hospital that my dear brother died, after long sufferings. He was wounded by a shell-splinter on the 5th of May; he died on the 2nd of August, 1915. He had remained only three weeks at Cherbourg; as soon as he could he rejoined his beloved Carabineers on the Yser. He had just been appointed Officer of the Order of Léopold, for having—as the "Golden Book of the Belgian People" relates—"from the 5th to the 7th of April, 1915, without a moment of repose, commanded his battalion, engaged before Noordschote, Drie-Grachten, and the position of La Nacelle, in a hurricane of machine-gun fire."

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Many of the wounded, alas! lose, for the rest of their lives, all physical aptitude for the calling which was theirs before the war.

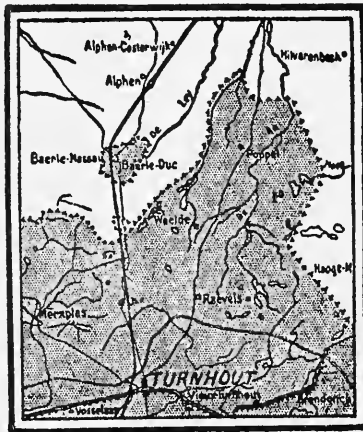
The "Belgian School for those Seriously Wounded in the War," established on a large estate at Port-Villez, near Vernon, the "Belgian Dépôt for War Cripples" at Sainte-Adresse, and another institute of the kind at Mortain for crippled "intellectuals," look after these unfortunate men from the moment they leave hospital, give them asylum, and, having with discernment assisted them to make choice of a new trade, make them follow this or that course of professional instruction. And thanks to these institutions, which in some sort form a corollary to the work of the Queen, the majority of these victims of duty will be able, while earning an honourable living, to contribute, with their more fortunate compatriots, to the material renovation of the country. They will still be useful citizens.

#### THE UNINVADED BELGIAN TERRITORY

The uninvented Belgian territories are not limited to the region of the Yser where the German offensive has been broken. They

also include the small *enclave* of Baerle-Duc and our vast African domain.

*Baerle-Duc* is a small Belgian commune enclosed by Dutch territory, about two miles from the frontier. It is adjacent to Baerle-Nassau, which is Dutch, and through which the railway from Turnhout to Tilbourg passes. A strange situation, in truth, and infinitely more abnormal than it appears on the map here reproduced. In reality the two communes are dovetailed together in such a manner that it is impossible for the burgomaster of Baerle-Duc to go from his villa to the communal offices without several times crossing Dutch territory. The railway station is Dutch, but the stationmaster's garden is on Belgian soil; while some houses are even partly Belgian and partly Dutch!



THE BELGIAN ENCLAVE IN HOLLAND.

Baerle-Duc, which, administratively speaking, is a portion of the arrondissement of Turnhout (province of Antwerp), has an area of about four square miles. Before the war it contained about 250 houses, which sheltered a thousand inhabitants; but since the invasion of the province of Antwerp the population of this curious *enclave* is largely increased.

And since the 4th of August, 1914, the black, yellow, and red flag has never ceased to float above the "communal house" of this Belgian village, whose peculiar geographical situation makes it, in a somewhat ironical manner, immune from the abhorred occupation.

### BELGIAN CONGO

Actuated by a fine sense of humanity, our rulers did not wish our conflict with Germany to spread to Africa.

On the 7th of August, 1914, M. Davignon telegraphed to this effect to the Belgian Ministers in Paris and London, and on the same day he despatched a letter, which was more explicit, and of which I quote the essential portion:—

While instructing the Governor-General of the Congo to take measures of defence upon the common frontiers of the Belgian colony and the German colonies of East Africa and the Cameroons, the King's Government has requested that high official to abstain from all offensive action against these colonies.

Considering the civilising mission common to the colonising nations, the Belgian Government desires, indeed, out of regard for humanity, not to extend the field of hostilities to Central Africa. It will not, therefore, take the initiative in inflicting such an ordeal upon civilisation in this region, and the military forces which it possesses there will not enter into action unless they are obliged to repel a direct attack upon its African possessions.

I should be extremely glad to know if the Government of the Republic (or of His Britannic Majesty) sees matters in the same light, and in that case whether it intends, on the occasion of the present conflict, to avail itself of Article 2 of the Berlin Act to place those of its colonies which are included in the Congo basin (as delimited by convention) in a condition of neutrality.

But in Africa, as in Europe, we were drawn into the struggle despite ourselves. In Africa, as in Europe, it was the Germans who struck the first blow. Only, by a just restitution, while Germany lost all her colonies one by one, ours is left to us, and remains intact. Not only have all the attempts hitherto made by the German colonial forces to enter the Belgian Congo been attended by pitiful failure, but the Belgo-Congolese troops have participated, with valour and success, in the French and British operations in the Cameroons and in German East Africa.

"At the end of October, 1914," we read in a French official Note, "the Belgian steamer *Luxemburg*, manned by a detachment of 130 sharpshooters, with three guns and a machine-gun, played a very important part in the operations which were developing against the Sangha at N'dzimon. . . . The steamer, proceeding less than 150 yards from the enemy's trenches, under a veritable hail of projectiles, stopped at a suitable point to disembark the Belgian sharpshooters. The fight was desperate; it was necessary to struggle for three days and a night before we could hoist our flag over the position. . . . It was by a furious bayonet charge that the Allied troops eventually forced the enemy to evacuate his last trenches. In this superb charge, under the fire of machine-guns, and despite the impediments of a marshy soil, the Belgian detachment was admirable. . . . The capture of the post of N'dzimon was the fortunate completion of the series of operations carried out in the Sangha, which made us the masters of almost the entire region. From this moment

the assistance of the Belgians became permanent. The Belgian contingent attached to the Sangha column was continually reinforced. It increased from 180 to 430, the effective total of the column being 1,100 men; then, at the beginning of January, it rose to 580. It took part in all the important operations which ensued along the Middle N'goko, terminating in the capture of Tiboundi and Molundu, and recently of Lernié, after the severe battles of Monso and Besam."<sup>1</sup>

On the 8th of February, 1916, an official Belgian *communiqué* from Havre stated:—

“The Commandant of the Belgian troops which are participating in the Cameroons campaign announces that a detachment under his orders reached Yaoundé on the 28th of January last, when it effected its junction with the French and British forces.

“The flags of the three nations have been run up over the fort and military honours rendered to them.”

On the side of East Africa our colonial troops are defending a frontier of more than 320 miles. They have repelled the German troops in more than ten actions, although the latter had made excellent preparations and were very well armed, and at present they have penetrated into German territory at a number of points. On the southern portion of Lake Tanganyika a Belgian steamer recently took part, with British steamers, in the capture of the German steamer *Kingani*.

As for the Belgian Congo, it is intact, and it therefore follows that, in spite of all, the Belgian colours are still floating above a territory four times as large as that of the predatory Empire which intended to commence the conquest of the world with Belgium!

Once transferred to Havre, the bureaux of our Colonial Office got busily to work again. Under the vigorous impetus given by the King and the Minister, M. Renkin, they have done so much and so excellently that it will soon be necessary to open a branch in London, the present centre of the great Belgo-Congolese enterprises. Thus, in spite of the unspeakable difficulties which have



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COLONIAL REVIEW

<sup>1</sup> *Le Temps*, 10th September, 1915.



enveloped the mother-country, the administration of the colony and the progress of colonial affairs have not been sensibly affected. To read the *Tribune Congolaise*, which now appears in London instead of Antwerp, one would hardly realise that Belgium is in the midst of a war with the most formidable military Power which has ever existed. The fine steamers of the *Compagnie belge maritime du Congo* continue their sailings, with the sole difference that Hull is for the time the home port of the line. The Congo railways and river services are still running. Officials, officers, missionaries, and business men come and go as before. In a word, the Belgian Congo is doing "business as usual."

It would be childish to pretend that none of the numerous Belgo-Congolese enterprises are suffering from the unparalleled crisis which has so sorely wounded the mother-country as an active producer. Such a result was inevitable for most of them. But the mere fact that these enterprises still survive, that they continue in working order—is not this a fine testimonial to the fundamental qualities of our nation: energy in action and a persevering will?

## IX

### IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM

THERE are 7,000,000 Belgians in those parts of Belgium which are occupied by the Germans. Free but lately as but few peoples were free, they have now, for more than two years, been sequestered, immured in their own country, or even in their towns or villages if they are capable of military service. A wall of steel and fire on the one hand, and on the other a fence of iron wire through which a powerful electric current circulates, and along which pitiless sentinels are posted (52)—these divide them from civilisation. Morally and materially these seven millions of human beings are living a tragedy whose full horror it is difficult to conceive.

“The despairing rumours of this tragedy,” says Maeterlinck, “reach us only through the fissures of the bloody wall which isolates it from the rest of the world. . . . All Belgium is now no more than a vast Prussian prison, in which all cries are cruelly and methodically stifled, and where no other voices are heard but those of the gaolers. Only now and again, after a thousand adventures, after passing through a thousand dangers, a letter from a kinsman, from a captive friend, reaches us from the depth of this immense *in pace* and brings us a gleam of authentic truth. . . .”

Considering the material situation of our poor country, my eminent fellow-countryman continues:—“In a country before all else industrial, which normally, in time of peace, was already producing less than a quarter of the wheat necessary for its consumption, the enemy has systematically requisitioned everything, seized upon everything for the maintenance of his armies, and has sent into Germany what he could not consume on the spot. The result of so monstrous a manœuvre may readily be imagined:

in all this territory, lately so fortunate and so wealthy, to-day held to ransom, pillaged, and pillaged again, ravaged, devastated by steel and by fire, there is left—nothing.”

Words, perhaps you may say? Exaggerations? We shall see!

### PROCLAMATIONS

To give us some idea of what the German occupation of Belgium means, nothing can exceed the value of the notices, decrees, and proclamations drafted or inspired by the German rulers themselves. These are reliable and irrefutable witnesses.

They refer to all the manifestations of the life of the oppressed nation, and they are extremely numerous; a volume the size of this would certainly not suffice to contain them all. I will therefore confine myself to reproducing a few, which I shall comment upon only as far as is necessary. Read them attentively:—

On the 21st of August, 1914, a fortnight after the Germans had entered the city of Liège, the burgomaster, M. Kleyer, informed his fellow-citizens (by order) that:

The front doors of houses must remain open all night.

Windows overlooking the street must be lit up, shutters and blinds remaining undrawn.

All movement in the streets must cease at 7 o'clock German time (6 p.m. by Belgian time).

A proclamation posted up at Namur, on the 25th of August, 1914, signed by the “Commandant of the Fortress,” von Bülow:

French and Belgian soldiers must be given up as prisoners of war before 4 o'clock in front of the prison. Citizens who do not obey will be condemned to *penal servitude for life in Germany*. A rigorous search of buildings will commence at 4 o'clock. Any soldier found will be immediately *shot*.

Arms, powder, dynamite must be given in at 4 o'clock. Penalty: *shooting*. Citizens knowing of any hiding-place must warn the burgomaster under penalty of *penal servitude for life*.

All streets will be occupied by a German guard, who will take ten hostages in each street, whom they will keep under observation. *Should any disturbance occur in any street the ten hostages will be shot.*

Doors must not be locked, and from 8 o'clock at night three windows must be lit up in each house.

It is forbidden to be in the streets after 8 o'clock. . . . &c., &c.

On the 30th of August the following placard, signed by the valiant Burgomaster of Brussels, was posted in the city. You would not ask me to comment upon it:

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*LE GOUVERNEUR ALLEMAND*

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**Le Gouverneur Allemand de  
la Ville de Liège, Lieutenant-Géné-  
ral von Kolewe, a fait afficher hier  
l'avis suivant :**

*• Aux habitants de la Ville de Liège.*

- Le Bourgmestre de Bruxelles a fait savoir au
- Commandant allemand que le Gouvernement
- français a déclaré au Gouvernement belge
- l'impossibilité de l'assister offensivement en
- aucune manière, vu qu'il se voit lui-même forcé
- à la défensive. •

**J'oppose à cette affirmation le  
démenti le plus formel.**

(Cité par le 30 août 1914)

*Le Bourgmestre,*  
**ADOLPHE MAX.**

BURGOMASTER MAX GIVES THE LIE TO VON  
KOLEWE.<sup>1</sup>

The Germans replied on the following day with this bilingual placard:

<sup>1</sup> "City of Brussels.—The German Governor of the City of Liège, Lieutenant-General von Kolewe, yesterday caused the following notice to be posted up:—

"To the inhabitants of the City of Liège.—The Burgomaster of Brussels has informed the German Commandant that the French Government has declared to the Belgian Government that it is impossible for it to assist the said Government offensively in any manner, seeing that it finds itself compelled to assume the defensive.—I meet this assertion with the most explicit denial.—The Burgomaster, Adolphe Max."

# Wichtige Bekanntmachung

Ich verbiete hierdurch auf das strengste einen jeden Maueranschlag, auch von seiten der Stadtverwaltung, ohne meine ausdrückliche Genehmigung.

Brüssel, 51. August 1914.

*Der Militärgouverneur.*

(Fürs.) **VON LUETTWITZ,**  
Generalmajor.

# Avis important

Il est strictement défendu, aussi à la municipalité de la ville, de publier des affiches sans avoir reçu ma permission spéciale.

Bruxelles, le 51 août 1914.

*Le Gouverneur militaire allemand.*

(Signé) **VON LUETTWITZ,**  
Général.

A PLACARD PROHIBITING PLACARDS.<sup>1</sup>

A proclamation, dated Brussels, 2nd of September, 1914, informs the Belgians that:

By the order of the 26th of August, 1914, given at the General Headquarters of the Army, His Majesty the Emperor of Germany has deigned to appoint as Governor-General in Belgium His Excellency the Field-Marshal Baron von der Goltz, and as chief of the Civil Administration of the Governor-General His Excellency Herr von Sandt.

On the 6th of September, 1914, Major Dieckmann installed himself in the Château des Bruyères, at Grivegnée, not far from the Fléron fort. He immediately had posted in Grivegnée and several of the neighbouring communes a long proclamation in which are enumerated the offences against German soldiers of which a Belgian civilian can be guilty.

<sup>1</sup> "Important notice.—It is strictly forbidden, to the municipality of the city also (*sic*), to publish placards without having received my express permission.—The German Military Governor, von Luettwitz, General."

# Commune de Grivegnée

## AVIS TRÈS IMPORTANT

Monsieur le Major-Commandant DIECKMANN, du Château des Bruyères, me prie de porter ce qui suit à la connaissance des habitants :

Bataillon DIECKMANN.

Château des Bruyères, le 6 Septembre 1914.

A la présente discussion assistaient :

- 1) M. le Curé FRYNS, de Bois-de-Breux ;
- 2) M. le Curé FRANSSSEN, de Beyne ;
- 3) M. le Curé LEPROPRES, de Heusy ;
- 4) M. le Curé PAQUAY, de Grivegnée ;
- 5) M. le Bourgmestre DEJARDIN, de Deyne ;
- 6) M. le Bourgmestre HODEIGE, de Grivegnée ;
- 7) M. le Major DIECKMANN ;
- 8) M. le Lieutenant d. R. REIL.

Par M. le Major DIECKMANN, porte ce qui suit à la connaissance des personnes présentes :

1. — Jusqu'au 6 Septembre 1914, à 6 heures de relevé, toutes les armes, munitions, armoires, pièces d'armes qui sont encore en possession des citoyens seront rendues au Général des Bruyères. Cela est en la forme que sera possible de la part de part II sera faite en place ou par les armes, à moins qu'il prouve qu'il a été par lui-même.

2. — Tous les habitants des maisons occupées des localités de Deyne-Housy, Grivegnée, Bois-de-Breux, Péro, doivent rentrer chez eux à partir de la chute de jour (ou de moment) à partir de 7 heures de soir — heures allemandes. Les maisons particulières seront à l'arrière sans exception que quelques y sera au pied. Les portes d'entrée seront fermées. Cela est en la combinaison, plus à ces pour répondre l'empêcher à des personnes d'entrer. Toute violation quelconque aura comme conséquence la mort.

3. — Le Commandant ne doit rencontrer aucune difficulté dans ces visites domiciliaires. Ce est pris, sans exception, de montrer toutes les pièces de la maison. Quiconque y opposera sera puni sévèrement.

4. — A partir de 7 septembre, à 6 heures de matin, je prendrai l'occupation des habitations de Deyne-Housy, Grivegnée, Bois-de-Breux, par les personnes qui y demeurent précédemment, sous l'empire que aucune détermination formelle de recevoir ou leur départ de présence pour les habitations occupées.

5. — Pour venir la chambre qui il est en la possession de cette proclamation, les Bureaux de Deyne-Housy et de Grivegnée doivent donner immédiatement des listes de personnes qui sont venues par autorisation de 24 heures, comme indiqué en l'art de l'arrêté. Le 6 septembre 1914, pour la première fois, de 6 heures de matin jusqu'à 1. Septembre 1. midi.

Il y a de la part de ces choses à ce que la population qui commencent précéder en bonne manière en toutes circonstances.

Pendant la nuit, il est sévèrement défendu de produire des signaux lumineux quelconques. La circulation des véhicules est autorisée que de 7 heures de matin à 6 heures de soir (heures allemandes).

6. — Je désire, lors des listes qui il seront occasion, les personnes qui, de nuit à un jour et nuit de l'autre jour, ont à apporter comme armes. Si le remplissement n'a pas lieu en temps utile, l'usage encourt le point de mort si le remplissement n'est pas fait.

7. — Comme signal, tout placard ou première ligne, les Pères, les Bourgmestres et les autres Membres de l'Administration.

8. — Je désire que tous les avis qui circulent dans ma administration, généralement dans des localités de Deyne-Housy, Péro, Bois-de-Breux, Grivegnée, l'empêcher de leur diffusion auprès des soldats allemands, et dans leur absence, en portant la main à la tête comme par le soldat militaire. La ce de dessus, on doit même tout militaire allemand. Cela est en la combinaison, plus à ces pour répondre l'empêcher à des personnes d'entrer. Toute violation quelconque aura comme conséquence la mort.

9. — Il est permis, aux militaires allemands de visiter les maisons, parquets, etc., de tous les habitants des communes. Toute violation à ce sujet sera punie sévèrement.

10. — Celui qui a communiqué que des quantités supérieures à 100 litres de pétrole, benzine, alcool et d'autres liquides analogues se trouvent à sa, contre l'avis du Commandant des Bruyères et qui ne l'a pas annoncé au Commandant militaire qui y agit, lorsqu'il y a eu un droit sur le lieu et le quantum, encourt la mort. Les quantités de 100 litres sont exactement visées.

11. — Celui qui s'empare pas de cette proclamation — lors de la liste — se rend coupable de la peine de mort.

12. — L'entrée du Château des Bruyères de même que celle des sites de part, en attendant, sans point de mort, depuis la réception jusqu'à l'heure de 6 heures de soir à 6 heures de matin — heures allemandes — heures allemandes qui se ont en la possession de l'armée allemande.

13. — Pendant la nuit, l'entrée du Château des Bruyères n'est permise que par l'entrée Nord-Ouest, si ce n'est la route de la poste avant de partir, et y a de cartes d'entrée distribuées. Tout rassemblement à proximité de la Garde est défendu sans l'assentiment de la population.

14. — Quiconque, par la communication de fausses nouvelles qui ont servi de nature à nuire au moral des troupes allemandes, de même que qui de s'empare quelle fausse nouvelle à l'endroit des dispositions contre l'armée allemande, est puni sévèrement et encourt la peine de mort.

15. — Tandis que, par les dispositions contraires les habitants de la région de la formation III II, sont punis de prison sévère, les habitants de la région des départements sont punis sévèrement, les mêmes habitants présents, lorsqu'ils se montrent passifs, coupables ou la production les plus horribles et la destruction d'autres personnes. Ils ont fait les punitions les plus sévères.

16. — Les demandes de remise de l'état pour une quantité déterminée ou tout journalièrement, de 10 à 16 heures avant midi et de 8 à 9 heures après midi, au Château des Bruyères, après de la Commission de l'état.

17. — Celui qui, sans l'ordre de l'inspecteur de la Conviction Seiner, est en contact avec à l'armée allemande et est puni sévèrement, est puni.

(s) DIECKMANN.

Major-Commandant

Par copie certifiée

Le Bourgmestre

Victor HODRIGS

Grivegnée, le 6 Septembre 1914.

A CHARACTERISTIC PROCLAMATION.

I will reproduce a few of the more typical of the seventeen paragraphs of this monstrous lucubration:

2. All the inhabitants of the occupied houses in the localities of Beyne-Heusay, Grivegnée, Bois-de-Breux, and Fléron must return to their homes by nightfall (at present by 7 p.m. German time). These houses will be

VILLE DE BRUXELLES

**CHERS CONCITOYENS,**

Un avis, affiché aujourd'hui, nous apprend que le Drapeau belge arboré aux fenêtres de nos demeures est considéré comme une provocation par les troupes allemandes.

Le Feld-Marschal von der Goltz, dans sa proclamation du 2 septembre disait pourtant « ne demander à personne de renier ses sentiments patriotiques ». Nous ne pouvons donc prévoir que l'affichage de ces sentiments serait tenue pour une offense.

Celle qui nous le révèle n'est, je le reconnais, rédigée en termes mesurés et avec le soin de ménager nos susceptibilités.

Elle n'en blessera pas moins, d'une manière profonde, fiévreuse et libre population de Bruxelles.

« So demande à cette population de donner un nouvel exemple de sang-froid et de la grandeur d'âme dont elle a toujours déjà tant de preuves en ces jours douloureux.

« Acceptons provisoirement le sacrifice qui nous est imposé, retirons nos drapeaux pour éviter des conflits, et attendons patiemment l'heure de la réparation.

Bruxelles le 16 septembre 1914.

*Le Burgomestre,*  
**ADOLPHE MAX**

STAD BRUSSELT.

**WAARDE NEDERBURGERS,**

Uit een bericht, beden aangeplakt, vernemen wij dat de Belgische vlag, die aan de gevels onzer huizen prijkt, door de Duitse troepen als een « uitdaging » wordt beschouwd.

Veldmarschalk von der Goltz, in zijne proclamatie van 2 September, zei ooktans: « Ik vraag aan niemand zijne patriotische gevoelens te ontzeggen ». Wij konden dus niet voorzien dat aan het bevestigen deze gevoelens een beledigend karakter zou toegekend worden.

De plakbrief waarbij wij zulk vernemen, is, ik bekren het, opgesteld in gematigde woorden en zonder het inzicht in onze gevoelens te willen verliezen.

Zij zal niettemin de vurige en bere bevolking van Brussel diep kwetsen.

Ik vraag aan deze bevolking een nieuw bewijs te geven van de koelbloedigheid en de grootmoedigheid waarvan zij zoveel blijken heeft gegeven in deze droeve tijden.

Laat ons voorlopig het offer dat ons opgelegd wordt volbrengen; laat ons de vlaggen intrekken om botsingen te voorkomen, en laat ons met geduld het uur der verzoening afwachten.

Brussel, den 16 September 1914.

*De Burgemeester,*  
**ADOLF MAX**

M. MAX'S LAST ANNOUNCEMENT.

lit up as long as anyone is moving about in them. . . . Any resistance against these orders will entail *death*.

1 "City of Brussels.—Dear Fellow-citizens,—A notice posted up yesterday informs us that the Belgian flag displayed upon our house-fronts is regarded as a 'provocation' by the German troops.

"Field-Marshal von der Goltz, however, in his proclamation of the 2nd of September, stated that 'no one was to be required to deny his patriotic feelings.' We could not, therefore, foresee that the expression of these feelings would be regarded as an offence.

"The placard which informs us of this fact has, I recognise, been drafted in measured language and with a wish to consider our susceptibilities.

"None the less, it will be profoundly wounding to the proud and ardent population of Brussels.

"I beg this population to give a fresh example of the composure and magnanimity of which it has already furnished so many proofs in these painful days.

"Let us provisionally accept the sacrifice which is imposed upon us; let us withdraw our flags to avoid disputes, and wait patiently for the hour of reparation.—The Burgomaster, Adolphe Max."

3. The commandant must meet with no difficulty on his domiciliary visits. Persons are requested without notice to show all the rooms of the house. Whosoever opposes this will be *severely punished*.

6. I shall appoint, from the lists which will be submitted to me (by the burgomasters), those persons who from noon one day to noon the next will have to remain as hostages. If the hostage is not replaced in time he will have to remain a further 24 hours in the fort (of Fléron). After this second period of 24 hours the hostage will incur the *death penalty* if he is not replaced.

8. I demand that all the civilians going to and fro in my district . . .

## BEKANNTMACHUNG

Ich habe mich genötigt gesehen, den Bürgermeister Max wegen dienstwidrigen Verhaltens von seinem Amte zu suspendieren. Er befindet sich in ehrenvoller Haft in einer Festung.

Brüssel, den 26. September 1914.

Der Militär-Gouverneur,

Freiherr von LÜTTWITZ,  
Generalmajor.

## AVIS

Le Bourgmestre Max, ayant fait défaut aux engagements encourus envers le Gouvernement allemand, je me suis vu forcé de le suspendre de ses fonctions. Monsieur Max se trouve en détention honorable dans une forteresse.

Bruxelles, le 26 septembre 1914.

Le Gouverneur Militaire,

Baron von LÜTTWITZ,  
Général.

### REPLY TO M. MAX'S ANNOUNCEMENT.<sup>1</sup>

shall show their deference to German officers by taking off their hat (*sic*) or lifting the hand to the head as in the military salute. In case of doubt *any German soldier should be saluted*. Those who do not do so (as required) must expect the German soldiery to make themselves respected by *all and any means*.

10. Anyone who has knowledge that quantities of petrol, benzine, benzol and other analogous liquids are to be found in a given place . . .

<sup>1</sup> "Notice.—Burgomaster Max having failed to keep the pledges made to the German Government, I find myself compelled to suspend him from his functions. M. Max is in honourable detention in a fortress.—The Military Governor, Baron von Lüttwitz, General."



and who has not declared it to the military commandant, *incurs the death penalty.*

11. Anyone who does not immediately comply with the order "raise the arms" renders himself guilty (*sic*) of the *death penalty.*

14. Anyone who, by the communication of false news which would be of a nature to injure the *moral* of the German troops, and also anyone who, no matter in what manner, seeks to make preparations inimical to the German Army, renders himself suspect and runs the risk of being *shot* on the spot.

17. Anyone who, under the protection of the sign of the Swiss Convention, does anything or seeks to do anything prejudicial to the German Army . . . *is hanged.*

What, to the German mind, is "false news of a nature to injure the *moral* of the German troops"? Would it not be, more often than otherwise, news that merely contradicts the news which the German leaders provide for their troops, to improve their *moral*, and which is an accurate representation of fact—the truth, in short, as opposed to lies?

On the 16th of September, 1914, a fresh placard from the pen of M. Max appeared upon the walls of Brussels (see p. 173).

A few days later a German placard announced the arrest of this great Belgian citizen, who has since then been imprisoned in Germany, where "he patiently awaits the hour of reparation."<sup>1</sup> Adolphe Max is still ignorant—and so are all his compatriots—of the precise pretext for this measure; but it seems that his crime must have been that he scrupulously and unfalteringly kept his promise to defend "with all his energies the rights and dignities of his fellow-citizens" against the encroachment of the Germans.

Here is a notice signed, like the preceding, by General von Lüttwitz, "Governor of Brussels," and dated the 22nd of September, 1914:

I remind the population of Brussels and the suburbs that it is strictly forbidden to sell or distribute newspapers which are not expressly permitted by the German Governor.

Infringements will result in the immediate arrest of the vendors, as well as long sentences of imprisonment.

This notice, dated Brussels, the 25th of September, 1914, is from the Governor-General himself:

<sup>1</sup> First at Glatz, for more than a year, then at Lille. It has since been reported that he is in Switzerland.

It has recently happened, in the regions which are not at present occupied by German troops in moderate strength, that convoys of waggons or patrols have been attacked by surprise by the inhabitants.

I call the attention of the public to the fact that a register has been made of towns and communes in whose neighbourhood such attacks have been delivered, and that they will have to expect their punishment as soon as German troops are in their neighbourhood.

A few days later, on the 1st of October, a fresh notice of this kind appeared:

## BEKANNTMACHUNG

Am 25. September abends 11 auf der Strecke Löwenjoul-Vertryck die Eisenbahn- und Telegraphenlinie zerstört worden. Daraufhin sind die genannten zwei Ortschaften am 30. September morgens zur Wehrmacht gezogen und gefesselt genommen worden.

In Zukunft werden stets die dem Taktort nächst gelegenen Ortschaften — unbekümmert, ob dieselben der Behörde schuldig sind oder nicht — unabweislich bestraft werden. Zu diesem Zweck sind hienun diejenigen Ortschaften, welche nahe dem Bescher schon direkt einschlägig bestraft sind, hienun liegen, bestraft worden worden, welche bei dem geringsten Versuch, nahe der betreffenden Ortschaft Bahnen, Telegraphen- oder Telefonleitungen zu zerstören, sofort erschossen werden.

Ferner sind alle zum Bahnschutz bestimmten Truppen angewiesen worden, jede sich dem Bahnschutz, Telegraphen- oder Telefonleitungen in verächtlicher Weise nähernde Person zu erschlagen.

Bruxelles, den 1. October 1914.

Der General-Gouverneur in Belgien,  
FRIEDRICH VON DER GOLTZ,  
Generalgouverneur.

## AVIS

Dans la soirée du 25 septembre, la ligne de chemin de fer et le télégraphe ont été détruits sur la ligne Louvain-Vertryck. A la suite de cela, les deux localités citées ont eu, le 30 septembre, au matin, à ce rendre compte et ont été livrées aux armes.

A l'avenir, les localités les plus rapprochées de l'endroit où de pareils faits se sont passés — peu importe qu'elles en soient coupables ou non — seront punies sans miséricorde. A cette fin, des otages ont été enlevés de toutes les localités voisines des voies ferrées menacées par de possibles attaques, et à la première tentative de détruire des voies de chemin de fer, des lignes de télégraphe ou de téléphone, ils seront immédiatement fusillés.

En outre, toutes les troupes chargées de la protection de voies ferrées ont reçu l'ordre de fusiller toute personne s'approchant de façon suspecte des voies de chemin de fer ou des lignes téléphoniques ou télégraphiques.

Bruxelles, le 1 octobre 1914.

Le Gouverneur Général en Belgique,  
FRIEDRICH VON DER GOLTZ,  
Generalgouverneur.

## BERICHT

Den 25 September is op de lijn Löwenjoul-Vertryck de spoorweg- en telegraaflijn vernield geworden. Daarop is den 30 September 's morgens van de twee genoemde dorpen reukenschap genomen worden en hielden al zwaarlevend moeten stellen.

In toekomst zullen die dorpen, die de plaats waar zulk gebeurde naast gelegen zijn, ten strengste gestraft worden, onbekommerd of zij of niet door bijstand schuldig zijn. Voor dit doel zullen in alle zulke dorpen werke in de nabijheid liggen van spoorwagelijnen etc. al door aanvallen zijn bedreigd worden, gijzelaars vastgenomen worden, welke onmiddellijk zullen doodgeschoten worden bij de eerste poging naar het betrekkelijke dorps spoorweg-, telegraaf- of telefoonlijnen te vernielen.

Versiers hebben alle tot bescherming van spoorwagelijnen bestemde troepen order gekregen iedereen persoon daad te schieten die op verdachte wijze des spoorwegs, de telegraaf- of telefoonlijnen nader komt.

Bruxelles, den 1 October 1914.

Der General-Gouverneur in Belgien,  
FRIEDRICH VON DER GOLTZ,  
Generalgouverneur.

WILL BE PUNISHED WITHOUT MERCY—WHETHER GUILTY OR NOT.

On the night of the 25th of September the railway-line and the telegraph were destroyed on the Lovenjoul-Vertryck line. As a result these two localities were obliged, on the morning of the 30th of September, to render themselves accountable and were forced to provide hostages.

In future the localities nearest to the spot where such things have been done—it does not matter whether they are guilty of complicity or not—will be punished without mercy. To this end hostages have been taken from all localities in the neighbourhood of railways menaced by such attacks, and at the first attempt to destroy the railways or telegraph or telephone wires they will immediately be shot.

Moreover, all troops entrusted with the protection of the railways have received orders to shoot any person approaching the railways or telegraph or telephone lines in a suspicious manner.

The Field-Marshal must certainly have been aware that these attacks upon German convoys or patrols, and this destruction of (Belgian) railways or (Belgian) telegraph lines, was the work of (Belgian) soldiers defending their country as best they could. But as it asserted at the outset, through one of its leaders, the German Army wanted an "open road," and the "Governor-General in Belgium," who had to see that it got this "open road," did not hesitate, with this end in view, to employ any means which he considered opportune, even to blackmail. All means, even the most infamous, the most profoundly disgraceful, were good in the eyes of the high military authorities of Germany, so long as they tended toward the supreme goal: the victory of Germany. "To employ without mitigation the means of defence and intimidation is not only the right, but the duty of every army commander," says the *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, treating of the relations between the army occupying a given territory and the inhabitants of that territory.

Here is another order of Field-Marshal von der Goltz's, which tends to hamper and paralyse the defensive; it is dated the 7th of October, 1914:

In that portion of the country occupied by the German troops the Belgian Government has succeeded in forwarding to the militia of several classes orders to join the army.

These Belgian orders are not valid. Only the orders of the German Government and of the authorities subordinated thereto are valid in the above portion of the country.

All those who receive Belgian orders are strictly forbidden to carry them out.

In future militiamen must not leave their present place of residence (town or commune) without being specially authorised so to do by the German Administration.

In case of disobedience the *family* of the militiaman will be held equally responsible.

Militiamen in possession of an order to join or a medal of registration will be treated as *prisoners of war*.

On the 13th of October, 1914, von der Goltz renewed and added further details to the prohibition, which had already been several times published, to sell or circulate newspapers or other "products of the printing-press" not passed by the censor.

All products of the printing-press, as well as all other written reproductions or pictures with or without descriptions, and musical compositions with text or commentary (printed) obtained by mechanical or chemical

process and intended for distribution, are subject to the *ensorship* of the General Imperial German Government (Civil Administration).

Whosoever shall have fabricated or distributed printed matter as indicated in paragraph 1 without the permission of the censor will be punished in conformity with martial law. The printed matter will be confiscated and the plates and clichés destined for reproduction will be rendered useless.

The placarding, exhibition or exposure of printed matter prohibited by the present decree in places where the public is able to take note of it is also regarded as distribution.

Von der Goltz Pasha left for Constantinople. General von Bissing, his successor, applied himself to consolidating the German domination. The mailed fist grew yet heavier.

Here is the text of one of the first proclamations (Brussels, the 4th of January, 1915) of the new Governor-General:

The public is reminded that in those portions of Belgium subject to the German Government, and since the day this Government was instituted, only the orders of the Governor-General and the authorities subordinate to him have the force of law.

The decrees issued since this date or yet to be issued by the King of the Belgians and the Belgian Ministers have no legal force in the domain of the German Government in Belgium. I have determined to ensure by all the means at my disposal that Governmental powers shall be exercised exclusively by the German authorities instituted in Belgium. I expect the Belgian officials, in the admitted interests of the country, not to refuse to continue in the exercise of their functions, above all as I shall not require of them services directly benefiting the German Army.

Salaries which are paid by the late Belgian authorities unknown to or contrary to the will of the German Government to Belgian officials are liable to confiscation.

General von Bissing also endeavours by all means in his power to prevent young Belgians of an age to bear arms (50) from crossing the Dutch frontier in order to enrol themselves in what he called the "enemy army." Belgium literally became "a vast Prussian prison" (52).

Read this notice of the 26th of January:

Persons capable of military service have lately attempted on various occasions to cross the Dutch frontier in secret in order to join the enemy army.

Consequently I decide as follows:

1. All privileges in force as regards circulation in the regions bordering on the frontier are suppressed in the case of Belgians capable of military service.

2. Belgians who attempt, in spite of prohibition, to cross the frontier to Holland run the risk of being killed by the sentinels on the frontier.

Belgians capable of military service captured under such circumstances will be punished and sent to Germany as prisoners of war.

This applies equally to members of the family of any Belgian capable of military service as above who do not prevent the latter from entering Holland.

4. All Belgians of male sex aged from sixteen to forty years are regarded as capable of military service within the meaning of this decree.

Not content with preventing Belgians from serving their country, the German authorities use all means in their power to force them to betray it by serving the interests of the German Army. Here, in this connection, is a very characteristic notice, dated from Gand, on the 10th of June, 1915, and signed by Lieut.-General von Westarp:

By order of His Excellency the Inspector of the Station (*Etape*), I bring the following to the notice of the communes:

The attitude of several factories, which, under the pretext of patriotism, and relying on The Hague Convention, have refused to work for the German Army, proves that there are tendencies among the population which aim at placing difficulties in the way of the Administration of the German Army.

In this connection I make it known that I shall employ every means at my disposal in order to repress such underhand behaviour, which can only disturb the good understanding hitherto existing between the Administration of the German Army and the population.

In the first place I make the communal authorities responsible for the spread of such tendencies, and I call attention to the fact that the population itself will cause the liberties hitherto accorded in the most generous manner to be withdrawn and replaced by restrictive measures necessitated by its own offence.

I will not lay stress upon the graceful manner in which this von Westarp deals with Belgian patriotism and international conventions; but I cannot refrain from remarking that he truly exaggerates when he boasts of the "liberties accorded in the most generous fashion" to the Belgian population, and that he goes altogether astray when he brags of the good understanding existing between this population and the Administration of the German Army.

Here, by the way, is one among many decrees which is significant of the "liberties so generously accorded":

Whosoever wears, exposes, or displays in public, in a provocative manner, the Belgian colours, or whosoever wears, exposes, or displays in public, even in a non-provocative manner, the colours of other countries at war with Germany and her Allies, is liable to a maximum fine of 600 marks, or a maximum sentence of six months' imprisonment. These two pen-

alties may also be combined. Offenders will be tried by the German authorities or military courts.

The present decree will enter into force on the 1st of July, 1915.

On the 1st of July—that is, three weeks before the national festival! Von Bissing (for the decree was his) realised that “to govern is to foresee”!

Here is something that will afford a still better idea of the aforesaid liberties: A decree posted on the walls of Menin (in West Flanders, ten miles to the east-south-east of Ypres) contains the following:

From to-day the town can no longer grant relief—of whatever kind, even for families, women and children—except to those workers who are working regularly upon *military work*, and other prescribed tasks. All other workers and their families cannot henceforth be relieved in any way whatever.

Decrees of the Governor-General, dated the 14th and 15th of August, 1915, generalise and extend to the whole of the occupied territory the measures intended to ensure the execution of “works of public interest” (for which read: of military—German—interest), while others refer to “the strikers who through idleness refrain from work.”

Of the same order is the following decree, applicable to the region of *étapes* (Flanders, East and West, and a portion of Hainault). It was issued in Gand, on the 12th of October, 1915, by Lieutenant-General von Unger, *Etappeninspektor*:

Art. 1.—Whosoever, without pretext, shall refuse to undertake or continue work in conformity with his calling and in the execution of which the Military Administration is interested, work ordered by one or more military commandants, will be liable to a maximum term of one year's correctional imprisonment. He may also be deported to Germany.

The fact of invoking Belgian laws to the contrary, or even international conventions, can in no case justify the refusal to work.

As to the lawfulness of the work required, the military commandant alone has the right to form a decision.

Art. 2.—Whosoever by constraint, threats, persuasion, or any other means attempts to induce another person to refuse to work as indicated in Art. 1, is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years.

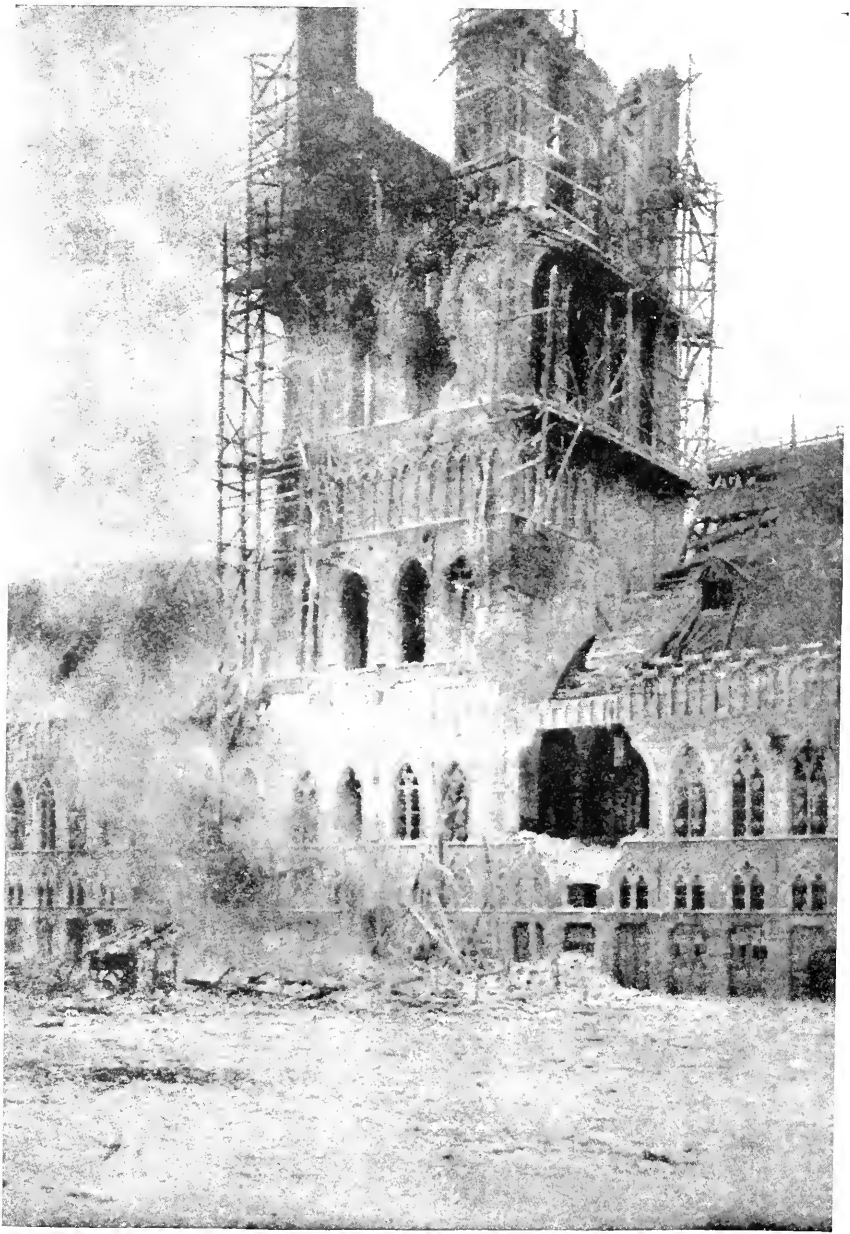
Art. 3.—Whosoever shall knowingly, by relief or other means, facilitate the punishable refusal to work, will be liable to a fine which may amount to as much as 10,000 marks; he may in addition be condemned to one year's imprisonment. If communes or societies have rendered themselves guilty of such an offence the heads of the same will be punished in consequence.



39. DURING THE BATTLE OF THE YSER. (*Page 148*)

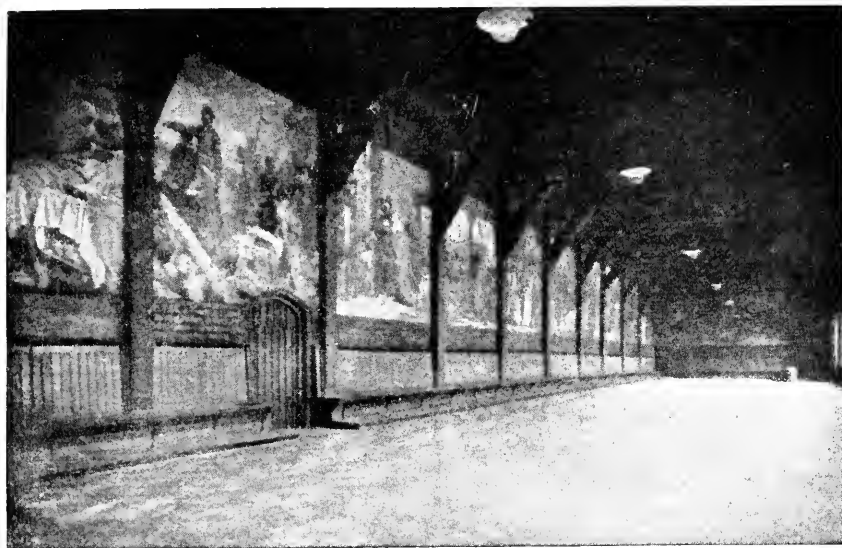


40. A GERMAN VILLA, PREPARED FOR HEAVY HOWITZERS, DESTROYED BY THE BELGIAN ENGINEERS. (*Page 152*)



41. YPRES . . . . THEY HAVE BURNED THE CLOTH HALL. (*Page 156*)





42. YPRES—A CHAMBER IN THE CLOTH HALL BEFORE THE WAR.



43. THE SAME CHAMBER IN NOVEMBER, 1915.



44. HE NEVER, ON THE YSER ANY MORE THAN AT ANTWERP, LEAVES HIS ARMY FOR A DAY NOR AN HOUR. (Page 160)

Art. 4.—Independently of the penalties threatened in articles 1 and 3, the German authorities may in case of need impose upon those communes in which the execution of a piece of work has been groundlessly refused a contribution or other coercive police measures.

The present decree enters into force immediately.

This is forced labour, slavery, naked and unashamed. Worse than this: it is treason rendered compulsory by means of an infamous blackmail, and in contempt of all international conventions. We have reached the zenith of illegality: one could go no further.

### WAR CONTRIBUTIONS

Provinces and communes were burdened with formidable war contributions. Figures have been cited which one hesitates to believe correct, so exorbitant are they.

Of the following figures, however, we may be certain, since we find them in the official documents:

Brussels, £2,000,000; Antwerp, £2,000,000; province of Brabant, £18,000,000; Namur and seventeen surrounding communes, £1,280,000.<sup>1</sup>

We read in the report of the interview at which the conditions of the entry of the Germans into Brussels were discussed: "Captain Kriegsheim required the city of Brussels and the communes of the district of Brussels (*agglomération*) to pay within three days, as a war contribution, a sum of 50 million francs, in gold, silver, or banknotes, the province of Brabant having to pay, in addition, as a war contribution, a sum of 450 millions of francs, which sum was payable by the 1st of September at latest."

And in the report of the College of the Burgomasters and Sheriffs of the City of Antwerp we read: "Despite our repeated efforts, a war contribution of 50 millions of francs imposed on the city independently of the daily requisitions, the burden of which is very great."

As for the figure mentioned in the case of Namur (£1,280,000), it is given in the 11th Report of the Commission of Inquiry.

M. Max obtained, subsequently, both an indispensable postponement and the reduction of the contribution imposed on the city and district of Brussels to £1,800,000.

<sup>1</sup> I think, if my memory serves me, that Liège, like Brussels and Antwerp, had to pay £2,000,000.

As for the £18,000,000 at first demanded of the province of Brabant, it was materially impossible for this single province (containing only 1,500,000 inhabitants) to pay it. The German Administration finally realised this fact, and it was under these circumstances that von Bissing, on the 10th of December, 1914, issued the following decree:

A war contribution of the amount of £1,600,000, to be paid monthly for one year, is imposed upon the population of Belgium.

The payment of these amounts is imposed upon the nine provinces, which are regarded as joint debtors.

The two first monthly payments are to be made by the 15th of January, 1915, at latest, and the following monthly payments by the 10th of each following month, to the military chest of the field army of the General Imperial Government in Brussels.

If the provinces are obliged to resort to the issue of stock with a view to procuring the necessary funds, the form and terms of these shares will be determined by the Commissary-General for the banks in Belgium.

The Provincial Councils having been convoked by the German authorities to determine the mode of payment of this war contribution, the Vice-President of one of these assemblies declared:

“The Germans demand these 480 million francs of the country without right and without reason. Are we to sanction this enormous war-tax? If we listened only to our hearts we should reply: No, 480 million times no; because our hearts would tell us: We were a small, honest nation; living happily by its free labour! We were a small, honest nation, having faith in treaties and believing in honour. We were a nation unarmed, but full of confidence, when Germany suddenly hurled two million men upon our frontiers, the most brutal army that the world has ever seen, and said to us: Betray the promise you have given. Let my armies go by that I may crush France, and I will give you gold.

“Belgium replied: Keep your gold; I prefer to die rather than live without honour. . . .

“The German Army has therefore crushed our country in contempt of solemn treaties. ‘It is an injustice,’ said the Chancellor of the German Empire. ‘The position of Germany has forced us to commit it. But we will repair the wrong we have done to Belgium by the passage of our armies.’

“They want to repair this injustice as follows: Belgium will pay Germany 480 million francs! Give this proposal your vote!

“When Galileo had discovered the fact that the earth moved round the sun, he was forced, at the foot of the stake, to abjure his error. But he murmured: *Nevertheless, it moves!* Well, gentlemen, as I fear a still greater misfortune for my country, I consent to the payment of these 480 millions . . . and I cry: *Nevertheless, it moves!* Long live our country, in spite of all!”

A year had elapsed, and the 480 millions had been punctually paid, when von Bissing issued a fresh order:

In virtue of Article 49 of The Hague Convention relating to the Laws and Usages of War on Land, there will henceforth be imposed, until further notice, upon the Belgian population, a monthly war contribution of 40 millions of francs, in order to contribute to the expenses of the army and the administration of the occupied territories.

The Administration reserves the right to levy the monthly payments wholly or partly in German money at the rate of 80 marks for 100 francs. The obligation of this payment is incumbent on the nine provinces of Belgium, which assume the responsibility of the sum due as joint debtors.

The payment of the first monthly instalment must take place by the 10th of December, 1915, at latest, and that of succeeding instalments by the 10th of each month at latest, to the military chest of the General Imperial Government in Brussels. If the provinces issue stock in order to procure the resources necessary for payment, the Imperial Commissary-General of the Belgian banks will fix the form and the terms of the said stock.

Germany appealing to The Hague Conventions: there, to say the least of it, is an unlooked-for spectacle! But let us see what is the wording of this Article 49, which von Bissing invokes for his own purposes. Here it is:

If, in addition to the taxes mentioned in the above Article, the occupant levies other money contributions in the occupied territory, they shall only be applied to the needs of the army or of the administration of the territory in question.

As for the preceding Article, it says:

If, in the territory occupied, the occupant collects the taxes, dues and tolls payable to the State, he shall do so, as far as is possible, in accordance with the legal basis and assessment in force at the time, and shall in consequence be bound to defray the expenses of the administration of the occupied territory to the same extent as the national Government had been so bound.

Now 40 million francs per month, or 480 millions per annum, is more than six times the amount of the direct taxes lately col-

lected by the Belgian State—taxes which the German Administration, moreover, is collecting on its own account into the bargain. Four hundred and eighty millions of francs is five times as great as the ordinary expenditure of our War Department.

But in Germany they find that it is still insufficient! Is this because they consider that this sum, large as it is, is not sufficient for “the needs of the army and of the administration” of the occupied territory? Who would be so simple as to believe this? No, the fact is—and no one is ignorant of it, even in Germany—that by virtue of the principles with which the German Army and public are imbued, a great portion of this good Belgian money goes out of Belgium.

The *Vossische Zeitung* feels impelled to explain to its readers that “the new monthly contribution of 40 millions corresponds to Belgium’s capacity payment,” which means—does it not?—that this is *all* that could be demanded of her. The worthy newspaper adds elsewhere: “Experts have expressed the opinion that Belgium has lost, since the war, a sixth of her national wealth;<sup>1</sup> Belgian industry is paralysed for lack of raw materials and means of export. The number of the unemployed and indigent is considerable. The exploitation of the mines and the alimentary industry alone yields a certain profit. Under these conditions one cannot demand a greater sacrifice from the nine occupied provinces.”<sup>2</sup>

### PILLAGE

On the 17th of January, 1915, one might read, on the walls of the good city of Brussels, a notice issued by the German military authorities, in which it was stated:

The present events of this war prove that no army in the world has given proof of a spirit so ideally military, of so high a culture, and of a discipline so severe, as our Army; that nowhere are the laws of war which forbid theft, murder, and pillage, and the removal of the goods of others, respected with such sincerity and such rigour as in the German Army.

An impudent lie, if ever such was!

At Visé, Aerschot, Andenne, Namur, Dinant, Louvain, Termonde, and many another town, and in numbers of villages the

<sup>1</sup> A fortune which the German newspaper estimated at £1,200,000,000 to £1,400,000,000.

<sup>2</sup> *Vossische Zeitung*, No. 596, 22nd of November, 1915.

Germans proceeded to devote themselves to a systematic pillage from the moment of their arrival.

At Louvain the pillage began on Tuesday the 27th of August, 1914, and lasted a week. In bands of six or eight, the soldiers burst open the doors, smashed the windows, ransacked the drawers, cupboards, etc., broken open the safes (48), stealing money, pictures, curios, silver, linen, clothing, wines, and food.

Whole suites of furniture were packed and sent to the railway stations in military baggage waggons, thence to be despatched into Germany.

"At Aerschot," says M. Orts, Councillor of Legation, in the 4th Report of the Commission of Inquiry, "for three weeks the Germans were gradually emptying practically the whole of the houses in the town, everywhere destroying articles which did not satisfy their cupidity, while the officers kept the wealthier dwellings for themselves. All securities which the owners had had no time to place in safety, silver, family jewels, and money have disappeared; incendiarism often had no other object than to efface the proofs of particularly extensive thefts. Baggage waggons laden with booty set out from Aerschot in the direction of the Meuse. . . ."

At Namur a large number of houses were sacked. The funds of a private bank, the "Banque Générale Belge," were seized. In a number of houses where officers had lodged all the furniture was broken, and the wine, the linen, and even the women's clothing was stolen. A citizen of Namur saw the furniture of his country house going by on German waggons. Another had 17,000 francs' worth of securities taken from his safe.

At Dinant all the safes were opened by means of *oxy-hydrogen blow-pipes* brought for the purpose; before they were burned, all the houses were methodically emptied.

"To my house," writes the State Attorney, M. Tschoffen, "they came with waggons to remove the silver, the bedding, the furniture, the clothing (men's and women's), the linen, the knick-knacks, the mantelpiece ornaments, a collection of weapons from the Congo, the pictures, the wines, and even my decorations, and those of my father and grandfather. . . . From the cellars of a wine-merchant, M. Piret, 60,000 bottles were stolen. There is not, to my knowledge, in the houses left standing a single safe which has not been forced or which does not bear manifest traces of burglarious attempts!"

At Andenne the wine-cellars were all emptied (96) and the

drapers' shops were sacked; wines, liquors, sheets, stuffs, etc., were taken away on motor-waggons.

On entering Hasselt the Germans stole 2,075,000 francs from the branch of the "National Bank," which is really a private undertaking.

At Liège they seized 4,000,000 francs in the same manner. Then, finding in the bank some new 5-franc notes which had not yet been signed, they went to the printer and forced him to add the missing facsimile signature.

At Louvain they appropriated the funds of the "Banque de la Dyle" and those of the "Banque populaire."

At Termonde, on the 4th of September, 1914, a special gang entered the "Banque Centrale de la Dendre." In the office of the deputy-president they blew open a small safe, from which they removed a sum of 2,100 francs; then they attempted—but in vain—to force an entrance to the vaults where the safes of private persons were kept.

At Termonde, again, the shop of Van den Durpel, a jeweller, was plundered, as well as a number of private houses.

At Tongres the shops in the Rue de Maestricht were nearly all plundered; wines, stuffs, and goods of all kinds were carried off.

And it was the same in very many other places.

The Germans also stole the valuables from a number of churches. And whenever they could they possessed themselves of the contents of the post-office and railway-station safes.

In many parts of the country château and villas were methodically pillaged and completely emptied of all their furniture.

Country people were despoiled of all they possessed.

"I had placed in a trunk all our family silver, and a silver Christ, as well as our jewels, and I had had this trunk placed in the wine-cellar," says Mlle. Dirieux de Tenham, of Surice. "The Germans carried off the wine, the trunk, and all else that they fancied. . . . The pillage of all the houses, which began on Tuesday night, continued all through Wednesday. I have learned since that Mme. Laurent-Mineur's safe (she is a widow) was dynamited, and the silver plate which it contained all twisted out of shape; it was carried off, and so were the shares and securities, some of which were found, half-burned, on a stone not far away."

Do not imagine that these offences were committed only by common soldiers and non-commissioned officers. On the 23rd of



August, 1914, a general, three colonels, and six majors installed themselves in the Château de Villers-Saint-Amand, near Ligne (Hainault), and, "guarded by a large number of soldiers," says the owner of the château, M. Delacroix, advocate in the Court of Appeal, "they gave themselves up to veritable acts of vandalism." I have before me the inventory of their depredations and their plunder, drawn up by M. Delacroix himself, and I cite, from among many others, these few items: "1,500 bottles of wine, 1 carriage, 3 bicycles, 3 gold watches, 1 typewriter."

The Hospital of Saint Thomas at Louvain possessed a fine motor-car, quite new, a 40-h.p. model, which had been presented to it at the beginning of hostilities by M. Léon David (foully assassinated on the infernal night of the 25th of August, 1914). On the 4th of September a German army doctor, who had noticed this fine motor-car, begged the loan of it "to visit the wounded at Aerschot." The motor-car did not return to Louvain. Questioned on the subject, the German doctor excused himself by saying that a superior officer had taken a fancy to it and appropriated it. (The number of motor-cars stolen by the Germans in Belgium is, by the way, considerable.)

But here is something better still: After staying for a week in a château in the Liège district, His Imperial Highness Prince Eitel Fritz, the Duke of Brunswick, and a third person of less importance, had all the dresses which were found in the wardrobes packed under their own supervision, in order that they might be sent to Germany. The châtelaine and her daughters were famed for the richness of their toilettes.<sup>1</sup>

#### IN A BELGIAN CHATEAU

We must do the German officers the justice to admit that it was often for their wives that they committed these thefts; they sent them, from Belgium, dresses, laces, furs, jewels, pianos, and even sewing-machines. "A motor-car arrived at the hospital," wrote the soldier Johannes Thode (4th Reserve-Ersatz-Regiment) in his service note-book—he was then under treatment in Brussels. "It brought some war booty (*Kriegsbeute*): a piano, two sewing-machines, a number of albums, and all sorts of other things."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I doubted the authenticity of this report, and I wished to obtain irrefutable proof of it before recording it here. Such proof has been placed before me.

<sup>2</sup> Béliet, *op. cit.*

Sewing-machines as "war booty"! Is it not pitiful?

Pianos are greatly in demand among the ladies of Germany. Here is an example: A German officer left a letter from his wife in a drawer in one of the rooms of a château in which he had been lodging. In this letter occurred the passage: "A thousand thanks for the beautiful things you have sent me. The furs were magnificent. The tulip-wood furniture is exquisite; but do not forget that Elsa is still waiting for her piano."

Hundreds of pianos have been sent from Belgium by the Germans. Elsa may well have had hers by now. Perhaps she even came to choose it for herself, and profited by the occasion to take away a few fine dresses, for not a few German women have made the journey to Belgium in order to assist their men-folk to choose and pack their "war booty."

Once the pillaging of a town or village had been begun the Germans destroyed or spoiled or soiled what they could not take away.

"Although Aerschot was only partially destroyed by fire, it was sacked in its entirety," says M. Orts in his report; he visited the unfortunate little town after the second sortie from the entrenched camp of Antwerp. "I went into several houses, chosen at random, and I went through the different storeys of these houses; while through broken doors and windows I looked into a number of others. Everywhere the furniture was in confusion, broken open, or defiled in an obscene manner; the wall-papers were hanging in strips from the walls; the doors of the cellars were burst open; wardrobes, chests of drawers, and cupboards of all kinds had been opened and emptied of their contents. Linen and the most miscellaneous articles covered the ground, as well as an incredible number of empty bottles.

"In the more wealthy houses the pictures were cut to pieces, and other works of art were smashed. On the door of one of these houses, a very large and handsome building belonging to Dr. X—, one may still read the following half-effaced inscription, written with chalk: *Bitte dieses Haus zu schonen, da wirklich friedliche gute Leute. . . (S) Bannach, Wachtmeister.* (Please protect this house, here really peaceful, honest people. . . .) I entered this house. I was told it had been inhabited by some officers, and that the solicitude of one of them appeared to have saved it from the general devastation. On the very threshold a stale odour of spilt wine drew the attention to the hundreds of empty bottles which littered the hall, the stair-

case, and even the courtyard giving access to the garden. In the rooms an indescribable disorder prevailed; I was treading on a layer of torn clothing, and flockers of wool escaped from ripped-up mattresses, and everywhere were gaping wardrobes or chests of drawers, while in every room, within reach of the bed, were yet more empty bottles.

"The dining-room was littered with them; dozens of wine-glasses covered the dinner-table and smaller tables, which were surrounded by tattered sofas and armchairs, while in a corner of the room a piano, with a smutty keyboard, had apparently had the front kicked in. Everything went to prove that these rooms had been the scene, for many days and nights, of disgusting drunkenness and debauchery. In the market-place the house of M. X——, the notary, offered a similar spectacle, and, according to what I was told by a sergeant of gendarmes who was endeavouring with his men to bring a little order into all this chaos, it is the same with most of the houses belonging to the more prominent families, in which the German officers had elected to quarter themselves."

How many other examples of such depredations I could cite! Here is one among many:

"At Lierre the Germans plundered the studio of Isidore Opsomer. 'On my pictures they painted in large letters: *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!* (51). They amused themselves by slitting canvases, tearing up my etchings, photographs, and documents, and breaking my antiquities,' wrote the unfortunate artist, some time later, to one of his friends."

The inscription found by M. Orts on the house of an Aerschot doctor, and others, sometimes briefer, such as that to be seen in the above photograph, prove plainly that pillage forms an integral part of the German methods of warfare. *Nicht plündern*—that is to say, "You are permitted—or ordered—to pillage everywhere but here."

Ordered? Yes, precisely; the Mother Superior of a convent near a village which had been plundered received a visit from a German non-commissioned officer and a soldier, who gave her, the first a watch, chain, and bracelet of gold, and the second a small sum of money, saying that, although pillage was imposed upon them, they at least did not wish to profit by it, not being thieves.

Yes; pillage is a military operation—a part of German warfare! it is a veritable form of organised brigandage raised to the

level of a national institution; but do not imagine that it ceased after the first few days of the occupation! Far from it!

A Norwegian engineer, who was attached, with other foreigners, to a great factory in the suburbs of Brussels, and who remained there until December, 1914, told me that the German officers who had for some time been billeted in the factory used often to set out in the morning with *empty* portmanteaux. When they returned in the evening these were stuffed with laces and valuable *bibelots* which these gentry, who were extremely proud of their exploits, used to display, complacently, before the eyes of their hosts, who were flabbergasted by such cynicism. "And you," I asked my informant—an absolutely honourable man, whose statements could not be questioned—"did they steal nothing from you?" "Not much; when they finally left us they contented themselves with taking the best of our boots!"

*Krieg ist Krieg!*

## REQUISITIONS

Article 52 of The Hague Convention says:—

Requisitions in kind and services shall not be demanded from local authorities or inhabitants except for the needs of the army of occupation. They shall be in proportion to the resources of the country, and of such a nature as not to involve the inhabitants in the obligation of taking part in military operations against their own country. . . .

Contributions in kind shall as far as possible be paid for in ready money: if not, a receipt shall be given and the payment of the amount due shall be made as soon as possible.

These regulations—like nearly all the others—have been absolutely ignored by our enemies.

When they entered a Belgian town or village the German troops proceeded to demand enormous requisitions of provisions, forage, wines, liquors, and tobaccos. These contributions in kind were very rarely paid for in money; as a rule, the Germans confined themselves to giving in exchange valueless scraps of paper, or vouchers payable in Berlin, or even—the height of impudence!—in Paris.

I could not if I wished tell the whole tale of these exactions here. I will confine myself to a few hints.

On their arrival in Brussels the Germans requisitioned enormous quantities of provisions. "It is obvious," writes a jurist

who remained in the capital, "that these were not intended for consumption on the spot by the army of occupation, but that they were destined to maintain enormous armies of invasion for a certain length of time. . . . Everybody saw these provisions being packed; everybody remembers their significant destination. On the other hand, it is certain that these requisitions were not in proportion to the resources of the city, whose population was seriously threatened by famine after this infliction."

In Antwerp, not content with seizing enormous stores of cereals as war booty, the Germans demanded, month after month, that the commune should provide daily for every man of the garrison—and it sometimes numbered 20,000—750 grammes of bread, 800 grammes of meat, 780 grammes of potatoes; vegetables, coffee, sugar, cheese; half a bottle of wine, 5 cigars, 15 cigarettes, and 100 grammes of tobacco.

"Every day," wrote the correspondent of the Amsterdam *Handelsblad*, from L'Écluse, in December, 1914, "every day a score of officers come hustling into the Hôtel de Ville of Gand in order to make their requisitions. The finest stoves are seized for use in the German trenches. They ask for everything—fruit, coffee, tea, cheese, clothing. . . . One officer even demanded wristlet watches, but the communal administration kicked against such a demand, and the officer did not insist."

At Gand, one day, some soldiers presented a distiller with a requisition voucher for 800 bottles of cognac. Having glanced at the paper our distiller requested the Germans to ask their officer if there was not some mistake. They returned with a demand for the delivery of 1,600 bottles!

"At Ostend," writes the correspondent quoted above, "the situation is extremely critical. There is practically no more flour; the bread is extremely bad, there is no petrol; cheese costs 4 francs the kilo, and the livre of coffee costs 2fr.50. The gas-works have ceased operations owing to a lack of coal. In the cafés, of which some are lit with candles, one sees only German soldiers."

The cause of this penury was the demands of the Germans. And it was of no use to employ ruses or expedients to evade these demands. "At Ostend, as the wine destined for our troops had become scarce, we decided to ransack the cellars," we read in *Die Woche* for the 6th of March, 1915. "Very soon we obtained a splendid prize. We discovered 40,000 bottles which had been walled up."

Famous for their Burgundies, the cellars of Wallonia were, we surmise, very largely depleted.

At Charleroi, on the 18th of November, 1914, the *Kreigshauptmann* ordered the inhabitants "to draw up a list of all the wines which they had in their cellars, indicating the number of barrels and bottles of the different vintages," and he added in his "Notice" that these wines, which were to be "reserved for the consumption of the field army"—you understand, the field army—must not be removed without his authorisation.

At Tournai (36,000 inhabitants) 110,000 bottles of wine had to be provided at Christmas as an "extra." The Kaiser is so generous!

I have given a few examples of what happened in the towns. In the country matters were much worse.

M. Hans, correspondent of the Amsterdam *Telegraaf*, wrote from L'Ecluse, on the 8th of January, 1915:—"On the *maison communale* of the little village of Middelburg, which contains only 850 inhabitants, a notice was pasted containing the list of all that had to be provided within a period of six weeks: 100 fat hogs, 100,000 kilos of wheat or rye, 50,000 kilos of beans or peas, 50,000 kilos of oats, and 150,000 kilos of straw.<sup>1</sup> Now Middelburg has already provided the great army which is fighting for civilisation and justice with 50 cows, 35 hogs, 100 fowls, 1,600 kilos of oats and 1,600 kilos of straw."

At the same period an inhabitant of a little commune of the Campine wrote:—"Every day brings us fresh demands for hay, straw, oats, cattle, petrol, coal, etc. And what fresh vexatious regulations!"

From another small village in Flanders—a frontier village of 1,200 inhabitants—a reliable person, an acquaintance of mine, wrote in February, 1915, to his brother, a refugee in a Scandinavian country:

"They loudly declare that they do not requisition either young animals or cows in calf. But the officers tell their men on the quiet that they must not take any notice of the protests of the peasants, so that among the 150 beasts which they took here yesterday there were a great many cows in calf and young calves. In this way we shall soon be without anything: butter, milk, meat; in this way, moreover, our agricultural industry is threatened with complete ruin. . . . Then they say that they pay! Yes, they give 'vouchers,' but when one wants to get the

<sup>1</sup> 1,000 kilos is almost equivalent to the British ton.

amount settled one is sent from Herod to Pilate, and one day one has called too soon, and another day too late.

“It is the Germans who, by their odious behaviour, are driving numbers of volunteers to leave the country. Despite all sorts of difficulties, and in spite of the risk of being shot on the spot by the sentries, they are still crossing the frontier every day in order to enrol themselves in the ranks of our valiant army. . . .”

Here, finally, are some extracts from a letter written in the Walloon country:

“The German occupation is oppressing us, pillaging our possessions, stealing from us, meddling with the whole of our public life—and, above all, with our private life—and thrusting itself everywhere. Having taken our linen, they requisitioned the mattresses; then the blankets, leaving only two for each occupied bed—and one has to prove that the bed is occupied. Now they are scouring our Namur countryside in order to take everything that is made of brass or copper, in order to make cartridge-cases and shell-fuses; saucepans, door-handles, curtain-rings, brass bedsteads, chandeliers—everything is taken—everything—and, naturally, nothing is paid for. The woods, too, are ravaged by poor people without coal . . . and very soon without bread. . . .”

“From the farmers in our district they have taken nearly all their horses, cattle, swine, fowls, carts, harness, forage, grain, etc., for which they give vouchers, but these vouchers will assuredly never be paid. From Farmer F—— alone they have taken stock to the value of more than 40,000 francs; from V—— (whose farm is one of 270 acres) the value of 60,000 francs; from G——, nearly 30,000.

“All the stud horses of which we were so proud have gone to Germany. Now the horned cattle are following the same road. There are poor, respectable people, refugees by the thousand, who had everything they possessed stolen or burned, and we no longer know what we are to do to help them. . . .”

“Nevertheless, our confidence remains untouched and absolute. . . .”

As the writer of this letter very truly remarks, we were extremely proud of our heavy draught horses, and we had reason to be. Look at the portrait of “Rêve d’Or,” that superb stallion who, in 1900, in Paris, was proclaimed the champion of the world, and whose glorious perfection did so much to estab-

lish, once for all, the superiority of the Belgian breed. It was a breed essentially national, its qualities resulting not from such or such a cross, but from a judicious and severe selection of native stud-horses.

We used to sell these admirable horses to Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Russia, Italy, and even the United States and Canada; we sold them for good gold, and this trade, which was increasing from year to year, brought us in an annual average of £2,000,000.

The Germans, and particularly the farmers of the Prussian Rhineland, were our most assiduous customers. Every year, at the same season, our best stables were visited by German horse-dealers, and notably by a certain Karl M——, an eminent expert, with the manners of a good fellow, wholly *gemütlich*, who quickly became extremely popular in the horse-breeding world. Now during the early days of the invasion a number of our great farms were visited one by one by grey motor-cars—preceded by an armoured motor-car provided with machine-guns—from which alighted the said Karl M——, clad, this time, in the uniform of a cavalry officer, and a whole band of . . . collaborators, who, with the audacity of bandits armed to the teeth, who are confident in advance of impunity, seized upon the finest of these famous horses.

Other officers operated in other localities, sometimes indicating by name the horses which they wished to take!

In the majority of cases no requisition voucher was given, or if they gave such vouchers these were, as a rule, irregular vouchers bearing neither a description of the horse, nor mention of the price, nor seals, nor signatures. These worthy officers even profited, at times, by their victims' ignorance of the German language by adding irony—or worse—to spoliation. One farmer, from whom two beautiful horses were taken, received a voucher for "two rabbits"; another was given a voucher for "cuts with a whip"; some vouchers bear the words "payable in Paris," or even "payable by the French Republic." In a certain locality in Limburg some brutes burned in his stable a stallion worth £2,000, forcing the farmer, his wife, and his children, kneeling, with raised hands, to witness this horrible spectacle. Elsewhere officers and soldiers amused themselves by killing horses grazing in the fields with shots from their rifles or revolvers.

This was during the period of invasion.



From the beginning of October, 1914, competent officials came expressly from Germany to organise systematic raids, fallaciously described by them as "cash purchases." Their official label was "The Commission for the Purchase of Horses"; and these gentry used to inform the farmers, by means of placards that they would sit, on such or such a date, at such or such

**Malmedé & Geissendörfer, Köln a. Rh.**

**Verkauf  
von Beutepferden**

durch die Landwirtschaftskammer unter  
Mitwirkung der Rheinischen Pferdezentrale  
am Dienstag den 27. Oktober u. Mittwoch  
den 28. Oktober, von 10 Uhr ab  
auf dem Schlachthof in Cöln.

Es gelangen 400 Beutepferde (Absatzfohlen, Jährlinge, Zweijährige, Gebrauchspferde, 8 Hengste) zur Versteigerung.

Als Ankäufer sind **nur Landwirte** aus der Rheinprovinz und den benachbarten Provinzen zugelassen, die sich als solche durch eine amtliche Bescheinigung ausweisen können, und die sich schriftlich verpflichten, die Pferde **nur im eigenen landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe** zu verwenden.

Die genauen Bedingungen werden vor Beginn der Versteigerung verlesen.

Der Verkauf erfolgt **ohne Garantie nur gegen Barzahlung.**

Zum Versteigerungsplatze haben **nur Landwirte**, die sich als solche durch eine amtliche Bescheinigung ausweisen müssen, Zutritt.

**Hebel-Stanzmaschinen**

4 Stck. (neu), auch z. Prägen, Pressen, Schneiden einzurichten, für 1600. Mk z. verk. Näheres Postschließfach 130. Köln. (1a)

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ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE "KOLNISCHE ZEITUNG" ANNOUNCING SALE OF "BOOTY HORSES."

a place, where all horses, as well as yearling foals, must be brought before them under penalty of confiscation, and even of a fine into the bargain. The "Commission" then retained the best horses, while the unwilling vendors—who received in exchange nothing better than a requisition voucher—were not allowed to fix any prices. In many cases, moreover, the vouchers bore no hint as to the value of the horses. These latter were at once sent to Germany, where they were publicly sold. The German newspapers have on many occasions announced the public

auctions of these "booty horses." One such advertisement, which appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* for the 29th of October, 1914, is here reproduced.

The horned cattle were carried off and raided just as the horses were, and here again the finest specimens were sent to Germany.

What are we to say of such spoliation? What are we to say, again, of the felling of beautiful trees—notably of a large number of walnut trees, destined to make rifle-stocks at our expense; and of the disappearance of all articles made of brass, copper, or tin—plates, chandeliers, and crucifixes, delightful old stuff which, under our grey skies, brought sunshine and joy into the humblest of our farmhouses? I leave the reader to reply.

\* \* \*

The *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, of which one cannot pretend that it is hostile to Germany, stated in its issue for the 24th of January, 1915:—

"Of the farmers' stores of grain, hay, and straw, and of their stock, they leave nothing. They requisition the stocks of the wholesale and retail merchants as well. It is the same, moreover, all through East Flanders with cotton, linen, cloth, and thread. Goods to the value of millions are requisitioned and paid in vouchers; in the factories raw material intended to last more than three months is seized, and everything that is being manufactured is for Germany too."

The Germans also "requisitioned" great quantities of guano and nitrates in Flanders.

In Antwerp they seized cereals to the value of £720,000; nitrates to the value of £160,000; £240,000 worth of animal and vegetable oils; £400,000 worth of rubber; £800,000 worth of foreign hides; £52,000 worth of cotton, etc., etc.; the value of the merchandise requisitioned merely in the warehouses of our great port amounting to a total of £3,500,000 to £4,000,000.

"Eight hundred thousand pounds is the most that can have been paid," said the President of the Antwerp Chamber of Commerce, in a fully detailed report. "There will, therefore, be at least £2,600,000 still to be paid, or about 80 per cent., of which £2,400,000 represents merchandise for which no price has been fixed."

<sup>1</sup> Report addressed to the Intercommunal Commission by M. Castelein, acting President of the Antwerp Chamber of Commerce.

Everywhere it is the same. The country is being exhausted.

"The requisitions made by the Germans in Belgium," said the same Dutch newspaper, "have lately reached unprecedented proportions. Thus a large manufacturer of Verviers had to furnish £50,000 worth of leather. After this requisition he closed his works, but the Germans demanded that he should resume work, or they would carry off everything. He was therefore forced to resume operations, and is obliged to give the Germans the half of all the leather he prepares. A cloth-maker of Verviers, fearing the same treatment, sent for two thousand poor women, and gave each sufficient cloth to make a cloak."<sup>1</sup>

"Civilians, accompanied and assisted by military detachments, have entered the factories and workshops, selecting and appropriating the machine-tools, many of which have been removed and sent to Germany."<sup>2</sup>

Worse still: the Germans have appropriated whole factories as well as workshops belonging to private persons, and they have even gone so far as to tear up the rails of some of our light railways. Yes, these rails were removed in pairs, still attached to their sleepers, and, loaded on trucks in this condition, they were sent to the Eastern front!

Herr Ludwig Ganghofer, in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (No. 103, the 26th of February, 1915), boasts of the organisation of this systematic pillage.

"For three months," he writes, "the occupied country provided four-fifths of the requirements of the army. Even now, although the resources of the occupied country are beginning to yield less abundantly, our Western army still draws from it three-fifths of the necessary subsistence. Germany, therefore, according to a calculation based upon the average, has saved from £175,000 to £200,000 per diem.

"The profits of victory are still further increased by the profits of the economic war waged conformably with the law of nations (*sic*) against the conquered territory—that is, by the utilisation of the immense resources transported from Belgium and the North of France into Germany: such as war booty, the stores of fortresses, cereals, woollens, metals, timber. What Germany is saving or gaining by this economic war, which is di-

<sup>1</sup> *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 18th of January, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> See the complaint addressed on the 22nd of January, 1915, to the German Governor-General by the *Fédération des Constructeurs de Belgique*.

rected with commercial intelligence, may be estimated at £240,000 to £280,000 per diem, and the total profit which Germany has reaped behind the Western front from the operations undertaken since the beginning of the war must be something like £80,000,000."

And this Ludwig Ganghofer adds, without shame:

"An officer of high rank remarked to me at Saint-Quentin, half-jesting, half-thoughtful: 'Astonishing what a man can learn. In reality I am an officer of the Bodyguard at Potsdam, but now I am dealing in timber and wool. And am even making a good thing of it!'"

### EXTORTION AND SPOILIATION

The "Military Interpreter for Use in the Enemy's Country," published in Berlin in 1906, describes in meticulous fashion the régime to be imposed upon the populations of occupied territories. Everything has been foreseen by this little manual, which must certainly have served as a guide on many occasions to German officers operating in Belgium.

"One means of obtaining money is the fine," is one notable statement. "Every commune being, in principle, declared liable for the acts of hostility or malevolence committed upon its territory . . . the slightest injury may be the occasion of a fine."

This "means of obtaining money" was applied in Belgium under the most various pretexts, and with much energy.

At Arlon, on the eleventh day of occupation, a telephone wire having been broken, the town was given four hours to pay a fine of 100,000 *francs in gold*, in default of which 100 houses would be sacked. When the payment was made 47 houses had already been pillaged!

Moreover, the German authorities held no inquiry into the breaking of this wire; this would have been to look a gift horse in the mouth! But in Brussels, where a similar incident had occurred, M. Max, confronted by the reprisals with which the city had been threatened, demanded that an inquiry should be held, and it was thereby discovered that the wire in question—put up by the Germans to connect two of their posts—was absolutely worn out and had broken spontaneously!

At Hargimont, a village in Belgian Luxemburg, some officers quartered themselves in the presbytery. They were finishing a savoury meal when a lively volleying was heard. All leapt to

their feet, and their leader declared: "My men have been fired on, Monsieur le Curé! You are my prisoner; I must have ten hostages, and, in two hours, a sum of 100,000 francs!"

In vain did the curé protest the innocence of his parishioners. He was met always by these words: "We must have 100,000 francs!"

The châtelaine of the district, who was the only person in a position to find such a sum, was forced to intervene and to sign a cheque upon a Brussels bank. Now the truth was this: it was a drunken soldier who had fired in the air, and his comrades, believing themselves to be attacked, had immediately begun to fire in all directions, even killing (but that was a detail!) the burgomaster, who was passing, leading the horses which had been requisitioned.

At Wavre, a small town in Brabant, a German soldier was wounded by a bullet. The commune (containing barely 8,000 inhabitants) was punished with a fine of *three million francs*—£120,000! A few days later Lieutenant-General von Nieber wrote to the burgomaster:

On the 22nd of August, 1914, the General commanding the IInd Army, Herr von Bülow, imposed upon the town of Wavre a war contribution of three million francs, payable by the 1st of September, in expiation of (its) unqualifiable conduct, contrary to the law of nations and the usages of war, in attacking German troops by surprise.

The General commanding the IInd Army Corps has given the General commanding the *étape* of the IInd Army the order to obtain the said contribution without delay, which it (*sic*) must pay on account of its conduct.

I order and summon you to hand to the bearer of the present the two first instalments or two million francs (£80,000) in gold.

I demand also that you give to the bearer a letter duly sealed with the seal of the town declaring that the balance, or one million francs, will be paid without any default on the 1st of September.

I draw the attention of the town that it cannot in any case count upon a prolongation of the term of delay, for the civil population of the town has placed itself outside the law of nations (*sic*) by firing on German soldiers.

The town of Wavre will be burned and destroyed if the payment is not made in time, without regard for anyone; *the innocent will suffer with the guilty.*

The unhappy little city not having been able to pay this exorbitant fine in time, fifty houses were burned down. A few days later a *German* bullet was extracted from the wounds of the precious German soldier!

The city of Brussels "without the suburbs" (about 180,000

inhabitants) was condemned to pay a fine of £200,000 because two police agents had refused to arrest—upon the injunctions of “an agent the depositary of the German authority”—for which read German spy—an urchin who was indiscreetly selling foreign newspapers. In Antwerp the commune was forced to pay a fine of £2,000—which was particularly favourable tariff—because a placard announcing a German victory in Poland had been torn. The little town of Lierre—almost completely destroyed at the time of the siege of Antwerp—had to pay £40 for a similar reason.

At Schellebelle (2,200 inhabitants) a telephone wire was broken; a fine of £4,000.

At Selzaete (5,500 inhabitants) a telephone wire was broken; a fine of £600 was imposed. It is claimed—but, of course, by malicious tongues—that here the German soldiers cut the wire by order.

At Puers the commune was condemned to pay a fine of £150—for the same reason. However, it was proved that corrosion was the cause of the break in the wire.

Malines was forced to pay a fine of £1,000 because the burgomaster did not warn the military authority of a journey which the Cardinal Archbishop, deprived of his motor-car, was forced to make on foot. (The eminent prelate had received an ovation from the peasants along the road.)

At Bruges two young children—it appears—dirtied a German flag. The commune had to pay £20,000 to expiate this abominable crime!

The city of Brussels, required to repair the road from Malines, a labour in no way incumbent upon it, refused to submit to this demand; it was condemned (in April, 1915) to pay a fine of 500,000 marks (£25,000). One remark in this connection: At present fines are usually reckoned in marks, but payment is demanded in francs. Now a decree of the 6th of October, 1914, fixed the price of the mark at 1fr.25 (whereas it is never worth more than 1fr.24); 500,000 marks therefore means in reality 625,000 francs to be paid by the Belgians affected, whatever may be the rate of exchange in the international markets.

At Middelkerke some German soldiers shot a carrier pigeon arriving from Ostend; under the pretext that this pigeon was carrying a letter, the town of Ostend was compelled to pay a fine of *one million marks* (£50,000). The burgomaster demanded a sight of the letter. He was refused; his rights were

confined to payment! (At the same period—the end of May, 1915—the Germans, always haunted by the fear of espionage, ordered a general massacre of carrier pigeons at Bruges and Ostend. And some of the Bruges fanciers had pigeon-lofts worth £2,000 and more.)<sup>1</sup>

The town of Courtrai was forced, some months ago, to pay a fine of *ten million marks* (yes, £500,000) because a pretended secret store of weapons was found there. Now these were weapons belonging to private persons, collected and stored by the communal administration—according to the instructions of the German Administration itself—in a communal building.

A last example, not to prolong this summary indefinitely: The administrators of the National Bank urged the Provincial Councillors, who had consulted them on this subject, not to acquiesce in the renewal, then lately decreed, of the monthly payment of £1,600,000. Von Bissing (104) got wind of the incident, and as a result the National Bank had to pay the German Administration—by way of a fine—a sum of £120,000. A mere trifle, is it not?

Among other “means of obtaining money” which the Germans use and abuse are these:

*Passports*, without which it is forbidden, in many parts of the country, to move from one locality to another (these passports are expensive, and at the end of a few days they lapse) (99).

*Confiscations* and *seizures* of all kinds; the Central Committee of the Belgian Red Cross refusing to occupy itself with undertakings which, although worthy of attention, were none the less entirely outside its province, von Bissing confiscated (on the 14th of April, 1915) the whole of its loose cash, or nearly £8,000. When a Belgian wishes to leave the country he has to pay—lest he should be suspected of wishing to go to France or England—a large deposit. If he does not return within the prescribed time, or if he really goes to the “enemy country”—and the Germans are always very exactly informed in these matters—the deposit is confiscated.

Then in certain cases of infractions of the German military law—which is interfering and fantastic to excess—the prisoner is condemned to a term of imprisonment *or a fine*; a prolonged

<sup>1</sup>The breeding of carrier pigeons was much in vogue in Belgium, where everyone still remembers the famous flight accomplished twenty years ago by some picked birds. Sent by rail to Madrid, they returned in an extraordinarily short space of time to their lofts in Belgium.

sentence of imprisonment, or a relatively light fine, matters being so arranged that the delinquent usually prefers to pay the fine. At least, it was so in the beginning; now the manœuvre seldom succeeds, and it is rarely that the offender does not choose imprisonment.

Blackmail—a method of the same category—used also to yield an excellent profit. You were searched, and under the pretext that you had compromising papers on you, you were threatened with prison, but were given to understand that “this time” you would be left at liberty if you gave . . . all that you could give.

There is still the *tax on absentees*. Belgians who left the country at the commencement of hostilities, and who have not returned by a given date, are forced, under penalty of the seizure of their personal property, to pay a supplementary tax equivalent to *ten times* the amount of the taxes which they paid to the Belgian State before the war. This fiscal measure is absolutely illegal, from whatever point of view we consider it; even if we were regarded as ordinary belligerents whose territory was legally occupied, it could not be legitimately applied to us. Now, to justify it, the German casuists have gone to the length of invoking I know not what regulations of The Hague Conventions; as though there had not been an essential crime committed at the very beginning of the German occupation, which—because unforeseen and unforeseeable—falsifies all the dispositions of these Conventions; and as though the whole subsequent conduct of Germany as far as we are concerned had not been a constant and absolute disregard of all Conventions and all legality!

### THE MARTIAL LAW OF GERMANY

The proclamations of which we have already seen a few examples have not remained dead letters. Martial law is applied in Belgium with a severity which is equalled only by the tranquil dignity of those whom it strikes. The military tribunals are virtually in permanent session, and they strike without pity and without appeal. It would be difficult to-day to number the sentences which they have pronounced, the sentences of imprisonment, sentences of deportation, sentences of penal servitude, sentences of death. For lack of space, and also for lack of sufficient documentation, I will do no more here than mention a few typical cases.



Despite all risks, intrepid couriers—known as *passieurs*—are at work introducing foreign newspapers into the occupied territory. The calling is profitable: certain English newspapers, and the *Times* in particular, are often sold at a very high price to the sequestered citizens, who are hungry for accurate news. (At the time of the fall of Antwerp a copy of the *Times* was sold for £4 and over.) But there are spies everywhere, and swarms of *agents provocateurs*. One day one of these individuals laid his

# BEKANNTMACHUNG

Von einem am 28. Oktober d. J. gesetzlich zusammengetretenen deutschen Feldkriegsgericht sind bestrahlt worden:

1. Der städtische Kleintaxi von Ryckere wurde Wilhelm Aggré, gegen seine rechtskräftige Anweisung seinen kaiserlich-belgischen städtischen Beamten, wegen gemeinverständlicher Erpressung zum Besuche in zwei Malen, wegen Verstoßes gegen die römische Fidei und wegen tätlicher Aggré gegen seine deutschen Kollegen

mit 3 Jahren Gefängnis;

2. Der belgische Kleintaxi Beghère wurde Wilfried Amgré, gegen seine rechtskräftige Anweisung seinen kaiserlich-belgischen städtischen Beamten, wegen gemeinverständlicher Erpressung des römischen Fidei und wegen Verstoßes gegen seine deutschen Kollegen

mit 3 Jahren Gefängnis.

Das Urteil ist am 31. Oktober d. J. vom Herrn General-Gouverneur Freiherrn von der Goltz, als zuständiges Gerichtsherrn bestätigt worden.

Der Stadt Brüssel, nach Vollmacht, wurde gegen den städtischen Beamten Aggré eine Anweisung von Ryckere gegen seine deutschen Kollegen wegen Verstoßes gegen die

5 Millionen Franc.

Brüssel, den 1. November 1914.

Der Gouverneur von Brüssel,  
Freiherr von Lüttwitz,  
Gouverneur.

# AVIS

Un tribunal de guerre légalement convoqué a prononcé, le 28 octobre 1914, les condamnations suivantes:

1. Contre l'agent de police de Ryckere pour avoir attaqué dans l'exercice légal de ses fonctions un agent de police de la commune de Bruxelles, pour les motifs susdits, condamné en deux ans de détention avec sursis, pour avoir jeté l'insulte à son dévot dans un café et pour avoir frappé un autre allemand

cinq ans de prison;

2. Contre l'agent de police Beghère pour avoir attaqué dans l'exercice légal de ses fonctions un agent de police de la commune de Bruxelles, pour les motifs susdits, condamné en trois ans de prison.

Les jugements ont été confirmés le 31 octobre 1914 par M. le Gouverneur Général, Baron von der Goltz.

La ville de Bruxelles, sous l'autorité, a été punie pour l'insulte reproché par son agent de police de Ryckere contre un autre allemand d'une amende de cinq millions de francs.

cinq millions de francs.

Bruxelles, le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1914.

Le Gouverneur de Bruxelles,  
Baron von Lüttwitz, &  
Gouverneur.

# BERICHT

Een oorlogstribunaal wettelijk bijgevoegden heeft den 28<sup>en</sup> October 1914, de volgende vonnissen uitgesproken:

1. Tegen den politieagent de Ryckere, om in het betrekken de politieagent de Ryckere een agent van de Gedeputeerde Raad van Brussel te hebben, voor verschillende misdrijven, waaronder twee aanslagen op de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid

vijf jaar gevang.

2. Tegen den politieagent Beghère, om in het betrekken de politieagent Beghère een agent van de Gedeputeerde Raad van Brussel te hebben, voor verschillende misdrijven, waaronder twee aanslagen op de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid, en twee misdrijven tegen de rijksoverheid

drie jaar gevang.

De vonnissen zijn den 31<sup>sten</sup> October 1914 bevestigd geweest door den Gouverneur Generaal, Baron von der Goltz.

De stad Brussel, na de bevestiging, is strafbaar wegens de insulte die door den politieagent de Ryckere tegen een ander Duitschman is uitgesproken van vijf miljoen frank.

vijf miljoen frank.

Brussel, den 1<sup>sten</sup> November 1914.

De Gouverneur van Brussel,  
Vrijheer von Lüttwitz,  
Gouverneur.

SENTENCES PUBLISHED IN BRUSSELS, NOVEMBER, 1914.

hand upon the collar of a little *colporteur* who had, in all confidence, discreetly offered him an example of one of these prohibited newspapers. A policeman was close at hand; the spy requested him to arrest the delinquent; the worthy and paternal policeman refused; whereupon invectives, blows, the intervention of the crowd, the arrival of another policeman, and then the appearance of German soldiers. . . .

A few days later the inhabitants of Brussels learned the sequel by means of the placard here reproduced:

NOTICE: A war tribunal legally convoked pronounced, on the 28th of October, the following sentences:

1. In the case of the police agent De Ryckere, for having attacked, in

the exercise of his duty, an agent the depositary of the German authority, for wilful bodily injuries committed in two cases, in concert with others, for having procured the escape of a prisoner in the case and for having attacked a German soldier: *five years' imprisonment*.

2. In the case of the police agent Segers, for having attacked, in the exercise of his duty, an agent the depositary of the German authority, for wilful bodily injuries inflicted on this German agent, and for having procured the escape of a prisoner (all these infractions constituting a single action): *three years' imprisonment*.

The sentences were confirmed on the 31st of October by the Governor-General, Baron von der Goltz.

The city of Brussels, without the suburbs, has been punished for the crimes committed by its police agent De Ryckere against a German soldier by an additional tax of £200,000.

General Fivé and Lieutenant Gille were retired Belgian officers living in Liège. Being themselves unable to serve in the army, they decided, in concert with some of their fellow-citizens, to help young men who wished to cross the frontier in order to enrol themselves in our army. They were unhappily betrayed by a piece of stupidity on the part of one of these young men, and after a longish term of "preventive detention" they were brought before a military tribunal, whose sentence was as follows (dated Liège, the 7th of January, 1915; signed, von Bissing):—

By judgment of the war tribunal at Liège the persons whose names follow have been sentenced for (crime of) war treason and for having participated in the crime: 1, the Belgian Lieutenant Gustave Gille, of Liège, to *penal servitude for life*; 2, the Belgian Brigadier-General (unattached) Gustive Fivé, of Liège, to *penal servitude for life*; 3, the tailor Ferdinand L'Homme, of Liège; and 4, the merchant Alfred Transquet of Liège, each to *eight years' imprisonment*; 5, the lithographer Guillaume Yerna, of Witte, to *four years' imprisonment*; 6, the artisan Ferdinand Wilde, of Liège, to *three years' imprisonment*.

The attitude of the two Belgian officers before their judges was superb. "You are accused of having assisted the escape of thirty-five young men who have gone to enrol themselves in the enemy army," said the president of the Court, a colonel. They smiled disdainfully; then, in virile tones, the elder of the two, the old General, replied: "You are mistaken; it is not thirty-five, but a full three hundred soldiers that we have had the honour to recruit for the country! As for the enemy, you are he!"

Among many others sentenced for similar actions I will men-

tion Father Van Bambeke, of the Society of Jesus, whose attitude before the Court was equally fine.

When the President asked him what he would do if acquitted, he replied without hesitation: "I should begin again. You thought you did your duty in arresting me; I know that I am doing mine in urging my young compatriots to join those who are fighting for the liberation of our territory." Father Van Bambeke was sentenced to *two and a half years' penal servitude*. But owing to influence—I do not know whose—he was released after a few weeks' imprisonment.

At Roulers, in the latter half of May, 1915, a man named Carbonnez shouted, "*Vive la France!*" as a small convoy of French prisoners was passing. Arrested immediately, he was sentenced to *three years' imprisonment* and was deported to Germany.

The town was threatened with destruction should such a thing occur again.

On the 21st of May Mme. Henry Carton de Wiart was sentenced to three and a half months' imprisonment. On the following day she was deported to Germany.

This sentence was brought to the knowledge of the population of Brussels in the following terms:—

Mme. Carton de Wiart, wife of the ex-Minister of Justice, was sentenced, on the 21st of May, by the military tribunal of the Government, to *three months' and two weeks' imprisonment*. Mme. Carton de Wiart has herself confessed that she has continually, in a large number of cases, and by evading the German post, caused letters to be forwarded to herself and to others in Belgium and across the Dutch frontier. She has thus withheld letters from the censorship and has rendered possible their utilisation for purposes of espionage and the transmission of forbidden news. She has, moreover, according to her own confession, distributed forbidden writings, while perfectly well aware of their offensive character. She has, lastly, and still according to her own confession, withheld and destroyed a letter addressed to the *Kommandantur* and placed by mistake in her letter-box. By such procedures it is possible to endanger the security of the German troops.

Consequently Mme. Carton de Wiart has had to be sentenced and transported to Germany.

When the Belgian Government was forced to leave Brussels, Mme. Carton de Wiart wished to remain in the capital, with her six children, in order to continue her activities in connection with the charitable undertakings over which she presided, and which, she considered with reason, would need her services more than

ever. Generous and compassionate to a fault, if she secretly received and forwarded letters it was only to enable Belgian families which had remained in the occupied territory to obtain news of those at the front. As for the "forbidden writings" which Mme. Carton de Wiart confessed to having distributed, these were copies of the Pastoral Letter of Cardinal Mercier. Lastly, if this Belgian lady threw into her waste-paper basket a letter addressed to the *Kommandantur*, which the German post had, by mistake, delivered at her private house, it was because she quite rightly considered that it was no business of hers to repair the blunders of her country's enemies. Once and for all, it is the Germans who, in *our* country, are perpetually in the wrong, at every moment and in every action, and no well-born Belgian would consent to assist them in any way whatever.

The examination of Mme. Carton de Wiart lasted seven or eight hours, during which this noble lady did not for a moment depart from her smiling composure and her fine courage. After passing sentence, the presiding officer asked her. "Have you anything further to say, *Frau Excellenz?*" "I have this to add," she said, "that I disavow beforehand any intervention which might be made in my favour. I regard the penalty inflicted upon me as an honour, and I wish to undergo it to the end."<sup>1</sup>

Wishing to recognise, by discreet but suitable acknowledgment, the inestimable services which the Spanish authorities, in concurrence with the Americans, have rendered us in the matter of revictualling our poor country, the communal administration of Charleroi decided to celebrate the birthday of King Alfonso in the schools of the town. A programme was drawn up; there would be a short talk about Spain, songs, and games (indoors); finally the school-children were to proceed in a body—but in small groups, a class at a time, and in silence—past the Spanish Consulate, just to see, without even saluting it, the Spanish flag which would be flying above the Consulate on the King's birthday. It would have been an extremely discreet demonstration, which could not in any way have given umbrage to the sullen "occupants."

Unhappily the rumour got about that all the school-children

<sup>1</sup> At the expiration of her sentence—which she had to serve in Berlin in a civil prison—Mme. Carton de Wiart was sent to Switzerland, where her husband went to meet her and escort her to Havre. He is forbidden to enter Belgium, so that she is virtually banished.

of the town were to be massed in front of the Consulate, where they were to sing a cantata and cheer the Consul!

The result was that on the day of the celebration (the 17th of May) there were at one moment a thousand curious watchers before the Spanish Consulate awaiting the arrival of the school-children. Suddenly some German soldiers from the neighbouring barracks, commanded by a non-commissioned officer, came running up, and fell upon the inoffensive crowd, even releasing a huge unmuzzled watch-dog, which bit several persons.

The epilogue of this spoilt celebration was the following sentence:

The advocate Dewandre, Franz, of Charleroi, rue de Brabant, No. 1, acting as burgomaster in Charleroi, Belgium, is condemned, by virtue of paragraph 18, Chapter II. of the Imperial decree respecting the extraordinary legal regulations in time of war as affecting foreigners, dated the 28th of December, 1899, to pay a fine of *two thousand marks* (£100), payable to the funds of the arrondissement on or before the 10th of June, 1915. In case of non-payment within the time required a term of three years' imprisonment, because on the 17th of May, 1915, he did, at Charleroi, at the time of the anniversary of the birthday of the King of Spain, permit the schoolmistress of this town to repair with the children of the schools before the house of the Spanish Consul in this town for the purpose of (holding) a demonstration and for having accorded him a private ovation, and because he caused thereby a gathering of men and excited the local population. . . .

So it was as a "foreigner," and for a crime—or pretended crime—which he did not commit that this Belgian burgomaster was sentenced, on Belgian soil, and in the Belgian town under his administration!

A few months ago the Comte George de Beaufort, burgomaster of Onoz (in the province of Namur), was condemned to *ten years' penal servitude*. His offence? He had nursed and kept in his house a wounded French soldier: an act of treason in the eyes of the scoundrels who are masters of our country—for the time being—only by virtue of the vilest and most cowardly act of treason!

M. Maurice Lippens, who managed an important factory in the north of East Flanders, obstinately refused to furnish electric current for the famous iron wire stretched along the frontier between Belgium and Holland; he was *deported to Germany*.

M. Arthur Verhaegen, deputy for Gand, protested against the efforts of the Germans to force the workers of Gand to make

sacks for the trenches; he was sentenced to *two years' imprisonment in a German fortress*.

On the 8th of September, 1915, a telegram from the Wolff Agency informed neutrals that Maître Théodor, President of the Order of Advocates, in Brussels, having forbidden a Brussels advocate to refer, in defending a client, to a decree issued by the German Governor-General, the latter considered that Maître Théodor had "injured the interests of those amenable to justice," and had, for that reason, transported him to Germany until the close of hostilities. Now it should be said that some time earlier some documents had been seized on the premises of Maître Francis Wiener,<sup>1</sup> of the Brussels Bar, and as President of the Bar Maître Théodor had addressed to the Governor-General a vehement protest against this abuse of power. This was the second time the courageous advocate permitted himself such an outburst, and it was evidently too much in von Bissing's opinion.

Here, by the way, is a typical example of the manner in which the said Governor-General and his satellites conceive of the "interests of those amenable to justice."

M. Jacques Timmermans, a Brussels manufacturer, was condemned to *one year's imprisonment* for giving information to two young men who wished to enrol themselves in our army. And to the sentence was added a statement that if the punishment inflicted was only one year's imprisonment, it was because, although the presumption of his guilt was grave enough, the facts were *not* absolutely established!

About the middle of November, 1915, some German soldiers invaded a communal soup-kitchen in Liège and proceeded to arrest M. Digneffe, deputy and communal councillor, one of the most highly respected figures in the industrial society of the city, and also the advocate, Paul Philippart-Staes, and several other persons who had been led thither by their evil star. The reason for this measure, which was revoked only upon payment of enormous sureties, was that these gentlemen were accused of giving "criminal" aid to the railway workers, who obstinately refused to work for the German Army.

In Brussels all Belgian ex-officers have to present themselves at the *Kommandantur* daily.

<sup>1</sup> Maître Francis Wiener had inherited the practice of his father, Maître Sam Wiener, Senator, who was advocate for the Civil List and for His Majesty King Léopold II. He was therefore in charge of important documents, which the Germans seized and pried into.

One fine day the Germans had something to say to General de Fauconval, General Janssens, General van Sprang, and Colonel Brassine: "Remain here: it has been decided to remove you to Germany." The officers were amazed, and demanded an explanation. No reply was vouchsafed them. "At least," demanded one of the prisoners, "let us go home for a few minutes so that we can bid our families good-bye and take a few things away with us!" This satisfaction was refused them. All that they could obtain, after lengthy discussion, was that they might send their families short notes—which were carried by soldiers—to inform them of their departure and to ask for a change of linen.

On the following day they were in Germany.

Hundreds of persons have been imprisoned or forced to pay heavy fines because they have received letters from abroad through blockade-runners.

Many, again, have been condemned to terms of ten and fifteen years' penal servitude, or even to penal servitude for life—when it was not simply to death—for having helped young men who were impatient to serve in our army to cross the frontier. The crime is known as "war treason"!

### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

By judgment of the German Council of War of the 13th of April, 1915, confirmed by the commandant of the *étape*, the divisional chief of the Ministry of Railways, in Brussels, Lenoir, has been *condemned to death* for espionage. The sentence was carried out to-day, the 14th of April, 1915. The condemned man was shot.

So reads a *communiqué* issued at Gand, where the execution took place.

M. Lenoir had sent "abroad"—that is, to the Belgian Government—some notes referring to the German military transports in Belgium. Before execution his butchers made him pass before the coffin and hearse which were intended for him! As for his widow, she was immediately deported to Germany.

A notice posted on the walls of Liège on the 7th of June:

(The following) were *shot* to-day, the 7th of June, 1915, by virtue of the finding of the Council of War of the 5th of June, 1915:

Louise Frenay, *née* Derache, shopkeeper, of Liège; Jean-Victor Bourseaux, shopkeeper, of Liège; Jules Descheulter, shopkeeper, of Liers; Pierre Pfeiffer, artisan, of Haout-Pré; Oscar Delarge, railway employé,

of Statte (Huy); Justin Lenders, of Liège; François Barthélemy, shop-keeper, of Grivegné; Charles Simon, draughtsman, of Namur; all Belgian subjects, except Simon, a British subject. They had taken an active part in an organisation which forwarded to the enemy information as to the movements of our troops (obtained) from the military service of our railways. They were found guilty of espionage.

The execution of Mme. Frenay and Justin Lenders appears to have been attended by particularly harrowing details. Various reports have been circulated whose veracity it was not always possible entirely to verify. According to one of these, which the *Record Advertiser* of Boston, U.S.A., reproduced, Mme. Frenay, only wounded by the first volley, and lying on the ground, was killed by a bullet from the revolver of the officer commanding the firing platoon. We record this detail with the necessary reservations.

About the middle of September, 1915, two citizens of Antwerp—M. Joseph Baeckelmans, architect, and M. Alexandre Franck, merchant—were executed “for espionage” in the courtyard of the prison of Saint-Gilles-lez-Bruxelles. For espionage—that is, for services rendered—while in territory improperly occupied—to their betrayed and mutilated country.

On their urgent petition the brother and the two sisters of Joseph Baeckelmans had obtained permission to bid him a last farewell. At the appointed time they reached the prison; they were brutally repulsed. They insisted, but it was of no use. . . . Hardly had they retired a few steps when they heard the shots of the firing platoon! One of the martyred man’s sisters fainted in the street. . . .

About the same time we learned that the “war tribunal” sitting in Brussels had passed sentence of death upon one Laurent Debakker, a commercial traveller of Uccle.

At the same time the station-master of Cuesmes was sentenced to penal servitude for life, and eight other persons, one of whom was a woman, were condemned to terms of ten and fifteen years’ penal servitude. Their crimes were “espionage” and “complicity in the crime of espionage.”

Lastly, “for having harboured a spy,” a woman of Tournai was sentenced to ten years’ penal servitude.

Early in October M. Nachtergael, son of the commandant of the fire brigade of Gand, and five other Belgian citizens were executed at Bruges.

At Hasselt, the chief town of the province of Limburg:



By the finding of the 7th of October of the field tribunal of the military government of Limburg, Pierre-Joseph Claes, of Belgian nationality, born the 8th of May, 1887, at Schaerbeek, near Brussels, was sentenced to death for espionage.

Claes confessed that in his capacity of Belgian soldier he came to Belgium dressed as a civilian with the object of practising espionage there.

The condemned man was shot to-day, the 8th of October, 1915.

Five other accused persons were sentenced each to fifteen years' penal servitude.

It is not true that Claes confessed that he entered Belgium to practise espionage. He simply admitted that he was a Belgian soldier: no more. As a brave Belgian soldier Claes refused to have his eyes bandaged. And in the act of protesting his innocence he died erect, fierce and superb, shouting, "Vive la Belgique! Vive la Liberté!" His bearing was so splendid that it affected the dozen slaves who were to shoot him; they had not the courage to aim at him, and as only one bullet wounded him, and that not fatally, the non-commissioned officer in command of the platoon had to kill him by firing a revolver into his ear. . . .

#### IN BRUSSELS:

By its finding of the 9th of October, 1915, the war tribunal has pronounced the following sentences for treason committed during a state of war (for forwarding recruits to the enemy):

1. Philippe Baucq, architect, of Brussels.
2. Louise Thuliez, professor at Lille.
3. Edith Cavell, superintendent of a medical institute in Brussels.
4. Louis Séverin, chemist, of Brussels.
5. Comtesse Jeanne de Belleville, of Montignies.

*All five sentenced to death.*

6. Herman Capiiau, engineer, of Wasmès.
7. Mme. Ada Bodart, of Brussels.
8. Albert Libier, advocate, of Wasmès.
9. Georges Derveau, chemist, of Paturages

*All four sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude.*

10. Princess Maria de Croy, of Bellignies.

*To ten years' penal servitude.*

Seventeen other accused persons were sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment varying from two to eight years.

Eight other persons accused of treason committed during a state of war were acquitted.

*The sentence passed against Baucq and Cavell has already been carried out.*

Brussels, 12th of October, 1915.

*The General Government.*

Philippe Baucq and Edith Cavell alone were executed, and this a few hours only after the passing of sentence. Sentence was passed on the 9th of October, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. At 2 o'clock in the morning of the 10th they were led to the public shooting-ground—the *Tir National*. Then the last act of this gloomy tragedy was unfolded. Baucq was shot first, in the presence of Miss Cavell, who fainted at the sight and fell. The officer-executioner then ordered his men to carry the condemned woman to the spot indicated for the execution; they obeyed, but when they received the order to fire upon the unfortunate woman they obstinately refused. Then the officer whose part it was to carry out the noble works of His Majesty the Emperor Wilhelm leaned over the poor little motionless body and coolly discharged his revolver into the ear.

Amid the horrors of this Germanic war the fate of this noble woman is symbolic. "The story of this English nurse," M. Ferdinand Buisson, President of "The French League for the Defence of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen," has very justly observed, "the story of this English nurse is that of the conflict between two moralities: the one is a return to primitive barbarism, scientifically perfected by the military caste of Prussia; the other, which responds to the aspirations of the best of humanity, was, on the eve of the tempest, on the way to conquering the peoples, and it will, you may be confident, become the rule of humanity when German militarism has indeed been annihilated by the victory of justice in arms.

"Miss Cavell was condemned in the name of the pretended military law which the Germans oppose to The Hague Conventions. According to them a neutral country invaded and ravaged by one of the guarantors of its neutrality commits a crime if it attempts to resist the invader, a crime deserving the punishment of extermination. Let a citizen or a friend of this country abet this resistance even indirectly, and he commits not a crime, but a treason. They have invented a special term, 'war treason!' Consequently there is only one penalty for this offence: the penalty suffered by traitors—death. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

"The sentence passed upon Miss Cavell is the most brutal, the most insolent defiance of ordinary justice ever offered by the justice of militarism. If there existed a man knowing nothing

<sup>1</sup> From a speech delivered at the Trocadéro on the 28th of November, 1915, on the occasion of the impressive demonstration organised by the League of the Rights of Man in honour of Miss Cavell's memory.

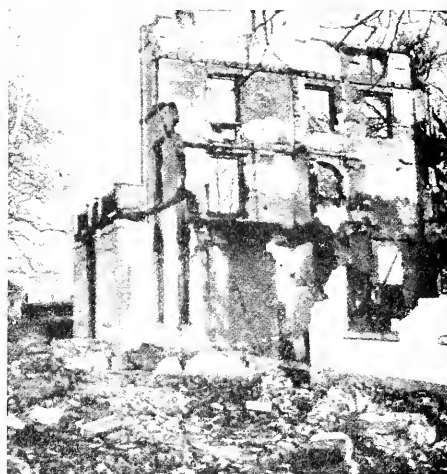


45. ELISABETH, QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

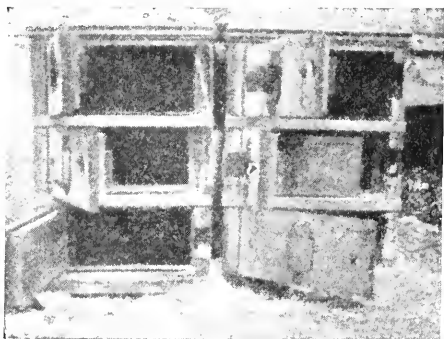
*"She is yonder, with King Albert, in the midst of the battling troops. . . . She consoles men in life and in death; she smiles, she dresses wounds. She is all sweetness and all pity in this land of Flanders, where the heavy mist enwraps the mournful landscape, a shroud of grey over so many, many shrouds of linen. . . . A queen errant, yet such a queen as was never the spouse of the mightiest of kings, she symbolises the whole country, bruised but refusing to die."*—ROLAND DE MARES,  
Page 162



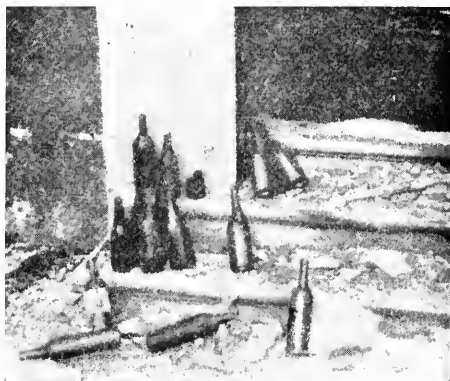
46. AT DINANT.



47. CHATEAU NEAR MALINES PLUNDERED AND BURNED BY THE GERMANS.



48. SAFE BROKEN OPEN BY GERMAN SOLDIERS.  
(Page 185)



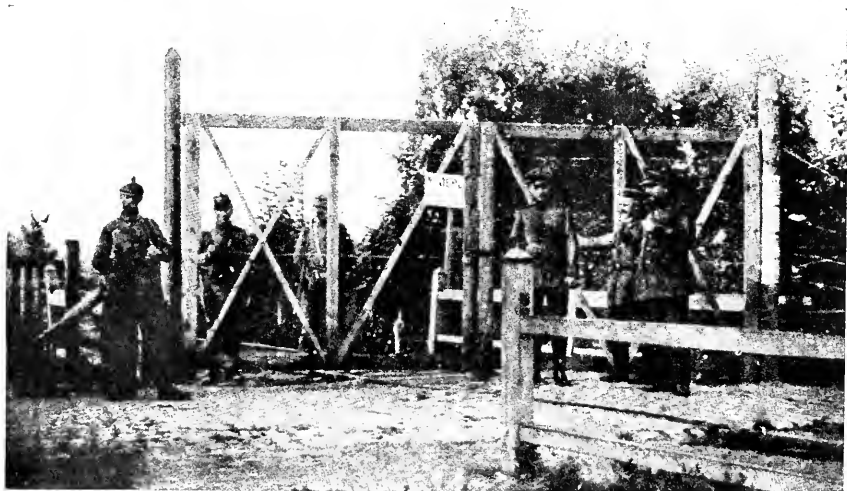
49. TRACES OF THEIR PASSAGE. (Page 185)



50. INSPECTION OF BELGIANS CAPABLE OF MILITARY SERVICE.



51. STUDIO OF A BELGIAN ARTIST VISITED BY GERMANS. (Page 189)



52. BELGIUM BECAME A VAST PRISON. (Page 178)



53. FARMHOUSES AND COTTAGES AND WINDMILLS DEMOLISHED. (*Page 235*)



54. BRUSSELS—READING THE GERMAN TELEGRAMS.

of the war, it would be enough to tell him of the trial of Miss Cavell, and he would hold the name of German in abhorrence.

“Every possible aggravating circumstance would seem to have been purposely combined in order to render the murderous procedure more abominable; the cold and bloodthirsty premeditation; the examination, circumstantial and secret, to facilitate the sentence; the crafty and dastardly dissimulation intended to avert all clemency, to hold the victim safely until the last moment. She must die, and die at once. Never, since the virgin of Lorraine appeared before the infamous Bishop of Beauvais, has the sun shone upon a more sinister parody of justice.

“And who then is the dangerous criminal against whom the whole bristling arsenal of this pitiless inquisition is invoked? A woman who for twenty years has unrestingly devoted herself to solacing all our human miseries; in Brussels, quivering under the heel of the conqueror, she nursed with equal devotion the sick and wounded of all the armies; the victors and the vanquished, the invaded and the invaders.”<sup>1</sup>

If the assassination of Miss Cavell was not the first of its kind, neither, alas! was it the last; and this in spite of the consternation and indignation which it produced throughout the civilised world.

On the 17th of October, 1915, the “war tribunal” of Liège condemned to death:

1. Simon Orfal, Belgian subject, warehouseman, of Verviers;
2. Anna Benazet, of French nationality, tailoress, of Verviers;
3. Amédée Hesse, native of Luxemburg, dentist, of Spa;
4. Constant Herk, Belgian, merchant, of Baelen, near Dolhain.

They had “undertaken, for the benefit of the Allies, the task of watching the railways.” (Five other prisoners were sentenced to terms of ten and fifteen years’ penal servitude.)

A few days later, on the 27th of October, 1915, the same tribunal sentenced to death:

1. Léon François, tramway inspector, of Larraeken;
2. Félix Van der Snoeck, tramway inspector, of Glain;
3. Henri Noirfalize, blacksmith, of Chênée;
4. Oscar Sacré, drayman, of Ongrée;
5. Henri Deféchereux, gate-keeper, of Kinkempois;
6. Auguste Beguin, policeman, of Liège;

<sup>1</sup> Speech delivered by M. Paul Painlevé at the Trocadéro, 28th of November, 1915.

7. Lucien Gillet, blacksmith, of Graux (France);
8. Joseph Gillot, painter and glazier, of Liège;
9. Jean Legros, mechanic, of Liège.

Their crime? Always the same—"war treason"! They were all shot on the 28th of October. The soldiers told off for their execution were divided into three platoons, which stood back to back in the form of a triangle, each platoon having before it three of the condemned prisoners. François died shouting, "*Vive mon pays!*" Gillet, who was secretary to the *Syndicat des Métallurgistes du Nord*, cried, "*Vive la France!*"

On the 2nd of November, 1915, the following were executed:

1. Jules Legay, platelayer, of Cuesmes;
  2. Joseph Delsant, manufacturer of shoemakers' sundries, of Cuesmes; and
  3. Charles Simonet, labourer, of Mons;
- who were tried in Brussels by the valiant champions of German *Kultur*, and were sentenced to death for having noted the passing of "the convoys of troops on two of the principal lines running to the front."

And this is not all! The foregoing summary is necessarily incomplete; it contains many lacunæ.

And the same sort of thing is still going on!

And the neutral nations continue to . . . hold their peace. They persist in the silence and reserve which they believe to be prudent and discreet, but which in reality constitute a slow moral suicide.

And the brigand who governs Belgium and presides over these crimes has allowed himself to be created—by I forget which Teutonic university—a doctor, *honoris causa*, of juridical science. Yes, of juridical science!

### CIVIL JUSTICE IN BELGIUM

I extract the following lines from a courageous protest addressed to General von Bissing, some time last year, by Maître Théodor, President of the Order of Advocates in Brussels:

"Many protests have been addressed to me, in my capacity of President of the Order of Advocates, by compatriots who complain of grave abuses, particularly in the matter of repressive measures. It is not my place to judge of these protests; none the less, they reveal a situation which it is no longer possible



to ignore. It is incumbent upon the Bar to consider this situation. . . .

“Regarding matters as a whole, without passion or partiality, the lawyer cannot fail to recognise that *everything, in the German judicial organisation in Belgium, is contrary to the principles of justice.* . . . It is justice without a check; the judge is committed to himself—that is, to his impressions, his prejudices, and his environment. The prisoner is abandoned in his distress to an unaided struggle with his all-powerful adversary.

“This justice, which is uncontrolled, and therefore without guarantee, constitutes for us the most dangerous and oppressive illegality. We do not regard justice as a juridical or moral possibility without freedom of defence. Freedom of defence—that is to say, light shed upon all the elements of the trial: the public conscience making itself heard in the heart of the prætorium; the right to say everything in the most respectful manner, and also the courage to dare everything, placed at the service of misfortune, justice, and the law. It is one of the great conquests of our domestic history; it is the foundation-stone of individual liberty.

“What are your means of information?”

“Apart from the judges of the court, they are the secret police and the informers.

“The secret police, without external marks or badges, mingling with the population in the streets, in the cafés, on the platform 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 rancour 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 defence 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 mortal 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 civilisation; art and science are its tributaries; religions live and prosper in its shadow. It is 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 (55). A small portion, still further reduced from day to day, 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 in Belgium?

#### THE OCCUPATION AS SEEN BY NEUTRALS

At the end of December, 1914, a Norwegian lady living in Belgium wrote to one of her friends in Christiania, who had herself in the past made a long stay in our midst.

"I have been," she wrote, "to see the B——'s. They had received neither your letters nor your telegrams; but they had, quite recently, an opportunity to ask a Norwegian who was leaving to remember them to you.

"The Germans are insanely strict, and before our departure from Antwerp I was searched all over. Mme. C——, who wanted to rejoin her husband here in Holland, was arrested at the frontier and sent back under escort to Antwerp, where she was imprisoned for twenty-four hours; she had some letters on her, and an old passport. Happily we were able to continue our journey and warn her husband. He will remain for the time being in Holland. The Germans no longer allow them to leave the country; consequently those who can remain abroad do not run the risk of re-entering Belgium.

"We made a harrowing and rather lengthy journey lately from Antwerp to Louvain—3rd class; 1st and 2nd *nur für Offizieren* (for officers only)! A stop of an hour and a half before arriving at Malines; there were, quite close to the railway, six common burial-pits. . . . All along the line from Malines to Louvain grave upon grave . . . the fields trampled, great yawning holes made by the shells, a true chaos; all the houses, too, were ruined on either side of the line, and the woods cut down. As for the aspect of Louvain, it was enough to make one weep tears of blood. . . . We conversed with a great many inhabitants, and what they told us would have moved a stone. . . . Their composure was especially impressive. . . . We shall remain in Holland until after the New Year in order to write our letters, for it is impossible to write from Belgium. . . ."

A few days later a friend—a Dutchman who had lived in Brussels for a number of years—wrote to me from The Hague:

"We left Brussels in December. One could no longer breathe there. There are spies everywhere; they listen to you in the trams in order to trap you. . . . After a disagreeable journey, which lasted three days, we arrived here. . . ."

On the 13th of January, 1915, M. Andreas Buntzen said in the *Berlingske Tidende* of Copenhagen:

"When one travels through Belgium at express speed in a motor-car one's impression is that of bowling down a long road bordered by ruined houses. The whole country, moreover, is one huge graveyard."

One huge graveyard! That Belgium which was formerly so smiling a country, of which men said, with due reason, that it was the kitchen-garden of Europe, is transformed into one huge graveyard!

There are witnesses in abundance to confirm what Maeterlinck told us.

Here, among other documents of the kind, is a report addressed on the 1st of January, 1915, to the Rockefeller Foundation by its Relief Committee, which is composed of Messrs. Wickliffe, Rose, Director-General of the International Commission of Hygiene; Ernest P. Bicknell, Secretary of the American Red Cross Society; and Henry James, Director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research:

"To understand the Belgian problem it is necessary to insist not so much on the poverty of a few hundred thousand men as upon the sudden inactivity imposed upon a healthy and vigorous nation of seven million souls. It is this that makes the situation of Belgium an example without precedent in history. . . ."

"The use of the telegraph and the telephone is strictly prohibited as far as the population is concerned. There is no international postal service, no communication with the outer world except by means of letters passing through the hands of the Germans.

"If anyone wishes to travel from one town to another he must, as a rule, obtain a special passport. He is compelled to waste hours in obtaining it. This is one reason why the Americans, who are authorised to move about with greater freedom, are employed to distribute provisions. The trains run practically for the Germans only.

"The obstacles which block certain canals have not yet been removed. A number of electric tramways providing a local

service are running, and the main roads are still accessible; but most of the draught animals have been requisitioned. The circulation of automobiles is forbidden.

"The cash reserves and a large proportion of the negotiable securities of the banks were removed before the invasion. The issue of bank-notes by the National Bank has been stopped; but a number of towns and communes are issuing vouchers payable within the limits of their own territory.<sup>1</sup>

"The German requisitions are paid for, not in cash, but by means of vouchers, which, according to report, more often than not assume the most invalid forms. Paper currency is itself so rare that the German occupation has been forced to exert its arbitrary authority in order to maintain the rate of exchange between the mark and the franc at the rate of 1fr.25.

"The banks have either interrupted their payments or have limited them to very small sums. The depositors of the savings banks cannot make withdrawals sufficient to cover the weekly expenses corresponding to the indispensable needs of a working-class family. The wealthy are not in a position to negotiate any of their investments (except, perhaps, through Germany), and they may literally find themselves without a sou.

"Modern society has obviously evolved in the direction of an extremely complicated mechanism of transport, communications, and credit. In Belgium this mechanism has been completely annihilated. It results from this that commerce and industry are completely at a standstill. The only tradesmen who still do a little business are those who sell alimentary products or clothing.

"In a few months' time the industrial populations will probably be suffering from the most incredible poverty. In centres such as Liège, Brussels, Louvain, and Malines bread is distributed gratuitously to a quarter or half the population.

"As for the agricultural districts in general, it seems that the destruction of food stores is of greater importance than the destruction of the houses. When the latter are burned their former occupants install themselves in the houses of their more fortunate neighbours; or they often continue to live within their own walls—even under the most inconvenient conditions and

<sup>1</sup> The German Governor-General deprived the National Bank of the privilege of issuing bank-notes. But at the same time (22nd of December, 1914), "to avoid an economic catastrophe to the country" (*sic*)—read: in order not to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs—he granted this privilege to the Société Générale de Belgique.

without the least sign of comfort. But without draught horses they are scarcely in a position to plough, sow, or reap. Now the country has been almost completely drained of horses and cattle. The armies have not even refrained from requisitioning milch cows.

“The German occupation has requisitioned grain, provisions, cattle, and horses in the towns and in the country. It has also requisitioned the stocks of cotton and wool, and of raw materials as well as of manufactured products, brass and copper fixtures, the plant of certain factories, motor-cars, benzine, and all plant which can serve for the manufacture of arms and munitions.

“In the course of our journeys through Belgium we have seen hardly any cattle, and, indeed, no swine and no horses. Some villages have been completely destroyed. A certain number of houses have been burned in nearly all the towns and villages along the principal paths of the invasion. The inhabitants, as a rule, have had no time to save anything except the few clothes on their backs. . . .

“The destruction of implements and equipment cannot be estimated. In the smallest localities through which the army has passed, just as in some of the great cities, such as Louvain and Malines, all the houses which are left have been pillaged. We have observed in many houses that pieces of furniture impossible to carry away had been broken to pieces. . . .”

Here, lastly, is a more recent sketch, taken from another point of view. It was published in the *Telegraaf* by M. Hans, and was based upon the information supplied by a Dutch waterman. He had travelled with his barge from Holland to Antwerp, then to Termonde and into Flanders, and the impressions which he received in the course of this voyage were so painful that he resolved to navigate through Belgium no longer while the Germans were there:

“It is miserable to navigate the Scheldt or the Lys now,” says this humble but very sincere observer. “The sight of Antwerp gives you the hump. You’ve been so used to the bustle and movement there, the basins full of barges, the quays loaded with merchandise, where you had to keep a good look-out in order not to get knocked over by a train. . . . You can still hear, in your mind, the noise of the drays, the whistling of the tug-boats, the creaking of the chains, the singing of the barge-men. . . . Now it is death! Yes, Antwerp is dead. . . .”

As for Termonde, which had also been familiar to him—Termonde, so full of movement, so gracious of aspect—this is what he says:

“It looked to me entirely destroyed. What ruin, what misery! . . . Lots of people live together in one room, or in a cellar, or a stable. . . . They repair everything with tarred paper. If there’s a hole the wind blows through, they stick tarred paper over it; if there’s a window gone, more tarred paper! . . . What a wretched sight! . . .

“At the sight of all that ruin, at the sight of so much poverty and such wretchedness, I cried more than once, and I was glad to get out of the town. I passed under the bridge . . . but the permit cost me five marks. . . .

“There are sentinels at all the bridges, at all the locks. You have the feeling you’re navigating in another country. Before, one was so free and comfortable there. Now you have to be always minding what you’re doing, and every minute there are fresh orders. Sometimes I’ve had to stop to make way for a submarine going to Bruges—had to wait till the monster had passed. Who would ever have thought it?—submarines in the Belgian canals! . . . .”

Then the good man gives some professional details. There is little money to be made. It is true that the Germans would very much like to make use of the barges, but the Belgian barge-men, despite enticing offers, refuse to serve the enemy. The only work they consent to do, he explains, is to navigate the canals for the American Relief Committee. In this way they are helping their poor countrymen, and in the towns where they discharge their cargoes they receive many manifestations of gratitude and fraternity. And this lover of the green waters and the wandering life ends on a note of disenchantment: “It’s done with! It’s no longer the Belgium it was!”

### RELIEF AND MUTUAL AID

Squeezed almost to death, and isolated from the outer world, Belgium would die of starvation without the intervention of two admirable organisations of which I want to tell you something: the “National Committee of Relief and Alimentation” and the “Commission for Relief in Belgium.”

The National Committee is the result of an extension of the “Central Committee” constituted in Brussels early in Septem-

ber, 1914, upon the initiative of an eminent citizen, M. Ernest Solvay, and a few other men of action, heart, and energy—an undertaking whose activity was at first confined to the city and district of Brussels.

It was Ernest Solvay himself who recommended this extension, having foreseen the necessity of it immediately. Then, at his request, the Marquis de Villalobar, the Spanish Minister, and Mr. Brand Whitlock, the United States Minister in Brussels, who had already consented to patronise the work of the Central Committee, opened negotiations with von der Goltz, and obtained from him "the assurance that the provisions of all kinds imported by the Committee for the alimentation of Belgium should be exempt from requisitions on the part of the military authorities and should remain at the exclusive disposal of the Committee."

A delegation was sent to London in order to request the British Government to authorise the importation into Belgium of all provision proceeding from neutral countries which should be intended for the civil population of Belgium.

The British Government granted this authorisation, subject always to the condition that as far as the Belgian frontier the products imported should be placed under the supervision of the representatives of Spain and the United States in London and The Hague, and that from the frontier to the distributing warehouses in Belgium the transport of these products should be effected under the protection of the Spanish and United States Ministers in Brussels.

Under these conditions there came into being, on the one hand, the "National Committee for Relief and Alimentation," a Belgian organisation, and, on the other hand, the "Commission for Relief in Belgium" (or the C.R.B.), an American organisation.

The C.R.B. undertakes the collection of foreign donations, and also the purchase and transport of provisions for the relief of Belgium. It fulfils its mission with the assistance of three principal offices: the London office purchases the provisions and collects donations in kind and sends them to Rotterdam, while the Rotterdam office receives and tranships the goods and forwards them into Belgium by way of the Scheldt or the Meuse, and, lastly, the Brussels office, by means of its delegates—who are American subjects—sees that the German authorities respect the engagements into which they have entered with the

Governments of Spain and the United States. Services of messengers transported by motor-car facilitate the admirably organised work of the Brussels office.

The "National Committee for Relief and Alimentation" undertakes—by agreement with the C.R.B.—the distribution of provisions throughout the whole of the occupied portion of Belgium. It fulfils its mission by means of ten provincial committees, or one per province, the tenth looking after the city and district of Brussels. These provincial committees, acting in concert with the communal administrations, ensure the distribution of provisions in every arrondissement, taking due note of the number of the inhabitants and the local wants and conditions.

The National Committee lived at first from hand to mouth, thanks to the small reserves which still existed in the country, and the small quantities of foodstuffs which it was able to procure in Holland and in England. Then about the middle of December, 1914, large cargoes of foodstuffs began to arrive from America.

By the 15th of July, 1915, the two Commissions had managed to import into Belgium 530,000 tons of wheat and flour, 50,000 tons of rice, about 35,000 tons of bacon, and more than 750,000 tons of other foodstuffs.

The National Committee had at its disposal, to begin with, a sum of £640,000. Since then fresh funds have come into its possession—millions and millions of francs—principally from England and the British colonies and from America.

The National Commission assumes, in short, the tutelary function of the temporarily exiled State. Without replacing the communes, it supplements their activities in many instances. In particular, it assists them to make provision for the distributions of foodstuffs which are known by the denomination of the "communal soup."

This "communal soup" consists of a daily distribution (gratuitous) of half a litre of soup and 250 grammes of bread,<sup>1</sup> with a weekly distribution of 3.5 kilos of potatoes, 50 grammes of coffee, and 50 grammes of chicory for each person registered, and in winter 40 kilos of coal per household.<sup>2</sup>

In September, 1914, 16.2 per cent. of the population of Brussels were receiving these gratuitous distributions. At the end of

<sup>1</sup> 17.6 oz. of soup (a little less than a pint) and rather more than half a pound of bread.

<sup>2</sup> Weekly supplies: 7¾ lb. of potatoes, 1¾ oz. of coffee, 1¾ oz. of chicory, and 88 lb. of coal.



November the proportion was 23.8 per cent.; at the end of February, 1915, it was 25.9 per cent.; at the end of March it was nearly 30 per cent.; and it continued to increase, so that in Greater Brussels alone more than 250,000 persons—a great number of whom are small tradesmen or clerks, drawing neither dividends nor salary—are at present reduced to living upon public charity.

In the provinces the situation is equally lamentable. Thus a statement published in June, 1915, gave the number of Belgians who were completely destitute and were living entirely on the "communal soup" as 1,500,000. To maintain them it was necessary to find £500,000 monthly! And the wonderful thing is that it was found!

In order to avoid the moral and professional decadence of the thousands and thousands of artisans condemned to idleness, the city of Brussels, in July, 1915, introduced a measure of compulsory technical instruction for the unemployed in receipt of relief; and the National Committee immediately sought to extend the application of this beneficent measure to the entire country.

It was decided, on principle, that all the unemployed must henceforth, in order to obtain relief in respect of enforced idleness, attend the classes of this new system of instruction. The instruction is given in French and Flemish, and comprises elementary technology, or industrial design, hygiene, and working-class legislation. Of course, these subjects are treated in an exclusively practical manner.

The teaching staff for instruction in technology has been recruited from among the employers and artisans of sixteen professional groups. Hygiene is taught by physicians, and working-class legislation by members of the junior Bar.

As admirable an organisation as it is gigantic (for some 75,000 persons devote their energies to it), this "National Committee for Relief and Alimentation" may at a later date, when we have recovered the plenitude of our resources, serve as the foundation and framework of a new economic organisation of the nation. Born of the most precarious circumstances in which a great human collectivity has ever found itself, this organism might readily be adapted to happier conditions, and who knows but that there will then emerge from it, quite naturally, the germ of a highly satisfactory solution of the social question? Then, if ever, we should be entitled to say: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good"!

## "LA LIBRE BELGIQUE"

Only German newspapers—and, what comes to the same thing, newspapers printed in French or Flemish under the control of the German authorities—are authorised in occupied Belgium. Yet there is one Belgian newspaper appearing in Belgium—only one—*La Libre Belgique*.

It is a poor little newspaper, which for excellent reasons has no "special wire" at its disposal, nor has it any connection with any international news agency. Its means of information, on account of the "wall of blood," are infinitely more limited than were those even of the founders of the first printed news-sheets four hundred years ago. But in the absence of news from the outer world it offers its readers cheerful and witty sarcasms con-

NUMÉRO 49

PRIX DU NUMÉRO — Élastique, 45 c. et 1/2 (parire aux revendeurs de ce pas dépasser cette limite)

AOUT 1915

# LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

Acceptons poliment les critiques qui nous sont imposées... et attendons patiemment l'heure de la réparation.

Le Bourgeois  
ANDRÉE MAZ.

FONDÉE

LE 1<sup>er</sup> FÉVRIER 1915

Evitez les personnes qui tombent par le force militaire sous le drapeau, ainsi les agents qui commandent l'armée. Rappelez-vous les règlements qu'ils nous imposent sous la main et qu'ils ne portent atteinte ni à la liberté de nos consciences chrétiennes ni à notre *Dignité Patriotique*.

M<sup>rs</sup> MEROIS.

BULLETIN DE PROPAGANDE PATRIOTIQUE - RÉGULIÈREMENT IRRÉGULIER

NE SE SOUMETTANT A AUCUNE CENSURE

Adresse télégraphique :  
KOMMANDANTUR - BRUXELLES

BUREAUX ET ADMINISTRATION  
ne pouvant être un emplacement  
de tout repos, ils sont installés  
dans une cave souterraine.

ANNONCES : Les affaires étant nulles sous la domination allemande, nous avons supprimé la page d'annonces et conseillons à nos clients de réserver leur argent pour des temps meilleurs.

cerning the present régime, and while it nourishes their good humour it also sustains their optimism.

"Not submitting itself to any censorship," *La Libre Belgique* is necessarily anonymous, and is printed on a secret press; but von Bissing received a copy as soon as it appeared. Some months ago the impertinent little sheet even published, on the first page, a photograph—evidently "faked"—showing the Governor-General reading . . . *La Libre Belgique*.

The heading—here reproduced—of this newspaper—unique of its kind—will dispense us from giving fuller details. We may add, however, that the German authorities have in vain promised a large reward to anyone who shall assist them to discover the editor or editors. This reward, which was at first fixed at £1,000, is said to have been trebled of late. As though honour, for us, could be reduced to a question of money, of more or less money! Baron von Bissing, "Governor-General in Belgium," is assuredly a very poor psychologist!

## X

### RUIN AND WASTE AND DEVASTATION

SOME estimates made at the end of 1914 which were as moderate as they are competent, and were the work of M. Henri Masson, advocate in the Appeal Court of Brussels, placed the material damage and devastation caused in Belgium by the German invasion at £220,000,000.

A few weeks later we learned that the Germans themselves estimated this sum at £280,000,000. And there is every reason to suppose that this valuation is nearer the truth than that of M. Masson, for the latter was extremely moderate in his calculations, and our enemies, moreover, were obviously better informed than we as to the extent of their depredations.

Since then there has been continuous fighting in Belgium; without let and without mercy the Germans have been killing and *destroying*.

The Germans have completed the destruction of Ypres and Dixmude and Nieuport; and they have seriously damaged Furnes. The Yser is bordered with ruins (56); to a great distance on either side of it farmhouses and cottages, windmills and inns, have been demolished (53); certain villages are now no more than heaps of rubbish, with here and there the remains of a wall emerging, and I know of certain splendid château—which within were full of works of art, and were surrounded by magnificent parks—of which nothing is left to-day but a few stones in the midst of a great bare plain intersected by trenches.

The Belgians themselves, and the Allies, have been obliged to bombard and destroy. Their aviators often fly over the interior of Belgium in order to demolish railways, bridges, and dockyards by means of their bombs. In order to dislodge or annoy the enemy the Allies have bombarded one by one, from the sea, all the large towns upon the Belgian coast, and they have seriously damaged the naval establishment at Zeebrugge, lately created at a cost of millions of francs. Our friends and ourselves are under the cruel necessity of assisting in the destruc-

tion of our poor Belgium—a cruel but unavoidable necessity, against which we must bravely and stoically harden our hearts.

And, alas, the end is not yet!

If we were to estimate this recent havoc, and that caused in our fields by inundation and in our woods and forests by brutal felling; if we were to make a return of the innumerable requisitions which the Germans have not paid for, and of the war contributions and fines which we have been forced to pay them, and also that of all the sums which have been extorted from us under the most varied pretexts, or simply stolen; if we were to estimate the total of the losses caused by the stagnation of business, taking into account the great length of time which will be required to restore it to its former activity; if we were to estimate all this loss and arrive at the total, we should, I am convinced, obtain a figure double that to which the Germans confessed a year ago.

If to this figure we added our military expenditure, which is enormous, and of which very little goes to the country, since we have to obtain our supplies almost exclusively from abroad; if we were to capitalise all that we shall have to pay, for many long years to come, to widows, orphans, cripples, discharged soldiers, and all the victims of this abominable war—we should obtain, unless I am greatly mistaken, a sum nearer £800,000,000 than £600,000,000.

And this, of course, supposing that the war were to end shortly, which will certainly not be the case.

This is the sole result, the sole definite achievement of the German activities in Belgium: ruin, waste, and devastation to the tune of perhaps a thousand million pounds!

How, “supermen” though they profess to be, will our enemies ever contrive to indemnify us in full—us and all the other victims of their tentacular politics and their demoniac *Kultur*? For that is how the horrible tragedy will end; the Germans, who asked for it, will have to pay the cost. The few lucid thinkers in their midst, the few men (without prefix) whom their temporarily victorious militarism has not completely stupefied, are well aware of this, and are troubled accordingly. One of my Norwegian friends, by no means a man of ordinary calibre, nor one whose memory or sincerity could be regarded as suspect, informed me, on returning from a visit to Germany, that a deputy (Socialist, of course) had remarked to him, without circumlocution: “We shall lose the game, and it is, at bottom, the best

thing that can happen to us (the crushing of Prussian militarism). But how shall we manage to indemnify France and Belgium? If the war were to end now, £1,000,000,000 would scarcely suffice." And that was in April, 1915!

Be this as it may, they can never restore to us those young men who were our hope, those in the full development of their faculties, those thousands upon thousands of industrious citizens who contributed to the unparalleled prosperity of our country; they will not diminish, neither by millions nor hundreds of millions, the anguish that we have suffered by their death, and by the death of all those women, young girls, growing boys, little children, and old men who were the victims of a delirious Pan-Germanism.

And the works of art destroyed, and the priceless documents; the rarest of books, early first editions, old communal charters—which were stupidly given to the flames, as so many common "scraps of paper"—where is the human power that can restore them? It would, in any case, be an insult merely to suppose that indemnities in hard cash could console us for their loss.

As for certain of our towns which have been destroyed, neither millions nor hundreds of millions will avail to restore the exquisite charm which only the accumulation of years could ever have given them. Some of them there are that will never again recover that air and those vistas of candid picturesqueness which made them dear to artists, and which, no less than the artistic jewels with which our fathers had so munificently adorned them, made them infinitely precious to us. How rebuild, *as they were*, Dinant, Visé, certain parts of Louvain, Malines, Lierre, Termonde, Ypres (57), Dixmude, or Nieuport? It is not possible! Certain of these little Belgian cities are indeed, alas! as some American observed, "finished."

It is improbable that we shall undertake to rebuild all the monuments destroyed. As for me, in the case of some of them at least I should like to see what is left made secure, and at the foot of these glorious remnants I should like to see a slab of marble, on which would be graven a chronological inscription, very brief, ending with these words:

BURNED BY THE GERMANS.

The — Day of —, 1914 (or 1915).

## XI

### THE SOUL OF BELGIUM

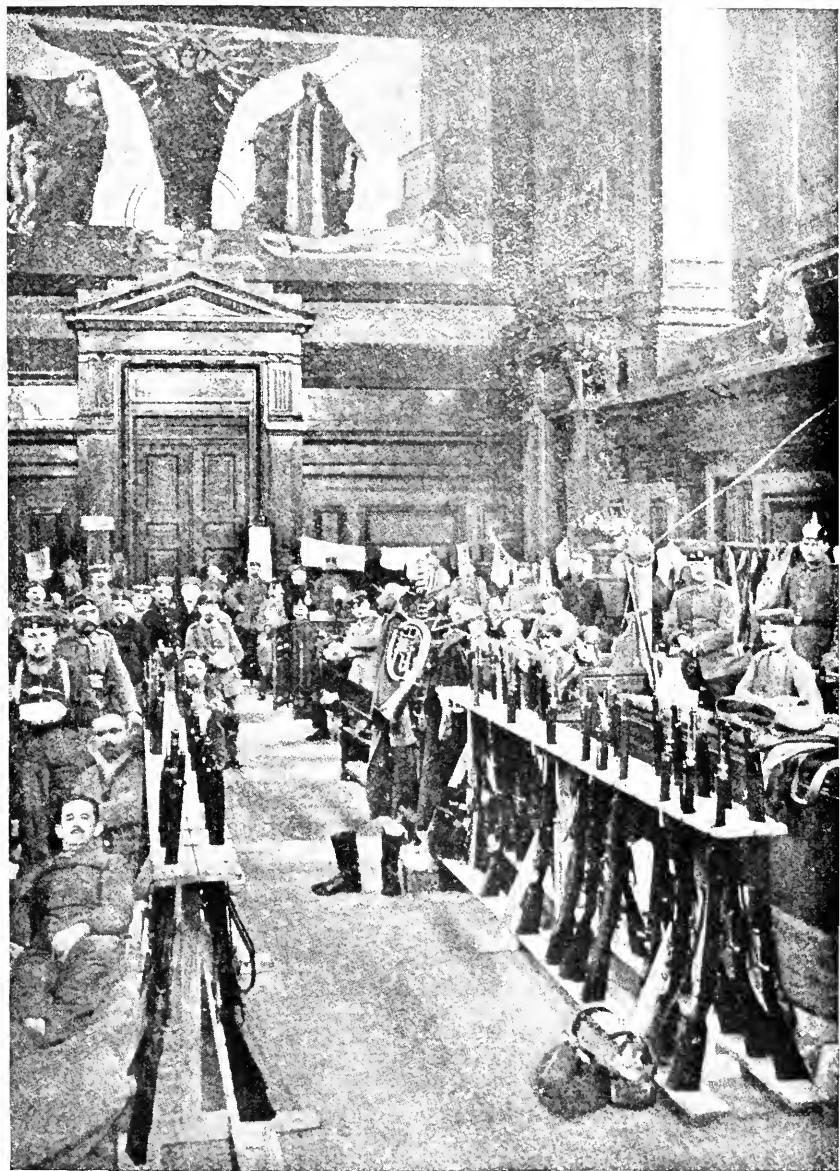
“WRITING, in a tragic hour, a solemn page of our history, we resolved that it should be sincere and glorious.” So wrote Cardinal Mercier more than two years ago, and he added: “And we shall be able to give proof of endurance for so long as shall be needful.”

More than two years ago! And the Belgian people, despite its incessant and unspeakable sufferings, remains unconquerably stoical. Without faltering, it continues to “give proof of endurance.” And it will be so “for so long as shall be needful.” I will convince you of this by asking you to read its soul, the soul of the Belgian people.

I will not speak now of those, whether soldiers or civilians, who—each in his own fashion, but each with all his might—are fighting on the front or outside the occupied territory. You are familiar with their valour and their tenacity. You have assuredly felt that this valour and this tenacity will remain such as they are to-day, such as they were yesterday, “for so long as shall be needful.” And you know, for you have plainly heard its echoes, that fine optimism which these Belgians derive from their determination to conquer, and the illimitable confidence with which those who are helping them have inspired them.

But what you are not sufficiently aware of, and what I wish I could make you understand more fully, is the noble stoicism of those of my compatriots who are inside the “wall of blood”; the ardent patriotism and the serene confidence of those seven millions of Belgians who are subjected to all the severities of a mediæval *régime*, and who, for more than two years, have been enduring the twofold and almost inconceivable moral torture of being at once deprived of encouraging news and overwhelmed by depressing reports.

Try, then, to imagine the environment in which these unhappy prisoners are vegetating; and then, but only then, read the fol-

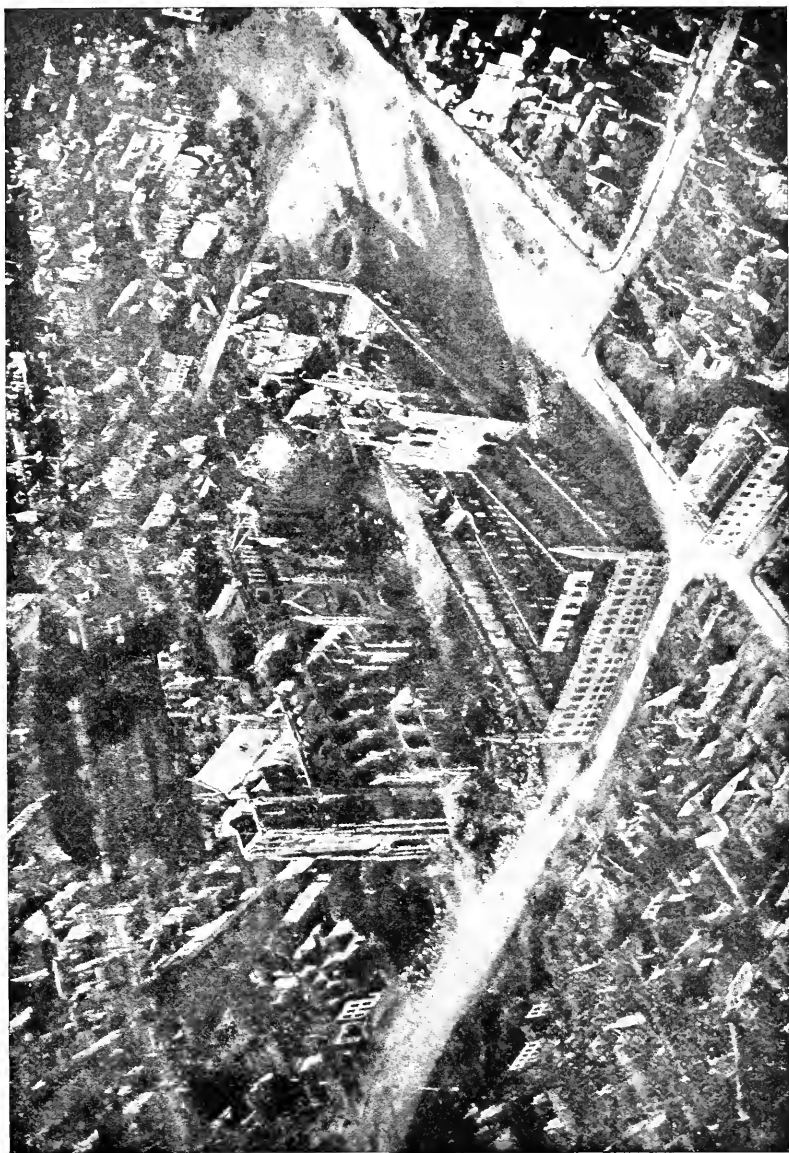


55. IN THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE, BRUSSELS. (*Page 215*)



56. THE YSER IS BORDERED WITH RUINS. (Page 235)  
(From a Drawing by Alfred Bastien.)





57. . . . "THE GERMANS HAVE COMPLETELY DESTROYED YPRES. . . ." (Page 227)



58. WHAT THE GERMANS CANNOT CONQUER. (Page 228)

*The Kaiser.*—Well! you see, you've lost everything!  
*The King of the Belgians.*—Not my soul!

*Sire, your name will henceforth be among the greatest. To such a point are you one with your people, that you will in future be its symbol, its courage, its tenacity. Its silent suffering, its pride, its future greatness, its immortality, reside in you. Our inmost soul is yours. . . .*

ÉMILE VERHAEREN.

lowing pages, in which their admirable frame of mind is revealed.

“For seven months,” wrote in March, 1915, a certain Belgian, who, thanks to his peculiar circumstances and his perfect knowledge of the German tongue, had since the outbreak of the war been continually travelling through Belgium in every direction—“for seven months I have been travelling through our beautiful land of Belgium, from Gand to Arlon, from Liège to Mons; going on foot or by tram from town to town, from village to village. I have seen and spoken with hundreds of men of all classes and all parts of the country. And all these people, taken singly or united in groups, display a very definite frame of mind. To describe this new psychology we must record the incontestably closer union which has been formed between the different sections of the country; there are no longer any political parties; there are Belgians in Belgium, and that is all; Belgians better acquainted with their country, feeling for it an impulse of passionate tenderness such as a child might feel who saw his mother suffering for the first time and on his account. Walloons and Flemings, Catholics and Liberals or Socialists, all are more and more frankly united in all that concerns the national life and decisions for the future.

“By uniting the whole nation in its army, by shedding the blood of all our Belgians in every corner of the country, by forcing all hearts, all families to follow with anguish the movements of those soldiers who fought from Liège to Namur, from Wavre to Antwerp or the Yser, the war has suddenly imposed wider horizons upon all, has inspired all minds with noble and ardent passions, has compelled the good will of all to combine and act in concert in order to defend the common interests.

“Of these profoundly tried minds, of these wonderful energies, now employed for the first time, of these atrocious sufferings which have brought all hearts into closer contact, a new Belgium is born, a greater, more generous, more ideal Belgium.

“I invite those who doubt this to take a walk through Brussels—supposing that they do not find it too inconvenient to do so. Not only will they see the street-urchins imitating the parade-step under the noses of the German officers; but they will find the whole population, admirable in its dignity, implacable in its contempt for the enemy who holds it under the threat of his regiments, as disdainful of advances as they are proud when threatened. They will see in our trams the young girl who

pushes into a corner the German soldiers who incommode her, and displays under their eyes the portrait of the King, which, at the risk of getting into trouble,<sup>1</sup> she wears always, faithfully, pinned upon her bosom. They will see men affecting to ignore, or slighting, or at least avoiding the German soldier or civilian.

“Go to Mons or into the Borinage, into the famine country, where, despite the admirable American organisation, people are still dying of starvation, of slow starvation, of an insufficient diet; anger and scorn are visible in the eyes of the young men, as in those of the women, and the Germans openly declare that they greatly fear the idea of retreating through these districts; so at the slightest disturbance they will make terrible examples there.”<sup>2</sup>

“Go to Arlon, go to Namur, all along the great Belgian Calvary, through the martyred Ardennes; the inhabitants have resumed work there, and even when they are suffering they cherish an invincible hope, an unshaken confidence. . . .

“This union of all Belgians is centred upon a name which all pronounce with the sincerest feeling: that of the King. How passionately they love their King, the Belgians of these provinces! With what idealism and affection they worship him! How grateful they are to him for having revealed their own soul to them, and for making it live so nobly in himself!

“A few other names, too, are set above all others: that of the Queen, that of M. de Broqueville, of Cardinal Mercier, of Burgomaster Max.

“The Belgium of to-day is fair to see, and those who have remained there are indeed the brothers and sisters of the soldiers who are heroically fighting on the Yser. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Another testimony—among so many—to the marvellous moral strength of my country; I find it in a letter written from Liège:—

<sup>1</sup> Some Norwegian newspapers for the 4th of June, 1914, contained, in their evening editions, this telegram: “*Berlin, 4 June.*—The Comtesse Hélène d’Ardoye, aged sixteen years, was sentenced by the courts here to three months’ imprisonment for insulting a German officer in the grossest manner. This sentence is justified by the expressions employed by the delinquent, which testify to her absolute lack of breeding.” Now we know to-day what caused the arrest of this ill-mannered child. A German officer—a paragon of civility, of course—having instructed Hélène de Jonghe d’Ardoye to remove from her bodice a brooch containing the portrait of King Albert, that “King without a kingdom,” the plucky young girl replied: “The Belgians prefer their King without a kingdom to an Emperor without honour!”

<sup>2</sup> This prediction was realised in the summer of 1915. During a harmless strike ten persons were killed by the German soldiery and thirty wounded.

<sup>3</sup> *XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 18th of March, 1915.

“For the moment, apart from the humiliation of feeling that we are under the enemy’s heel, and the fear of an always uncertain to-morrow, what have we to put up with? Disorganisation of the public services, railways, posts, telephones; the lack of independent newspapers; the high cost of living. . . . Must one be so courageous to bear this? Does it call for so much patriotism? Now the love of country is displayed everywhere; tricoloured cockades in the women’s headgear, ribbons in button-holes or on blouses, uniform buttons mounted as brooches or pins—that is what one sees everywhere in our streets and in our market-places. In the shop windows the portraits of the King and Queen are displayed, draped with tri-coloured ribbons.”<sup>1</sup>

And here is an extract from a letter written in Antwerp, which expresses the same ideas:

“It is cruelly melancholy here. No reliable news.

“Things are slow. Requisitions overwhelming. Factories in ruins. General unemployment. Savage resignation on the people’s part, and unshakable courage. The workers, in whose ranks I am constantly moving about for purposes of relief, advice, and in order to organise a little work, are admirably quiet in their frightful poverty. They are waiting for the return of the King, and they say: ‘We shall drag his carriage from the frontier to the capital!’”

Until that radiant day shall dawn for Belgium and her great King the minds of the oppressed commune in silence.

“No clamour, no outcry, not a word, nothing that could afford a pretext for reprisals, but a splendid surge of patriotism and love for the heroic and beloved King, whose birthday it was yesterday,” wrote a lady from Antwerp on the 9th of April, 1915.<sup>2</sup>

“All the offices were closed. In the street there was the crowd one used to see on the principal holidays in former days, the crowd of Shrove Tuesday or Easter Sunday or the 21st of July . . . but a sober, silent crowd, deeply moved, conscious of the tragic grandeur of the moment.

“In button-holes, on women’s bosoms, on sleeves, on hats, in the tresses of little girls, were tricoloured cockades, or flowers of three colours. Even on the beggar’s rags a scrap of ribbon

<sup>1</sup> As we saw in Chapter IX., all such manifestations are now prohibited.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter which took three weeks to get to London. It was published in the *Métropole*, 1st of May, 1915.

gleamed, in honour of the country so sorely bruised, and of him who is defending it, energetically and heroically, scrap by scrap, inch by inch. . . .

"Who gave the order? No one. Who asked Antwerp for this striking proof of her loyalty? No one. The impulse rose from the very heart of the people, a people crushed by the weight of hostile oppression, but still admirably faithful to its country and its King.

"The Germans can do us much harm, but they were powerless to prevent this moving festival, impressive in its calm dignity, as they are powerless to change the soul of the people of Antwerp, a proud and independent soul, passionately attached to its country and its dynasty, and determined to remain unshakably faithful to them, spite of all. . . ."

Speaking of "the principal holidays in former days," the author of this letter mentions the 21st of July. It was then that we used every year to commemorate the advent of the national dynasty, which took place on the 21st of July, 1831; it is our national festival.

It would be superfluous to inform you that in 1915 all free Belgians celebrated this patriotic festival with a quite special fervour. But let us see how those who are subject to the German yoke behaved.

As we have seen, von Bissing forbade them, three weeks beforehand, to wear, expose, or exhibit the Belgian colours in public.

A certain von Muller, calling himself "Provisional Governor of Brussels," had further caused the following notice to be posted on the walls of the capital:—

I warn the public that on the 21st of July, 1915, demonstrations of all kinds are expressly and strictly prohibited.

Assemblies, processions, and the decoration with flags of public and private buildings also fall under the above prohibition.

Offenders will be liable to a penalty of not more than three months' imprisonment and a fine which may attain a maximum of 10,000 marks, or one of these penalties to the exclusion of the other.

And it is probable that notices of the kind were placarded in other cities of Belgium.

Now this is what happened in the four great Belgian cities on the 21st of July of the accursed year 1915:—

In Brussels the shops and cafés kept by Belgians remained

closed as a sign of mourning; in the principal arteries of the city knots of crape were tied to the balconies. Even in the morning there were many people about in the central streets; and everyone wore, in his buttonhole or on her bosom, some flowers and a button with the initials A—E (Albert—Elizabeth). At 11 o'clock precisely, as though an order had been given, a vast crowd proceeded to the Place des Martyrs; sheaves of flowers were hung upon the corners of the monument erected there in memory of the combatants of 1830; a simple demonstration, and wholly silent, but impressively majestic. . . . While this was happening German soldiers suddenly came up, in close-packed ranks, with loaded rifles, and drawing after them—valiant fellows!—a machine-gun, which was quickly placed in position, they clumsily and brutally dispersed this absolutely inoffensive crowd, which had not made the slightest disturbance. . . .

During this time a solemn service was celebrated in the Collegiate Church of Saint Gudule, the immense building being entirely filled.

Those present were quiet and meditative, but everyone had a sense as of something imminent. And sure enough, immediately after the *Ite missa est*, the organ struck up the *Brabançonne*, in muffled tones at first, and quite *pianissimo*; then, after a masterly *crescendo*, it burst into a thrilling hymn of glory. Then, irresistibly and with all their might, the enraptured crowd sang in chorus the last stanza of the national hymn—which might have been written for the occasion:

*O Belgique, ô Mère chérie,  
A toi nos cœurs, à toi nos bras,  
A toi notre sang, ô Patrie!  
Nous le jurons tous, tu vivras!  
Tu vivras toujours grande et belle,  
Et ton invincible unité  
Aura pour devise immortelle  
Le Roi, la Loi, la Liberté!*

“It was a scene of delirium,” writes a witness of this thrilling incident; “the thunder of the organ mingled with thousands upon thousands of voices shouting, ‘*Vive le Roi! Vive le Belgique!*’ . . . The women waved their handkerchiefs, and the men their hats on the ends of their sticks. People were singing, shouting, weeping. . . . And when it was all over, and the church was slowly emptied and they were in the Place outside,

they were still sobbing, bewildered, bruised, broken down by this violent emotion."

All day and all night the German patrols traversed the city; but there was not the slightest trace of disorder to be suppressed. . . . "The crowd was quiet and serious," stated the "General Superintendent," W. Kestrauck; "nevertheless it was drawing the violent breath of suppressed hatred, which was burning within. Men walked through the streets with their fists clenched in their pockets."<sup>1</sup>

In Antwerp, as in Brussels, cafés and shops were closed. Early in the morning a great sheaf of flowers, bound with a ribbon of the national colours, was laid at the feet of the statue of Léopold I. A few of the principal streets were occupied by the military, and all traffic was forbidden. Everywhere else was a holiday crowd; but not a shout, not a cheer, lest the Germans should have a pretext for violence. . . .

On the following day, on account of the tricoloured ribbon which accompanied the flowers placed beneath the statue of King Léopold, the city was condemned to pay a fine of £10,000!

In Liège the statue of Charles Rogier, one of the founders of the kingdom, was abundantly decorated with flowers of the communal colours, red and yellow, which formed, with the black base of the monument, the national colours. These flowers were at once removed by the German authorities.

As for Gand, here is the edifying proclamation which one might have read there a few days later:

The manner in which the population conducted itself on the 21st of July, and the exaggerated fashion in which it wore the Belgian colours, force me to issue the following order:

I forbid, from this day onward, the wearing, exhibition, sale and purchase of the Belgian colours, portraits of the royal family, green leaves with or without inscription,<sup>2</sup> or any other display of colours combined to indicate political tendencies.

I forbid all Belgians to wear emblems or decorations of any kind whatsoever.

For every contravention of these prohibitions a maximum fine of 5,000 marks will be inflicted, or a maximum imprisonment of five years, or both penalties at once.

This order will be affixed to the walls and will come into force immediately.

Lieutenant-General Graf von WESTARP.

Gand, 25th July, 1915.

<sup>1</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, 22nd of August, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Ivy leaves, symbolical, usually bearing the device: *Je meurs où je m'attache* ("I die where I take hold").



Something finer still, something more profoundly affecting than the public demonstrations of which I have just given you a glimpse, is the proud determination of the Belgian workers to consent to do no work for the Germans, their unshakable resolution not to assist the enemy in any way or at any cost. Here truly we are touching on the sublime!

Not only have these worthy men, who are tortured by hunger, always proudly refused offers of the most tempting wages (railway engine-drivers have been offered as much as £2 a day), but they have often endured the harshest treatment rather than consent to work, even quite indirectly, for the enemies of their country.

A few examples will interest you:

At Luttre—where there is an important State railway works—thirty workmen were called up by the German authorities at the end of April, 1915; they were promised wages running up to £1 a day. All emphatically refused to resume work, which had been abandoned since the occupation. They were then imprisoned in cattle-trucks and informed that they would be released only when they would consent to work. . . . After several days they were threatened with deportation to Germany, “where they would be jolly well forced to work, and without wages too!” Nothing could be done with them. . . . Then the threat was put into execution; and at the moment when the train which carried these heroes away began to move, they, and all their fellow-citizens, who had hastened in a body to the station, shouted with all their might, “Vive la Belgique!” . . . The train, for what reason (or caprice) we know not, did not go further than Namur, and there the recalcitrant workers were liberated.

But a few days later a fresh attempt was made to recruit workers. An officer harangued the men, who had been forcibly conducted—there were a hundred on this occasion—to the refectory of the works: “You have nothing to fear in future,” he told them; “the *Kommandantur* will give you a certificate stating that you have resumed work only because constrained and compelled. Let those who accept our conditions step two paces to the front!” All took a step to the rear, shouting: “Vive la Belgique! Vivent nos soldats!”

After this incident M. Kessler, manager of the “Atelier central de Luttre,” was arrested in Brussels. Having been confined for two days in a cell, he was taken to the works, whither

the men had also been escorted. Invited to exhort his hands to resume work, M. Kessler confined himself to repeating to his men the communication which had been made to him, adding that he left every man free to act according to his conscience. Not one gave way!

Epilogue: M. Kessler was sent to prison at Charleroi and one hundred and ninety workmen were deported to Germany. A few weeks later sixty more were arrested and deported—whither, no one knows.

At Malines similar scenes were enacted. The workers in the State railway works, and the whole population also, were subjected for eight or ten days to a perfect reign of terror. . . . The men remained inflexible in their decision not to serve Germany.

At Sweveghem—in Flanders—where there is a large wire-drawing mill, the Germans demanded that barbed wire should be manufactured for them. The 350 workers at once left the factory. The burgomaster, the communal secretary, and even a senator who was there were arrested. This was on the 8th of June.

Commanded to resume work, the men remained insensible to any sort of menace. The village was then surrounded by a cordon of troops, and all movement out of doors was prohibited. On the 11th the men were dragged to their benches by force; they persisted in refusing to manufacture the barbed wire which was to be used for the defences of the German trenches. Sixty-one were sent to prison at Courtrai; and shortly afterwards their wives too were thrown into prison. But still no barbed wire is made at Sweveghem!

It was the same at the "Etablissements métallurgiques de Seraing," where, from the general manager—the eminent Grenier, dead to-day, perhaps of a broken heart—down to the humblest labourer, all displayed the most admirable civic courage and a magnificent spirit of self-sacrifice: it was the same at the "Fabrique national d'armes," at Herstal; and the powder-works at Wetteren; it was the same everywhere, in the Walloon country as well as in Flanders. In all Belgium there is not, so far, one manufacturer or one artisan or labourer who has listened to the promises or given way before the threats of the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These lines were already written when the Germans issued implacable decrees which made forced labour absolutely unavoidable in the case of some

Is not this fine? And is it not also a fine and heroic feeling which impels so many young Belgians to risk the obscure, stupid death which keeps watch for them at the frontier, in order that they may go to swell the ranks of our legions—may give their lives for their country?

Before dropping the curtain before the "inner life" of the Belgian nation, I will put before you an extract from a letter written in the fortress of Glatz by Adolphe Max, the great civilian who so magnificently set an example for his fellow-citizens to follow. This letter, written to a friend, is dated the 24th of May, 1915:

"I read your letter with emotion. What a time of mourning! And with how many sacrifices have we had to pay for the defence of our right and our honour! The death of Paul Renkin,<sup>1</sup> of the exquisite and charming Mme. Depage, and of Courouble's son,<sup>2</sup> and that of Pierre Pirenne,<sup>3</sup> which I learn from another source, and of one of Lévie's<sup>4</sup> sons, and of the eldest son of Dr. Thirias<sup>5</sup> . . . it is too much all at once. Must so many sorrows indeed be mingled with our hopes? Do not think me demoralised. The more painful the ordeal, the more I realise that one's duty is to harden oneself against grief and to keep one's eyes fixed always on the future. . . ."

\* \* \*

To harden ourselves against grief, and to keep our eyes fixed always on the future: that is what we are all doing.

There is not at the present moment a single Belgian family which has not been horribly tried by this war, for which we were not prepared. All are mourning—in silence and in the very depths of their hearts—the death of those dear to them; all have suffered loss of property or the loss of a livelihood. Ask any Belgian, whether he be a minister or a modest clerk, a manufacturer or an artisan, a wholesale merchant or a small shopkeeper, a great stockbreeder or a poor tenant-farmer: ask

hundreds of workers, whose conditions were especially unfavourable to a more protracted resistance; it was a case of *force majeure* which in no way invalidates the spirit of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Son of the Minister for the Colonies. The adult sons of our Ministers are all at the front. A notable case is that of the five sons of the head of the Cabinet.

<sup>2</sup> Courouble is one of our best writers. His pictures of life in Brussels are genuine little masterpieces.

<sup>3</sup> Son of the learned historian.

<sup>4</sup> Lévie, a great manufacturer, ex-Minister of Finance.

<sup>5</sup> An eminent surgeon.

the widow, or the orphan, or the parents who have lost one or several sons, ask any Belgian, no matter whom, be he Catholic, Liberal, or Socialist, if he does not feel to-day that it would have been better to have accepted the bargain which Germany proposed to us on the 2nd of August, 1914. There is not one who will not reply, without hesitation: "No, we could not have done otherwise than we did, and if it had to be done again we should do the same."

We have a clear conscience, all of us, and this is why, beyond the present, which we face boldly, we discern a future full of fair promise.

We know that we shall triumph, and that our beautiful country, already morally greater than it ever was before, will recover in its appointed time its old material prosperity. We shall triumph because, with the Allies at our side, we are fighting for Justice and Liberty. We shall triumph because our un-failing moral strength increases our material strength a hundred-fold, and because "we shall succeed, so long as it is needful, in giving proof of endurance."

Belgium is not dead; she will not die; she will live *toujours grande et belle*, because in her soul those virtues are flowering which make nations great and beautiful: a sense of honour, the spirit of independence, courage, and patriotism!

Belgium will not die because she has been able to prove that she is *a nation*—"a nation which is defending itself," and which, according to the prediction of its great King, has compelled the respect of all.

## APPENDICES

### I

#### TRANSLATION OF THE GERMAN ULTIMATUM

*Very Confidential.*<sup>1</sup>

THE German Government has received reliable information according to which the French forces have the intention of marching upon the Meuse by way of Givet and Namur. This information leaves no doubt as to the intention of France to march upon Germany through Belgian territory. The Imperial German Government cannot help fearing that Belgium, despite the best intentions, will not be in a position to repulse so considerable a French advance. In this fact lies a sufficient certainty of a menace to Germany.

It is to Germany an impervious duty of self-preservation to forestall this attack of the enemy's.

The German Government would feel the keenest regret should Belgium regard as an act of hostility against her the fact that the measures of Germany's enemies oblige her to violate Belgian territory from her own side.

In order to clear up any misunderstanding, the German Government declares as follows:

1. Germany has in view no act of hostility against Belgium. If Belgium consents, in the war about to commence, to assume an attitude of friendly neutrality in respect of Germany, the German Government on its own part pledges itself, when peace is declared, to guarantee the kingdom and its possessions in all their integrity;

2. Germany pledges herself under the condition declared to evacuate Belgian territory immediately peace is concluded;

3. If Belgium observes a friendly attitude, Germany is ready, in agreement with the Belgian Governmental authorities, to buy

<sup>1</sup> This phrase, whose intention it is difficult to grasp, is in French in the original document.

for cash all that is necessary to her troops and to pay an indemnity for the damage caused in Belgium;

4. If Belgium behaves in a manner hostile to the German troops, and especially if she places obstacles in the way of their march forward by opposing to them the fortifications of the Meuse or by the destruction of roads, railways, tunnels, or other engineering works, Germany will be forced to regard Belgium as an enemy.

In this case Germany will enter into no engagement in respect of the kingdom, but will leave the ultimate settlement of the mutual relations of the two States to the decision of arms. The German Government is justified in hoping that this eventuality will not take place, and that the Belgian Government will be able to take the appropriate measures to prevent it. In this case the relations of friendship which unite the two neighbour States will become closer and more durable.

## II

### THE CIVIC GUARD

The Belgian Civic Guard, organised in 1831, was reorganised in 1897. Every Belgian citizen must serve in it between the ages of twenty and forty years, unless he has already performed his military service or has not sufficient means to pay for his equipment. The Civic Guard has formations identical with those of the Army; it is commanded by officers of whom the majority are ex-Army officers. Its mission is defined by Article 1 of the Act of the 9th of September, 1897:—*The Civic Guard is entrusted with the duty of watching over the maintenance of order and the laws, the preservation of the national independence, and the integrity of the territory.*

In time of war it must furnish the *auxiliary* services of the Army: garrison service in the fortresses, the various supply services, the protection of communications between the fortress army and the field army, etc.

The Civic Guard is *active* in localities having a population of 10,000 inhabitants and in those which are fortified or commanded by a fortress. It is *not active* in other localities, where it exists, in a sense, "on paper" only, but where it may be called into

activity if circumstances so require. In that case the Civic Guards thus called up for active service must wear as uniform a blue blouse with a brassard bearing the national colours.

On the 4th of August, 1914, the Civic Guard was naturally called up for active service all over the country. Still, the Government reminded the burgomasters of the communes concerned that "the non-active Civic Guards called into activity constitute exclusively a police to maintain order and security," and that they must not "fire a shot."

### III

#### DECLARATION OF MME. TIELEMANS (WIDOW) CONCERNING THE HAPPENINGS AT AERSCHOT

*Mme. Tielemans, the widow of the burgomaster of Aerschot, writes to the Minister of State, M. Cooreman, President of the Commission of Inquiry:*

"The facts occurred as follows: About 4 o'clock in the afternoon my husband was distributing cigars to the sentinels posted at the gate. Seeing that the General and his *aides* were watching us from the balcony above, I advised him to return indoors. At that moment, glancing at the Grand' Place, where more than 2,000 Germans were encamped, I indistinctly saw two columns of smoke followed by firing; the Germans were firing on the houses and entering them. My husband, my children, the servants, and I had only just time to rush to the stairs leading to the cellar. The Germans were firing even in the entrance-passages.

"After a few moments of indescribable anxiety one of the *aides* of the General came downstairs, saying: 'The General is dead; where is the burgomaster?' My husband said: 'This will be serious for me.' As he went forward I said to the *aide-de-camp*: 'You can testify, sir, that my husband has not fired.' 'It's all the same,' he replied; 'he is responsible.' My husband was taken away. My son, who was beside me, led us into another cellar. The same aide came to tear him away from me, making him walk in front of him by kicking him. The poor child could hardly walk. In the morning, on entering the town, the Germans had fired into the windows of the houses; a bullet had

entered the room in which my son was, and, ricocheting, had wounded him in the calf. After the departure of my husband and my son I was taken all over the house by the Germans, who aimed their revolvers at my head. I was forced to see their dead General.

“Then they threw us, my daughter and me, out of the house, without an overcoat, without anything. We were penned up in the Grand' Place. We were surrounded by a cordon of soldiers and were forced to see the burning of our dear city. It was then that, by the dreadful light of the conflagration, I saw for the last time, about 1 o'clock in the morning, the father and son, bound together. Followed by my brother-in-law, they were going to execution.

“These evil men took from me all that I loved, and now they would take away the honour of a name that I am proud to bear. No, sir, I cannot allow this lie to gain credit. Upon my honour I assure you that we no longer possessed a single weapon.

“A price has been set upon my head; I have been forced to fly from village to village. Was it not in order to cause a witness to disappear?”

#### IV

#### CIVIL PRISONERS

*Extract from a note addressed on the 30th of March, 1915, by M. Davignon to the German Government, through the medium of the Spanish Government:*

“As far back as the 2nd of October, 1914, the Government of the King . . . forwarded to the Imperial German Government, through the obliging offices of the United States Minister in Brussels, its energetic protest against the systematic removal from Belgium and deportation to Germany of civilians innocent of any participation in the war.

“This protest was on several occasions recalled to the mind of the Royal Government of Spain.

“On the 28th of February last the Imperial German Government handed to the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin a Note which was communicated to the Belgian Government, and which de-



clared that: All Belgian subjects *who are neither criminal nor suspect* will receive permission to return to Belgium.

“If we may congratulate ourselves on this result, due to the efficacious intervention of the Government of His Catholic Majesty, we cannot, however, refrain from pointing out that the Note of the *Auswärtiges Amt* is a complete confession of the violation by Germany of international law and the international Conventions. The Government of the King notes the fact that the thousands of Belgians now sent back to their homes were neither criminal nor suspect, but consequently were inoffensive citizens. These unfortunate people were torn from the families of which they were often the sole support, deported into Germany, and treated, in the course of the journey and during a detention of six months or more, like the vilest criminals.

“The King’s Government finds itself obliged solemnly to renew its former protests and to make the most emphatic stand against procedures which constitute a flagrant violation of Article 50 of the IVth Convention of The Hague, and are a defiance of the most elementary laws of humanity.

“Basing itself upon the very information with which the Imperial Government has furnished it by the communication of the list of Belgian prisoners of war, into which the names of numbers of civilians have crept, the King’s Government is in a position to affirm that the improper procedures exposed above have affected Belgians of all ages, of all social conditions, belonging to all parts of Belgium. In certain localities almost the entire male population was led into captivity. A great number of civilians have died in prison. . . . Five men died of senile debility; two others were seventy-six years of age. A woman, Mme. Léonie Denorme, was ‘taken dead’ to the lazarette at Schneidemühle. And no doubt many other unfortunate and innocent people have succumbed in analogous circumstances.

“The Imperial German Government will bear the responsibility of these actions.”

THE END





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