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THE PAST
AND THE
FUTURE OF BELGIUM

BY

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PREFACE

Belgium has been placed in special prominence by her situation at the center of the greatest fight in history and by her noble attitude during a long period of indescribable sufferings. Many a name of her cities and villages has been associated for ever with deeds of glory or shame. Many a name of her sons has been added to the list of heroes who have suffered for ideals dear to mankind. The German intrigues as well as the discussions at the Peace Conference have acquainted the whole world with special aspects of Belgian nationality and Belgian politics. But all this has been very fragmentary information, and numerous are the persons in America who have the most friendly interest for Belgium but know very little of that country, her aspects, her inhabitants, the essential facts of her history, the main features of her national character.

Particulars as to the amount of destruction wrought by the Germans and about the part played by Belgium in the war are also very desirable; but above all, in connection with the restoration of the country and with its future, it will be helpful to provide reliable and clear information to all those who may come in contact with a nation that has now indelible bonds of friendship with the United States. Both countries will remain associated during the period of reconstruction and it is desirable that they know one another.

This is the idea which has inspired the present booklet which in a condensed form treats of Belgium, her glorious past, her ideals, her part in the war, her problems in the near future, her possibilities, her place in the new world.

1918

1918

Belgium before the War

THE COUNTRY

On a map of Europe of ordinary size, Belgium is scarcely more than a spot, and one often cannot help admiring the skill displayed by some geographers in placing, on so small a space, the seven letters of the name. The territory of Belgium covers only about $\frac{1}{318}$ as much of the earth's surface as the United States—Alaska included. A comparison with regard to population, however, produces a different impression. The United States has only fourteen times as many inhabitants as Belgium which in 1914 had 7,425,784 people on an area of 11,373 square miles, or 652 to the square mile. This remarkable proportion exceeds that of any other country, and since, on the other hand, the number of people in the cities compared to the rural population is smaller than in England and in Holland, one may infer that the Belgian countryside is probably the most densely populated in the world. Now, it is certainly surprising that in spite of such a condition there is scarcely any emigration from Belgium. Hardly more than 15,000 persons a year leave the little kingdom to settle in one of the neighboring countries, mostly in France, and these losses are largely replaced by an influx from France, Holland, and Germany. The death rate and birth rate coincide approximately with those of England, the Flemish districts having however more births than the Wallonian section.

Another compensation for the very limited area is to be found in the great variety of the geographical character of the country.

Along the shore of the North Sea stretches a belt of white dunes where tiny fishing villages are hidden in the sandy valleys or *pannes*. In one of these valleys (La Panne) stands the villa where the King and Queen took refuge during the war. Behind these sand ramparts lie great meadows, the "polders"; these are lower than the sea at high tide, and since Roman times have been a choice grazing ground for cattle. Beyond these, again, and to the south comes the "Campine," a flat sandy district. This was originally an arid, heather-grown country, but it has been reclaimed by the Flemings, and in some places, notably around Ghent and Antwerp, their perseverance has turned it into an excellent garden-land. In the center of Belgium is a clay soil which is extremely fertile, especially in the district of Hesbaine. Formerly it was thickly wooded with oaks and beeches, of which the Forest of Soigne is a remnant. Now the woods are replaced almost entirely by fields of corn and beets. Southern Belgium belongs to an earlier geological period than the northern districts. It is a region of carboniferous limestone, celebrated for its quarries, and even more for its coal mines, which reach from the French frontier to the country around Liége. And lastly there are the mountains of the Ardennes with their wooded plateaus and their deep and sinuous valleys. This part of Belgium is the most picturesque and the least populous.

The towns and villages vary in appearance in the different regions. In the north, in Flanders, one finds high bell-towers and steeples, pointed gables, and gay coloring, whether it be of the red brick in the towns, or of the red tiled roofs and green shutters of the little white village houses. The towns in the center of the country look modern and pros-

perous. In the Ardennes any human habitations seem lost in the valleys, almost undistinguishable from the blue-gray of the rocks, because they are built of similar colored stones.

HISTORY

The kingdom of Belgium was formed from these various regions in 1830, but the ties which hold the different provinces together date from a much earlier time. In the Middle Ages, when the country was still divided into counties and duchies, held in part by France and in part by the Empire, there was already a dawning of common interests and of national feeling. Belgium was as it were the crossroads of Europe. Here the products of the north and of the south met, and here the ideas, the art, and the literature of France and the Mediterranean countries found their way among the Teutonic peoples. As a consequence the merchant and artisan classes became influential, and at the same time the towns became powerful as trading centers; and breaking away from the bonds of feudalism, formed themselves into independent democratic communities. Their love of independence was intensely felt and expressed in 1302 in the Battle of Courtrai, at which time the people overthrew the feudal power of France; and again, this spirit of freedom was reasserted in the Hundred Years' War—when the communities of Flanders combined under the leadership of Jacques van Artevelde and claimed a political life of their own. The University of Louvain, founded in 1423, formed a moral and intellectual center for these provinces. The Dukes of Burgundy succeeded in uniting the Netherland provinces politically.

In the sixteenth century they fought as a body for their liberty and independence, which were threatened by Philip II of Spain, who had inherited the provinces from his father,

the Emperor Charles V. This revolution, in which religious differences complicated the political situation, ended in the secession of the northern provinces, which formed a prosperous republic, the Republic of the Netherlands. This democratic community fostered the Calvinistic religion. The southern provinces, on the other hand, were reconquered by Spain. They remained faithful to Catholicism, and from then on began a life of their own. These Catholic Netherlands were destined to become the present Belgium.

In 1715 the country fell to Austria by right of succession. Under this rule the Belgians persistently defended their liberty and defiantly fought against the tyranny of Maria Theresa and the schemes of Joseph II. At last, they revolted and formed an independent state, "The Republic of the United States of Belgium." All the institutions of the Burgundian times were revived, and the new nation adopted a federal constitution not unlike that of the United States of America. But the independence of the Belgium Republic was soon smothered by the armies of Austria and France. The French, however, were well received, but under the influence of the extreme revolutionary party they established a régime which was antagonistic to the Belgian love for moderation. Certain local uprisings, known as the "Peasant Wars," protested against the anti-religious policy of the French Revolution. However, Napoleon put an end to persecution, reorganized the country, improved the situation of Antwerp, and succeeded in winning a fair amount of popularity in Belgium.

In 1814, the Congress of Vienna decided to reunite the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and placed them under the scepter of William of Orange. His policy, however, was unfortunate: he favored his Dutch subjects at the expense of the Belgians; and the result was a renewed separation of the north and the south. In 1830 a revolution

broke out in Brussels and spread to most of the Belgian towns. A temporary government was organized with a very liberal constitution which combined the local and ancient communal liberties with the principles of the French Revolution.

By this constitution the Belgians won liberties that many a "free" nation might well envy: for instance, the right to hold political gatherings, freedom of the press, unrestricted education, freedom of religion and the right to hold the services of any creed in public places, freedom of speech, equality of every citizen before the law, and privacy of correspondence.

Since 1830 the trend of Belgian politics has been toward increasing liberty and justice. Two parties have been constant rivals, the "Catholics," or traditional evolutionists, and the "Liberals," who held the ideas of the French Revolution. At first there was a cessation of party strife and a period of organization under the minister Charles Rogier; then the Liberals came into power under the lead of Frère-Orban. In 1879 they passed an education bill which hurt the religious feelings of a great part of the population. In 1884 there was a reaction and the "Catholic" party became dominant, and has been in power ever since.

In the last thirty years, however, the party has undergone a gradual evolution. Side by side with the conservative element there has grown up a "Young Right" with a decidedly democratic program. Together with the Socialist party this wing of the "Catholics" is working for legislation in favor of the laboring classes.

In this last epoch Belgium had a time of great economic prosperity, due, in part at least, to the stimulating and enterprising spirit of Leopold II, who encouraged industrial expansion. Leopold also made great efforts to establish a colony for his country by founding the Congo Free State, which has since then been taken over by Belgium.

He also contributed to the building of the forts along the Meuse, and to the development of the army. Nevertheless it was not until 1912 that universal service was introduced, and in 1914 the forces so raised were still insufficient to repel an invasion.

LANGUAGES AND RACES

When the Romans came to Belgium the country was inhabited by the Belgæ, a group of Celtic tribes related to the people of Gaul or France. These tribes put up a stout resistance to the armies of Cæsar who paid due tribute to their courage. "The bravest of all the Gauls," he says in his memoirs, "are the Belgæ." They finally, however, had to give way, and, as in other parts of Gaul, the Latin of the conquerors replaced the Celtic dialects and became the prevailing language of the country.

From the third century of our era, the north of Belgium, which consists of a vast plain offering no resistance to any invader coming from the Rhine, was overrun by Germanic tribes. They devastated the country, took possession of the land, and then formed their settlements in this desolate region. Of these tribes the Franks were the best known. By the fourth century they were well established in Flanders and the Campine, that is in the districts now inhabited by their descendants, the Flemings. In 406 A.D., the Frankish warriors appeared much farther south and took possession of the greater part of Gaul, which from that time has been called France. Nevertheless they did not drive out the Gallo-Romans, who lived on in this country and kept their customs and speech; and from their Latin is derived the French language with all its different dialects, notably Walloon, which is spoken in the south of Belgium. This southern portion of the country, being cut off from the northern plains by the "Forêt Charbonnière," escaped Germanization.

Since this time, therefore, there have been two languages in Belgium, the Flemish dialects in the north, which are related to Dutch, the Wallonian dialects in the south, which are akin to French.

Nevertheless, this difference in speech has never resulted in corresponding political divisions. At first the French kingdom included both districts; then, when Charlemagne's empire was broken up, although the people of Flanders retained and spoke the Flemish language, Flanders nevertheless remained a part of the French territory. The Wallonian countries, however, such as Hainault and the Principality of Liége, along with Flemish Brabant, became part of the Empire. In the County of Flanders there was a long struggle between the Frenchified nobility—"Leli-aerts," as they were called, being partisans of the Lilies of France—and the middle and lower classes—the "Clauwaerts" who upheld the Lion of Flanders (and his claws). This conflict, however, was not a disagreement over linguistic differences; it was a social and political disturbance.

Under the influence of the Dukes of Burgundy French spread, even into the Flemish districts, and became the language of the upper classes. Notwithstanding this an important Flemish literature developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the religious wars the Walloons formed the "Malcontent" party and helped Spain to reconquer the southern provinces of the Netherlands. After this most of the Flemish literary men withdrew into the Dutch Republic, and French gradually became the language of literary and court circles, the prevailing language of Belgium. This situation reached its climax under the French rule of Napoleonic times. During the few years that Belgium and Holland were united, William of Orange insisted that in administrative affairs Dutch should be the official language, and that French should never

be used in diplomatic circles. The result was a strong reaction. The constitution of 1830 recognized both tongues, but from then on French was used in the governmental affairs, in the schools, and in the courts. Flemish became merely a popular dialect with an archaic spelling which almost concealed its identity with Dutch. Since the mass of the Flemish people felt themselves drawn by their habits, traditions, customs, and religion to the Walloons rather than to the Dutch, the suppression of the Flemish language at first excited no protest. The Flemish bourgeoisie took especial pride in emphasizing its thorough "Frenchness." Nevertheless, under the influence of Romanticism there was a revival of Flemish literature. Ledeganck's patriotic poems and Conscience's historical novels recalled the former glories of Flanders and taught the Flemings to love their own language and their own country. But, so long as the middle classes alone had the vote, this movement was of no great importance. After 1893 the workingmen and the peasants gained great influence, and the politicians found themselves forced to favor, or at least appear to favor, the claims of the "Flamingants," whose ideas soon spread and made headway among the enthusiastic students in the universities. Yet, there never has been a Flemish political party, and the matter did not attract the serious attention of the middle classes till twenty years ago. The militant Flemings proposed that a Flemish university be established. This plan was stubbornly opposed, especially by the middle classes in Flanders. This proves clearly that there is no question of freeing an oppressed nation, but rather a case of social evolution. The same conclusion might be drawn concerning the avowed hostility to Flemish things of the feminine element in Belgium, because the women are attached to the French conception of social life and to French fashion. The Flemings proclaim that their aim is to tear down the barriers between

the educated classes and the populace, barriers which are largely due to the difference in language. But they have never for one moment let their program become confused with that of the Pan-Germans. The Belgians of German birth worked against the Flemings, and it was only in 1915 that it occurred to the Germans to use the Flemish movement as a means of sowing dissension among the Belgians. They decided to make without delay a Flemish university in Ghent. The chiefs of the "Flamingants" saw through their trap at once, and refused to associate themselves with the scheme. A few obscure persons finally succeeded in forming a faculty; and meanwhile the newspapers and magazines in Germany spoke enthusiastically of the "liberation of the Flemish people." That being accomplished, they divided the administration of Belgium into two, the Wallonian section and the Flemish section; and, finally, the so-called Council of Flanders, composed of almost wholly unknown individuals who were subservient to the German Government, declared the political independence of the Flemish countries. On February 18, 1918, this action was protested. Senators and deputies in the occupied territories, the different district councils, and even the Flemish societies and well-known people in the Flemish region, emphatically denounced the deceptive plan of the Council of Flanders. They realized that these Prussianized tools were only "camouflaging" the real issues. Hence the Court of Appeal in Brussels impeached the leaders of this "activist" movement, charging that they were breaking the law forbidding sedition against the established government. The Germans, however, put an end to these proceedings and deported three of the judges to Germany. All this tyranny and false representation could have but one result—that the Flemings decided to reject all outside interference and to manage their own affairs in reconstructing Belgium; and the outlook for Belgium, at the present

time, is hopeful and seems to indicate that the Belgians will solve their problems in a way which will put an end to the troubles of the Flemings at least when the reaction provoked by the action of the "activists" will have abated.

At this moment, when every citizen is called on to give himself, body and soul, to the building up of his country, the government has realized that, if the Flemish patriotic enthusiasm could be willingly and loyally given and utilized, valuable services would be rendered to their country. Accordingly, on the 15th of October, 1918, the government gave official recognition to a commission established "to introduce absolute equality between the two languages in law and in practice, without endangering the national unity," and in his inaugural address to the Chambers on the day of his "joyous entry" into liberated Brussels, the King solemnly confirmed this program.

NATIONAL CHARACTER

Despite their differences of race and language the Walloons and Flemings have many customs and characteristics in common. Both have a clear conception of the realities of life. This realism is revealed in their popular philosophy, in their art, their manners, and their humor; and both love life too dearly to waste it in useless regrets and vain desires: their practical spirit and good common sense help them to smile, to make the best of their circumstances, to overcome their difficulties, and finally to use their mistakes as stepping-stones whereby they may rise to higher and greater and nobler things. Their feelings are vivid and intense—but not particularly refined; their vision is accurate, but not far-reaching. They ardently love their home life, their little coterie of friends, and even the district in which they live. Both have a horror of pretense, convention, and exaggeration, and both have a strong

sense of justice united with a keen appreciation of the rights.

Besides these characteristics, the Walloons have two other qualities: a spirit of adaptability and an inexhaustible fund of gayety. They are cordial, talkative, quick, and clever. The Flemings are less quick-witted, but, when they do make up their minds, they hold fast to their opinions. They are somewhat suspicious, very independent, and capable of violent or concentrated passions. Their artistic sense is highly developed. Being very democratic, independent, and hard to bend, they are very different from the modern Germans. They are impulsive rather than methodical and persevering, sensuous rather than sentimental, and, in their expression of personality, they are anything but conventional.

ART IN BELGIUM

Although the Belgians were influential in molding the political and economic evolution of Europe, still they are better known, and justly so, for the art treasures which they have added to the artistic heritage of humanity.

The Belgians are extraordinarily gifted artistically, and have given many proofs of an inspiration both forceful and original. In every field of art the same characteristics recur—strong imagination, clear perception, and intense feeling. The Flemings in particular have a marked tendency to visualize, and consequently to materialize their ideas in plastic forms. They see colors better than forms, hence their best work is done, not in sculpture, but in painting. Theirs is an art which, along with great sincerity, shows a fine grasp of life and essential details. Thus it happens that the Flemings are often implacable realists, very vigorous and, at the same time, excellent in doing work which requires minute details. But their intense

vision, accompanied by a certain concentration of feeling also draws them, to some extent toward mysticism. Given this temperament it is only natural that they should have devoted themselves chiefly to painting.

The Flemish "primitives," such men as the Van Eyck brothers, Roger Van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Dierik Bouts, and others, are celebrated for the richness of their coloring and the charming realism with which they have expressed their mystical ideas.

The influence of the Italian renaissance was not long in making itself felt in Flemish art, and its profound effect is best seen in the works of Rubens who was the most gifted and powerful interpreter of the Flemings' intense love for life and color. Rubens's successors, Van Dyke, Jordaens, Teniers, all gave proof of this same love for life; and the latter two especially expressed the exuberant vitality of the Flemish people. The influence of this school was still felt in the painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who, though clever men, are less well known.

The modern Belgian school has been remarkably active. There is probably more painting going on in Belgium in proportion to its size than in any other country. The Flemish influence is still recognizable, but that of the Paris schools is not less so. Several periods can be traced in this movement. About 1850 the canvasses were vast and the scenes represented were usually historical and full of movement; Leys and Wiertz are the best known artists of this theatrical time, a time of fine execution and little inspiration. There followed a period when genre painting was in vogue, with interiors modeled after the manner of the Dutch school. The great name of this time was De Braekeleer. Soon, however, the idea of "art for art's sake" arose and the Belgians were not the least audacious of innovators. The movement is definitely towards nature. There is a demand for open air, for fields and

copses, for moonlight and sunset effects, and especially for the color plays of mists and clouds. This is the period of animal painters, such as Verwee, of impressionists like Van Rysselberghe, and of the sunny landscape of Claus, the stippler.

At the heyday of Flemish painting, sculpture had not yet arisen in Flanders as an independent art, but was chiefly occupied with architectural ornamentation. The flamboyant-Gothic lacework found in such profusion on the churches and town halls shows great technical ability, and the statuettes, intermingled with the arabesques, are often surprisingly realistic in idea and finely executed with minute details. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this talent found expression mainly in wood carving, of which a splendid example was the great hall of the library at Louvain, destroyed when the city was burnt down in 1914. It was only in the last few years that real sculpture has developed in Belgium. Jef Lambeaux gave much of the Flemish exuberance in his very realistic works, but it was left for a Walloon, Constantin Meunier, to produce works of the first order. As is well known, his statues are of working men in such poses as illustrate the effort of man and his power in the struggle with nature.

Music also is a Belgian gift—as important and as fine as their art of painting. The popular airs of the country are especially remarkable, whether they be the songs of Flanders with their energy and sentiment, or the gay Wallonian songs with their lilt and sparkle. Every village has at least one musical society whose members often show considerable talent; and even the street singers are often gifted. Grétry of Liège is the great Wallonian musician, while the Flemings have a good title to claim Van Beethoven as one of their own, since he belonged to an Antwerp family although he lived in Germany. In more modern times, César Franck gave his genius to the founding

of the French school. Peter Benoît, Jan Blockx, Tinel, and others, inspired by Flemish energy and mysticism, wrote music which has become deservedly popular.

The visitor to Belgium, though he may pass through all too quickly, will rank the beauties of her churches and city halls as fully equal to those of the pictures hung in her museums. They interpret the very soul of the Netherlands. The pride of the cities in their struggle for liberty could not be better expressed than in the lofty belfries which seem to pierce to the sky, and the rich ornamentation on the public buildings reveals the opulence of the communities that built them; the lines of the cathedral towers and their arches, as it were springing towards the heavens, the capriciousness of their stone lacework in its mysterious designs, the exquisite realism of their sculpture, all these reflect different aspects of the old-time Flemish mysticism. Here again appears the taste for flowery detail, and the love for color shows in the painted work and the robes of sacred statues. The result, to be sure, is not conducive to purity of line. There were, however, two striking examples of the ancient and more simple Flemish Gothic art, the markets of Ypres and the vaulted markets of Louvain, but both have been destroyed in this war. The renaissance in Flanders produced a style of architecture which is graceful rather than imposing, but which, with its pointed roofs and steep gables, and its contrasts of white stone and red brick, is particularly well suited to the country. On the other hand, the eighteenth-century rococo, when applied with the usual Flemish prodigality, outdid its style in richness as witnessed by the church of St. Michael at Louvain and by many a highly decorated façade in the great square of Brussels. The classicism of the nineteenth century took on a more sober form, though still preserving no little grace. Some of the best examples of this style are to be found in the neighborhood of the park in Brussels.

But the love for decoration ended in the degeneration of the style, until it produced such results as the official buildings of the nineteenth century which are simply graceless piles of stone covered with rather banal designs. In the last twenty years there has been a salutary reaction. The classic style is still in vogue for big buildings, but it is now more controlled and therefore purer. The churches and even some of the public buildings are neo-Gothic. The Palais de Justice in Brussels shows marked originality. It is composed of motifs borrowed from various styles, combined very happily to produce a harmonious whole. The result is imposing, although not very elegant. Modern art, with its bold curves or cubic outlines has affected a large number of Belgian architects; and the newer residence quarters of the towns are full of surprising façades—some of which are really beautiful.

BELGIAN LITERATURE

It has often been said that the Belgian has more gift for art than for literature. He has not the Frenchman's rapidity of conception nor his ease in expression. He has more humor than wit and more feeling than ideas. This, however, only proves that his gift is for another kind of literature than that of the Frenchman. For instance, although he is fond of comedy, he rarely succeeds in writing that kind of plays. His novels, which are sometimes interesting, generally have weak plots. Nevertheless he can tell a story well and with humor. Froissart and Comines, the two best mediæval historians who used the French language, were Walloons. Though these two wrote in French, there was growing up at that time a Flemish literature, consisting chiefly of moral and satirical poems. At the end of the sixteenth century, when the southern

provinces of the Netherlands had been reconquered by Spain, the Flemish authors emigrated to Holland; and it was there that the tragedian Vondel wrote some of his greatest plays. For two centuries there were no important writers, but in the nineteenth century a reaction fortunately set in. Some of the moderns wrote in French and some in Flemish. The Belgian literature, written in the French language, dates principally from 1880; and it shows the influence of the group known as "Young Belgium." The novelists, of this time, men like Camille Lemonnier and Georges Eeckhoud, wrote in a vigorous and realistic style: a mode of expression, which, with its fervid and ardent sincerity, its persuading and convincing power, seems to have reached its climax in the works of those robust personalities; the poets, however, George Rodenbach, Edmund Le Roy, Charles Van Lerberghe, Max Elskamp, and Albert Mockel were symbolists. The last named of these, as editor of the magazine *La Wallonie*, exerted a great influence over the symbolist movement in France as well as in Belgium. But of the whole group, the best known names are those of Maurice Maeterlinck and Emil Verhaeren, the former of whom has won a world-wide reputation by his plays and his philosophic studies. He has tried to explain the subconscious and mysterious side of the human soul. Emil Verhaeren, on the other hand, has written forceful poems which glorify labor and the ideals of the modern world. Flemish literature is devoted to its native land, singing of the glorious past of Flanders, and calling on the Flemings to remain loyal to their own language and their traditions. The novelist Conscience is the most popular of Flemish writers. Quite recently the lyric poetry of Guido Gezelle and the novels of Stijn Streuvels (F. Latteur) have by their originality and their very real excellence called attention to this literature which is growing very important in Belgium.

SCIENCE IN BELGIUM

The Belgian love of art goes hand in hand with a taste for science.

Until the fifteenth century the Netherlands had no famous schools; students went to Paris or Bologna. In 1425, just as the Belgian provinces were being united under the rule of the Dukes of Burgundy, the University of Louvain was founded, and since then it has been the intellectual center of the country. A number of books were printed there from 1470 on, in the press of John of Westphalia. These books formed the foundation of the fine collection which was destroyed when the library of Louvain was burned down in 1914. After 1502 Louvain, thanks to the fame of Erasmus, became the meeting place for classical scholars in northern Europe, especially when the "Three Languages College" was started; it then became famous through its scholars, Barthelemy Masson, whom François I made head of the "Collège de France," Jan Bosche who went to Paderborn, and Justus Lipsius who added luster to the University of Leyden and then returned to his Alma Mater. Louvain scholars attained celebrity in various fields. Vesalius founded the modern school of anatomy, Mudaeus introduced the *méthode élégante* of interpreting Roman law; Jansenius, Baius, and other theologians had much influence on the evolution of ideas in the seventeenth century; Minckeleers experimented and worked out a method of utilizing gas as a means of illumination. Hagiography became a science under the direction of the Jesuits; and one of the order, a Belgian named Bolland, started the immense collection of *Lives of Saints* which his disciples are still publishing at Brussels. There were many names during the nineteenth century which brought honor to Belgian science, but this is not the place to list them. Nevertheless, it is fitting that the following

should be mentioned—Gevaert and Fétis, universally known as historians of music, the psychologist Delbœuf, the jurist Nys, celebrated for his works on international law, the geologist André Dumont, the mathematician de la Vallée Poussin, the biologists Van Beneden and J. B. Carnoy, the philologists Willems and de Harlez, the historian Kurth, the economist Waxweiler, and the philosopher Cardinal Mercier.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

It has been said already that the government which Belgium gave herself in 1830 is one of the most liberal in all Europe, in spite of the fact that it is a monarchy. It should be remembered that the king is "King of the Belgians," not "King of Belgium." All his power is given him by the nation and he has not one right that has not been granted to him by the constitution. He swears to "Obey the constitution and the laws of the Belgian people, to maintain national independence, and to keep the country's territory inviolate." His powers are the right to call together and to dissolve the Chambers, to command the army, to declare war, to make treaties for peace, for alliance, and for commerce, and to grant pardons. He acts generally through his ministers who, though appointed by him, are responsible to the Chambers. Nevertheless, the Belgian kings have had a real influence in molding the destiny of their country, but it has been altogether due to their personal character.

In Belgium there is no privilege given to birth, the Senate and the House of Representatives both being elected. There are, it is true, certain differences in the forms of the summons to attend the sittings, and the suffrage rights of the citizens are not all alike, but these variations are not in any way based on hereditary privileges.

Up to 1893 a citizen, before he could vote, must have paid a certain sum in taxes to the state. This custom was a relic of the middle-class democracy which was established in France and Belgium in 1830. The Liberal party, which looked for its support to the bourgeoisie of the towns, and which had preserved much of the viewpoint of 1830, hesitated to introduce universal suffrage. Moreover the idea was repugnant to the Belgian mind which is no friend of extremist measures. So the plan proposed by Professor Nyssens was adopted, which brought in a modified form of universal suffrage arranged to give preponderance to the more intelligent and thoughtful of the population and to those who would have the most interest in seeing that the public affairs were well managed. This system, known as the "plural vote," gave one vote to every citizen twenty-five years of age, two additional votes to college graduates, one additional vote to married men at least thirty-five years old, and one additional vote to each person owning his home. The maximum number of votes allowed was three. This plan succeeded in slightly reducing the influence of the common workers, massed in the industrial centers, who it was feared might exercise a real tyranny in the land, because they were uneducated and very easily swayed by the politicians. The "plural vote" system was thus inspired by very sane democratic ideals, but unfortunately it looked like a privilege accorded to the upper classes, and it was so complex that the people suspected it. Thus the abolition of this system became the platform for opposition parties. To put an end to this cause of dissension at this time, when complete union of all parties is necessary for the reconstruction of the country, King Albert, in his address to Parliament on the 21st of last November, states that his government is prepared to introduce equal suffrage.

Notwithstanding the privileges of the "plural vote"

the universal suffrage of 1892 did away almost entirely with the Liberal party, and favored both the Catholics, supported by the Flemish peasantry, and the Socialists, elected by the workmen in the Wallonian country. This situation facilitated the establishment of proportional representation. Since then the country has been divided into great electoral districts, each of which elects a large number of representatives. These are distributed between the different parties in proportion to the number of votes they receive. In this way no vote is lost. The Liberal and Socialist minorities in Flanders, and the Liberal and Catholic minorities in the Walloon districts have been represented since then. This arrangement prevents passing opinions from having any decisive influence on the composition of the parliament, and gives great stability to the various parties. Elections become more a test of party strength than an opportunity for the mass of the people to participate actively and directly in the government. This system is the open recognition of a state of affairs which has been growing up in many modern democracies.

The secrecy of the ballot is rigorously preserved and a law, providing that every citizen must vote, is a guarantee that the election will not be falsified by the withholding of votes.

Such is the procedure in the election of the members of the Chamber of Representatives. The Senate was destined by those who formed the constitution in 1830 to be a conservative body occupied in amending the bills put before it by the other Chamber. Consequently it was stipulated that Senators could only be elected from among citizens who were at least forty years of age, and who also paid a considerable sum in taxes to the state. The electors must be thirty years old; otherwise the electoral body is similar to the one which chooses the Chamber of Representatives.

The Provincial Councils elect senators whom they choose without regard to the taxes they pay. These councils are to be found in every district, looking out for the interests of that part of the country; they have no particular importance in general politics, but as they have control of the provincial funds they are very powerful locally. They elect a "Députation Permanente" who, along with the Governors chosen by the King, administer the finances and supervise the decisions of the Communal Councils. These latter are independently elected by the communes, both by the towns and villages. So there are no "County Councils" in Belgium. The autonomy of the communes is carried very far; it is indeed a relic of the old time liberties granted by the Netherlands. The burgomasters (*maires*), although nominated by the King (*i. e.*, the ministers), are really chosen by the communes, through a majority vote of the Communal Council, which forms a little parliament looking after the doings of the aldermen and managing the municipal treasury.

In common with the communal officials the administrators of justice have a great measure of independence. The Belgian judges have a well-deserved name for probity and impartiality, and their attitude during the German occupation of the country was worthy of their reputation. The members of the "Cour de Cassation" (Supreme Court) and of the Courts of Appeal are chosen from candidates presented by the Chambers and by the courts of justice themselves. All the judges are Doctors of Law; their appointment is permanent and their salaries fixed by law. These last two facts make them quite independent of the government. The creating of exceptional courts is forbidden. Criminal questions are solved in the Assize Courts where a jury decides on the guilt of the accused.

The police is under the control of the parish authorities but the *gendarmérie* is a state police force especially charged

to patrol the country districts and to serve the magistrates. In the army the *gendarmerie* forms a picked corps.

Belgium was the first country in Europe to introduce the system of solitary confinement. The prison at Ghent was built in 1835 after the model of the Philadelphia Penitentiary. In 1888 the systems of probation and parole were introduced. Since then children's courts have been established.

In the domain of public instruction, Belgium is chiefly concerned in protecting the freedom of the *paterfamilias*. Compulsory primary education was only introduced at a very late date; hence the number of illiterates in Belgium is greater than in the neighboring countries, though the situation is improving all the time. There are official schools, built by the communes with the help of the state, and private schools. The government subsidy since 1913 has been divided between the schools, public and private, in proportion to the number of their pupils and without reference to their confessional or unconfessional character. This is a compromise arranged to put an end to a long-standing quarrel between the Catholics, who wished to retain religious instruction as a part of the public school program, and the Liberal party, whose idea was to suppress all such instruction and to refuse the state subsidy to private and communal schools.

During the last twenty-five years Belgium has developed an important labor legislation. The employment of women and children in factories has been regulated; the number of hours in the working day has been limited; minimum wages have been introduced; the state has organized an old-age pension scheme; employers' responsibility in case of accident has been regulated by law; a working man's insurance act, providing for cases of sickness and lack of employment, has been adopted. Belgium has abandoned the *laissez-faire* principle without falling into the German extreme of state interference; the old methods of saving have been

retained but have been embodied in a system of insurance controlled by the state. But the most interesting of these social laws is one relating to the housing problem, which was introduced by M. Beernaert in 1889. Not only does it tend to do away with slums but it allows the working man to become the owner of his house, which he rents from the company, by paying a small sum each month which includes the cost of the real estate, the paying off of capital and an insurance. In this way, by paying yearly installments of about 7.5% of the value of the house, he may own it in twenty-five years. Thanks to the insurance, should he die before the end of the time, his family will come into possession of the real estate. Because of this law and the low charges for building and low rents, the Belgian laborer is, as Mr. Rowntree says, one of the best housed workman in the world.¹ This situation has been still further improved by the introduction of season tickets on the railroads, which allows the workmen to be employed in town while living in the villages where they can keep small farms. Their families have all the advantages of fresh air and the increased income from the cultivation of their small property. In this way, too, the workman if thrown out of work is not so completely at a loss as if he were in town. The condition of the Belgian working man is thus far better than would seem possible considering the low rate of wages. Moreover, the purchasing power of these wages is greater than might have been expected because the cost of living has always been very low. In fact, the rate of saving in Belgium was, in 1911, thirty-six dollars per head, as against twenty-three dollars per head in England. However, there are still great advances to be made along this line, especially in Flanders, but the growing strength of the trades-unions indicates that great improvements will be made. The peasantry

¹ Rowntree, *Land and Labour. Lessons from Belgium*, p. 458.

are better off than the town laborers. Certain agricultural associations known as *boerenbonden* have grown up. These associations make wholesale purchases, rent farm machines and draft horses to the small farmers, establish coöperative dairies, and organize agricultural instruction in the country districts. In short these *boerenbonden* allow the small holder to enjoy the same advantages as the great farmers, and they unite the peasants in groups strong enough to force the parliament to look out for the agrarian interest. The Raffaisen Banks, which were organized to help the working men, make small advances to the farmers at low interest, thus allowing them to improve their fields, to drain and irrigate their land, to build greenhouses or to buy cattle. Therefore, it is not remarkable that the cultivation in Belgium should be as intensive as anywhere in the world. The following is the production per acre of the various cereals in Belgium and the neighboring countries¹:

<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Rye</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>
Belgium 33½ B.	31½B.	54½B.	6.7 ton
France 19 B.	15½B.	26½B.	3 "
Germany 27 B.	23 B.	38½B.	5 "
Great Britain 30 B.		39B.	5.7 "

The best results are generally obtained from the small farms, the average size of a holding being 14½ acres as against 63 acres in England. Thus the greater number of the farmers cultivate their own land. Out of one hundred cultivators there are only thirty-five paid laborers. In England these figures are exactly reversed.

This agricultural prosperity has been increased in the last few years by the development of light railways ("Chemins de fer Vicinaux"). These little lines have local

¹ Rowntree, *ibid.*, p. 178.

interest only and offer no very brilliant prospects to their shareholders; but the Belgian Government encouraged the formation of a "National Organization of Local Railways," a semi-official body which has a monopoly of the light railways and is guaranteed by the state, the shares being held by the state, the provinces or the communes. Each line is built by certain men who in turn lease the railway to another company. These tenants operate the roads. The advantages of this system are, first, that it prevents excessive centralization and bureaucratic complications and, on the other hand, that it makes possible the construction of lines which would bring in very little, or would not even pay at all for a number of years. The expense is small because the tracks are laid along the roads, very light material is used, and country inns are quite often used for the stations. In this manner the railroads are run without actual loss and contribute a great deal to the success of farming in out-of-the-way districts. The percentage of local railways in Belgium in 1918 was 22.8 miles per square mile of country, whereas in Germany it was only 2.6, in France 1.8, and in England 0.38 miles per square mile.

It should be remembered that these local lines are only supplementary to the regular railways, which have also developed quite remarkably in Belgium. There are about three thousand miles of track, that is 30.29 to every square mile as against 22.38 in England, 15.72 in Germany, and 11.72 in France. Almost all these lines are owned by the state.

There is a fine system of canals in Belgium, especially in the north, which makes it possible to transport heavy loads at a low charge. The port of Antwerp is the natural exit and entrance to this network of waterways. It was known among European ports for the ease with which any vessel unloading there could find another cargo. Antwerp

was not only the natural export-harbor for Belgian products but was also an important port of transit. It is noteworthy that, contrary to a fairly current opinion, German trade was not the most important. Statistics show that Antwerp's commerce was half with England and only one fifth with Germany.

Belgium's commerce, in proportion to the population, was the most flourishing in the world. In 1913 it amounted to about nine milliards of francs (\$1,800,000,000). Strictly speaking Belgium ranked fifth, coming after England, Germany, the United States, and France. This was due partly to the nation's favorable position and the industry of the inhabitants, and also in an almost equal degree to the natural resources of the country. These latter are mostly a result of the agricultural prosperity which has already been mentioned: for, although Belgium could not produce enough corn for her dense population (four fifths of the wheat consumed in the country was imported), she was able to export sugar, vegetables, and fruit. The chief mining wealth was coal, the output of which was equal to that of Russia and about half that of France, but much less than the production in England and the United States. The recent discovery of a large coal bed in the north of the country gives promise that the coal supply of Belgium may double in a few years. The iron mines are to a great extent worked out, but the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and Lorraine are both near enough to supply material for a great deal of metal work in Belgium. The production of steel was more than half that of the French, a third of the English and a seventh of the German. Formerly there was a large supply of zinc found in "La Vieille Montagne" near Liége but the veins are now exhausted, and the industry has developed with imported material. In 1914 Belgium handled a quarter of the annual zinc supply of the world. The quarries, which are another considerable

source of Belgian wealth, brought in sixty-two million francs a year. They contain bluestone for building, limestone, black and red marbles in the Wallonian district, chalky stones from the country round Maestricht, porphyry for paving stones from South Brabant.

The public debt was relatively small—\$1,200,000,000 in 1914, of which about half was represented by the state railways. Belgium was one of the most lightly taxed countries in the world.

THE BELGIAN CONGO

At the conclusion of the conference of Berlin in 1885, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, was called to the sovereignty of the independent state of the Congo on account of the part he had taken in the struggle against slavery in Central Africa. Between the new state and Belgium there was only a personal union. The power of the sovereign of the Congo was absolute. The Congo State experienced at first quite a difficult period, then came prosperity, due especially to the export of rubber. A part of the revenue from the colony became the property of the King of the Belgians, who employed it particularly to beautify Brussels and its vicinity. Various charges have been made against the administration of the independent state of the Congo. It has been proved that most of these accusations, which in no case concerned Belgium, were unfounded. The action of the principal accusers, Messrs. Morel and Casement, in the present war renders moreover their testimony highly questionable.

A short time before the death of Leopold II, the Congo was taken over by Belgium. King Albert at his succession to the throne emphasized in quite a special way in his address to the Chambers and also on the occasion of the inauguration of the Museum at Tervueren the necessity

for extending to all of the Congo a rule worthy of Belgium. He recommended to the Chambers that they vote a series of decrees, which, as he said, had for their aim the happiness of the native population, and were prompted by a liberal policy, for "we should enjoy the respect of our neighbors, and, surrounded by other sympathetic nations, advance unceasingly in the path of progress." A short while before his coming to the throne, Albert I had visited the colony. The first minister of the colonies, Mr. Renkin, did likewise, and it was in the colony itself that he elaborated most of the plans of which the King had spoken. Under the direction of Mr. Renkin, great progress was realized. The sleeping sickness was combated, while a chain of important lines of railroads and the creation of an important fleet of river boats facilitated the development of the colony. The missions were doubled, the mining region of Katanga was explored. The war has not interrupted these activities: the copper mines are being developed, and several months ago the last rail was laid on the line connecting Katanga with the network of lakes in Central Africa.

The native army was also increased and the fidelity of the blacks (remarkable examples of this have been published) proves their attachment to the present government.

The war has produced great prosperity in the Belgian colony. In 1916, the exports amounted to 129,200,006 francs against 46,391,000 francs of exports.

black troops in the state so that the Belgians at first directed their contingents against Cameroon. These, joined to the French troops of Gaboon, went up the valley of the Sanga, and on the 28th of January, 1916, entered Yaunde, the capital of Cameroon.

German East Africa was provided with numerous black troops, well armed and commanded by many European officers. The war supplies had been increased from the armament of the cruiser *Koenigsberg*. The Belgians were therefore obliged at the beginning to hold themselves on the defensive while provisions and ammunition were being transported across the vast continent—partly on the backs of the men.

In March, 1916, General Tombeur felt strong enough to launch an offensive, which was energetically directed. On the 3d of July, at Kato, the main body of the German army was cut to pieces. On the 26th of September, after other engagements, the Belgians entered Tabora, capital of the colony, and there delivered 189 Europeans belonging to the allied nations. They had captured from Germany about 120,000 square miles. Their offensive powerfully aided those of the English in the northern part of the same colony.

In Russia, a Belgian division of armed motor-cars rendered valuable service during the offensive of 1917. They opened up the way for the infantry at Koniuchy; they covered the retreat on the Tarnopol route and stopped the enemy—sometimes for whole days.

MORAL AND DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE OF BELGIUM

It is always contrary to the rules of international law to enter by force with an army the territory of a neutral country in such a way as to reap any advantage whatso-

ever in a war with another nation. In the case of the violation of the neutrality of Belgium by Germany, the injustice takes on a special character. Belgium was, in fact, reduced to a state of neutrality imposed by a treaty. This was a double contract. On one hand, the five contracting powers (England, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia) agreed, in relation to Belgium, to abstain from all acts of hostility on her territory on condition that she should abstain from forming alliances and from entertaining any political ambitions. On the other hand, there was an agreement on the part of each of these powers in relation to the others to respect Belgian neutrality. This stipulation was the principal reason for the treaty of London: for the powers wished to prevent any one among them from reaping any advantage in occupying Belgium or in forming an alliance with her. Belgium had kept her word in resisting by all means any attempt of this kind. For this reason she had always kept an army, but this had been maintained in modest proportions not only because she had confidence in the promise of the guaranteeing powers but also in order to avoid any suspicion among them that Belgium was entertaining any idea of political aggression. The relative weakness of the Belgians, before the German attack, therefore, was due not only to their confidence in their neighbors' word but to their scrupulous and faithful adherence to the terms of the treaty. This adds to the odious character of Germany's act, the perfidy of which appears still more complete when one takes into account the reiterated assurances which she had given to Belgium, saying that she intended to respect the treaty.

Bismarck had written in 1870: "In confirmation of my assurances given by word of mouth, I have the honor to restate to you in writing the declaration—superfluous if one considers the treaties in force—that the North German Confederation and its allies will respect the neutrality of

Belgium, provided naturally that this country be respected by the other belligerent."

In a speech of Von Jagow, minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Budget Committee of the Reichstag on April the 29th, 1913, he declared: "Belgian neutrality is guaranteed by international conventions and Germany is determined to respect these conventions."

On the 2d of August, 1914, Von Below, the German Minister at Brussels stated to the Brussels newspaper editors: "The troops will not cross Belgian territory. Serious events are impending. Perhaps you will see your neighbor's house burned down but the fire will spare your own residence."

In spite of all these protestations, on this very day, the 2d of August, at seven o'clock in the evening, the same minister delivered to M. Davignon, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, a note announcing Germany's intention of sending her troops across Belgian territory with the aim of averting a French attack by way of the Meuse valley. (The Germans have since then acknowledged that there was no indication that such an attack was being prepared.) In case Belgium should oppose the passage of German troops, she was to be considered as an enemy country. The reply had to be given in twelve hours.

The members of the Belgian Government had little difficulty in reaching an agreement among themselves and with the King as to the nature of the reply to be made to this ultimatum. It ends with these words: "The Belgian Government by accepting the proposals made to it would sacrifice the honor of the nation and at the same time betray its duty in relation to Europe. Conscious of the rôle that Belgium has played for over eighty years in the civilization of the world, it refuses to believe that the independence of Belgium can be preserved only at the price of the violation of that neutrality. If this hope is deceived, the Belgian

Government is firmly determined to repulse by every means in its power any violation of its rights."

This attitude of Belgium exposed it to the greatest dangers. It was not, however, an attitude due to a vain pride or to boldness, or to an exaggerated idealism. It was a profound sense of the justice of her cause and of her duty to Europe and to herself which led Belgium in the person of King Albert and of her ministers to make unhesitatingly these serious resolutions. They were entirely approved by the nation.

This upright policy had a great moral effect on the war. It had as a first result the intervention of England. This country would have abandoned an age-old policy if she had permitted an important power to take possession of Antwerp and of Flanders and thus to threaten Pas de Calais, and the whole of Great Britain. A complete victory moreover would have constituted a great danger for the British Empire. In one way then it was a wise policy for England not to detach herself from the Triple Entente and to enter the struggle. On the other hand, however, it was a terrible adventure to undertake with a very small army, the enormous task of crushing the formidable German military power. Great sacrifices had to be made by the nation and, an ardent patriotism had to be aroused in the mass of the English people who were rather inclining towards pacificism. The undertaking would perhaps have been beyond human strength if it had not been for the moral shock produced by the German crime in Belgium. The violation of neutrality had been followed by the contemptuous words of the German chancellor referring to the treaty as a "scrap of paper." Then had come the news of the burning of Louvain with the horrors inflicted on the Belgian population by the German armies. From the very beginning of the campaign, the German conception of war, born of the philosophy of *Kultur*, presented itself as diametrically op-

posed to all the ideas of morality, of justice, and of humanity, the ideals dear to modern peoples. There was from that moment a lofty aim in the war, an ideal to the defense of which the whole world rallied, irrespective of political opinions, class interests, or patriotism.

Belgium's heroic stand and the German atrocities in Belgium not only facilitated the powerful intervention of England but they produced a deep feeling in Italy and there, also, strongly contributed to the creation of a state of mind necessary to the great resolution of May, 1915. In the small neutral nations of Europe there was, without doubt, some fear caused by the cruelty of the Germans towards the little country which dared to resist them, but sympathy went to the victim in spite of the German propaganda, which, particularly through the pen of the Swedish professor Steffin, attempted to represent the attitude of Belgium as an act of folly.

In the United States the sympathy of the greater part of the population for those who suffered unjustly in Belgium expressed itself immediately in concrete acts. The Commission of "Belgian Relief" was founded in October, 1914, and since that time the great nation of America has not ceased to show proofs of a steadfast friendship for the little country of Europe which suffered for principles dear to every American.

The violation of her promises by Germany and her indescribable conduct in Belgium had rapidly created a public opinion which neither peaceful tendencies, nor the Monroe doctrine, nor German propaganda—impudent or cunning—could alter. The submarine exploits raised to the highest pitch an exasperation which was already very great; and the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Washington and Berlin, caused by the actions of the Germans on the sea, had already been demanded with insistence all over the country—in the name of Lincoln's great

principles—when Germany established slavery in Belgium by the deportation of workmen.

The noble conduct and the powerful letters of Cardinal Mercier, proclaiming the imprescriptible rights of Christian morality in the presence of the force founded on a barbarous philosophy, made a profound impression among Christians and especially on the entire Catholic world. They helped to dissipate the clouds with which a very insidious Austro-German propaganda had tried to disguise among them, the true moral character of the conflict. To the pacifists of every class who wish peace, if not at any price at least above everything, the Cardinal held up the sovereign rights of justice and the promise that the "last word of this war shall be pronounced by the God of Justice."

The destruction of the University of Louvain moved the entire thinking world, and the clumsy manifesto of the ninety-three German scholars, approving blindfolded all the acts of their government and of their soldiers in Belgium, struck another blow to the fellow-feeling which German science had won in university centers.

BELGIAN MORAL EFFORT

The civilian population of Belgium had given proof of courage in accepting all these risks of resistance to the will of Germany; the army also immediately showed great bravery, especially at Liège, under command of the intrepid General Leman. This effort from the beginning was, however, a small thing in comparison with the long ordeals which were to follow. The Belgian fighting men little knew the electrifying effect of victory. Facing an innumerable army and powerful instruments of war, their task was to dispute, foot by foot, the road with those who wished by a withering march to crush nations insufficiently prepared to resist them. Each heroic, stubborn resistance was

followed by an order to retreat. Later, it was the long waiting in the mud and stagnant water of the Yser. Behind the gloom of the drenching rains the soldier divined the presence of an enemy who was torturing his people and whom he could not think of pursuing until the general situation of the front should make this offensive possible.

The invincibility of the Belgian attack in September, 1918, showed that this army had been able to resist those four years of ordeal without seeing its morale weaken.

The civilians, on the contrary, were in permanent contact with the enemy, which fact caused it to be said that "Belgium was the civilian front." Their attitude might lead to the gravest consequences for the future of their country. Germany conducted against them a continuous warfare, seeking to compromise them in some way in order to make the world believe that Belgium was accepting the accomplished fact, attempting to separate them from the Allies by an artful press, doing her utmost by a thousand privations and by the severity of her rule to provoke a feeling of discouragement—the necessary condition for a shameful peace—striving to create a division between the rich and the poor, the townspeople and the peasants, the refugees and the Belgians who had remained in the country, between the Catholics and the free-thinkers, the Flemings and the Walloons, by slandering the King, the Queen, the Cardinal, the government, etc.

All this was of no avail. The population of Brussels and of the province remained inflexible in the attitude of passive resistance in the face of the invader. The authorities set the example. The sovereigns and the government had shown the way. They were followed by the burgomasters who, on the arrival of the enemy, assumed a fearless attitude; for example Mr. Max in Brussels, Count Visart de Bocarmé at Bruges, Mr. de Lalieux at Nivelles.

The corporation of lawyers of Brussels in the person of

Mr. Théodor protested against the manner of administering justice in Belgium in the tribunals organized by the Germans. This act cost him a long imprisonment in Germany. The judges, also, by causing the arrest of the traitors who, with the support of Germany, were attempting to divide Belgium, exposed themselves to the severities of the invader. Exile and imprisonment were likewise inflicted on Professors Pirenne and Frederic for having refused to support the German plan concerning the founding of a Flemish university at Ghent.

Many leading men were condemned for having refused to make their workmen labor for the enemy; for refusing absolutely to give information to the enemy for the purpose of deportation; for having protested against some abuse of power, or under the accusation of either having communicated with relatives outside of Belgium, or of having assisted a young man to the frontier, or of having read or spread abroad a prohibited pamphlet. Many are those who lost their lives in such manner—either by contracting diseases in German camps or by facing the bullets of a firing squad.

The victims were still more numerous among the workmen deported to Germany or forced to labor behind the lines. The percentage of deaths among those who were sent back home, after the complete exhaustion of their strength, is frightful.

Notwithstanding this cruel treatment and in spite of threats and of all kinds of temptation, the working class remained obstinate in spite of the efforts of the Germans to make them work for their advantage. The resistance of the workmen in the machine-shops in Malines, Luttre, and Liége, and the firmness of the quarrymen of Lessines were particularly obstinate. In the face of deportation, the Belgian workmen sent a protest to all their brethren in the neutral countries. It ended with these words: "Workmen, from the depth of our misery, we count on you. Act!

As for us, even if force succeeds for a time in subjecting our bodies to servitude, never shall our souls submit. We add this: Whatever be our torture, we wish peace only with the independence of our country and the triumph of justice."

Carried off to Germany, they suffered all kinds of torture for having refused to sign a work contract. Subjected to forced labor in Flanders or in Northern France, they went on long strikes, doing the least amount of work possible, while some of the more unconquerable spirits were subjected in the detention camps to a régime of starvation.

Those who were ruined by sack and fire were just as courageous and as calm as the workmen. In the large crowds flocking towards Brussels after the destruction of Louvain, there was no hysterical passion against their tormentors, no despondency or despair. There was a resigned sadness, great faith in a final victory and retribution, a certain satisfaction in having been able to bear the ordeal, a desire to conceal from the Germans any feeling of suffering. As for those who were put to death, they displayed not stoicism but bravery. They accepted death always without fear and often with heroism, as did young Pierre Hoogerheyde of Reckheim who was executed at Charleroi in the spring of 1918; who refused to be blindfolded and himself gave the order to fire.

Far from terrifying the people, as the Germans purposed to do, these executions only made the Belgians hate the invader and strengthened their determination to hold out to the end. This end they could conceive of in no other way except as a victory to be gained for their rights. This unshakable confidence in the future, which sustained them in their long ordeal, they kept, notwithstanding the efforts of the enemy to convince them by their placards and their newspapers that the cause of the Allies was definitely lost. These attempts to poison their minds were

thwarted, above all by a powerful and fearless clandestine press which defied all the efforts of the rapacious German administration to strangle it. These little newspapers, these pamphlets, never ceased to publish the heroic acts of their countrymen, the allied victories, the German crimes.

If the attempt at moral suppression was thwarted in this way by Belgian ingenuity, it was the same with the attempts made by the enemy to imprison the Belgians in their country. The only frontier in the direction of a neutral nation—that of Holland—was defended by a triple wire in which ran an electric current at a high pressure. There were, besides, a canal, barbed-wire fences, and a hedge of sentinels who fired without pity on every person suspected of attempting to escape. In spite of this severity about twenty thousand young men escaped from jail in order that they might join the Belgian army; and many were the circumstances under which numerous others for serious reasons ran the same risk. A great many lost their lives or their liberty in this way, but a greater number succeeded in passing the border—thanks to their incredible cleverness. Among these escapes the best known are those of the boats *Scaldis* at Antwerp and of *Atlas V* at Liège, each of which by an act of remarkable daring succeeded in taking an important group of Belgians into Holland.

SUFFERINGS OF THE WAR

A relative famine was the portion of all the peoples of Europe during this long war. The Belgians suffered from it more especially for two reasons. The very dense population of the country makes it necessary, even in times of peace, to import a large part of its provisions, and the country found itself, on account of the German occupation, cut off from the rest of the world, except from Holland. On the other hand, the almost complete suppression of all

industry by Germany stopped the economic life of the nation, and millions of people were reduced to want. These people were not able themselves to buy food and became dependent on the public distribution. In addition to this, let it be remembered that there were unceasing requisitions of food made by Germany, especially in the campaigns in Flanders; and it will be readily understood why a frightful famine would have spread over the country if the "Belgian Relief" had not come to avert this catastrophe. The Belgian Government could hardly hope that Germany would carefully fulfill the duties of an occupying power and furnish to the invaded regions a sufficient quantity of food. It was probable that Germany herself, suffering from famine on account of the blockade to which she was subjected, would allow the Belgians only a very little to eat. On the other hand, in permitting food to be taken into Belgium, the Allies ran the risk of having it seized by Germany for their own army. It was necessary, therefore, for a neutral Commission to supervise the distribution of foodstuffs and for Germany to promise not to seize these imports. The intervention of the United States and Spain made this plan practicable. An American Commission was formed, the Commission for Relief in Belgium, charged with the task of collecting donations and of buying and importing food through the medium of its office in Brussels, and of seeing that Germany respected her promises and did not seize the food brought into Belgium. A Belgian Committee, the National Committee for Relief and Feeding, undertook likewise to distribute this same food in the country. Rations were distributed to whomsoever could not pay. Others paid in proportion to their means. The funds were furnished principally by the Belgian Government, which borrowed, to that end, at first from the English and French governments and afterwards from the Government of the United States. Public generosity furnished,

in addition to this, important contributions, which came particularly from the United States, from the European allies, and from the English colonies. When America entered the war the American Commissioners were replaced by Spaniards and Dutch.

The submarine warfare at times rendered the work of the Commission for Belgian Relief extremely difficult. Ships laden with wheat were sunk and the number of available vessels decreased considerably.

During the winters of 1916-17 and of 1917-18, the rations had to be reduced to the point of not furnishing more than half the calories necessary for an idle man to keep his weight; consequently there was a general weakening of the population, as is shown by Mr. M. Pate (report of June 6, 1917), American representative of the Commission for Belgian Relief for the province of Hainault. The rate of mortality in the region of Charleroi, as he states, was three and one-half times what it was in normal times, and that without any epidemic. Physical resistance to disease had been lowered to one-third of the normal resistance. Men had lost from ten to forty pounds of weight. The number of people receiving soup each day had increased from sixty thousand to four hundred thousand during the months of February and March, 1917. So it is to be noted that one could scarcely expect private individuals to be able to supplement the insufficiency of these rations by the purchase of native products. These products were indeed scarce and commanded fantastic prices. During the winter of 1917-18 the retail prices paid in Antwerp were as follows:

<i>Before the War</i>			<i>In April, 1918</i>
Coffee	per lb.	\$0.27	\$5.50 to \$6.40
Butter	" "	0.27	2.38
Rice	" "	0.07	1.83
Meat	" "	0.27	1.37

Bacon	"	"	\$0.18	\$2.28
Lard	"	"	0.16	2.73
Eggs, each			0.02	0.13
Cheese	"	"	0.18	1.64
Potatoes	"	"	0.01	0.18

Under the influence of these causes, the general state of health grew steadily worse. At Brussels in January, 1918, a newspaper stated that the majority of the adults did not weigh more than 110 to 140 pounds. In Brussels, during the last week of 1917, there were only eighty-five births against two hundred and seventy-six deaths. The same conditions existed in Antwerp, and in the latter city the mortality had increased from 13.5 to 28 per thousand. At Liège during the year of 1917 there were only 1362 births against 2951 deaths. Tuberculosis spread more and more rapidly with its destructive power. It has been recently reported that in certain districts, one-third of the population is tainted with this germ to some extent in some form or other.

The progress of tuberculosis was favored by the coal famine which increased the price of coal to \$23 a ton, and by the lack of covering and of warm clothing. Cloth sold at \$12 a yard; a pair of stockings at \$3, and shoes cost from \$18 to \$25 a pair. Soap was very scarce. It sold for \$2 a pound, and its absence caused the appearance of skin diseases, especially the itch.

Here again, the ingenuity of the inhabitants attempted to remedy these evils in various ways. Substitutes for divers things were invented: people drank coffee made of seeds from the pine tree; they smoked strawberry plants; they made cloaks from bed-coverings; old clothes were turned and made over; clogs were worn instead of shoes.

EXACTIONS, DESTRUCTION

The German invasion and occupation transformed one of the most industrious commercial countries of the world

into a region of misery and desolation. From the very beginning of the invasion, economic life was almost destroyed and only the institution of the moratorium could prevent complete financial ruin. The railroads were placed in the hands of the military authorities, and in order to use them the civilians were subjected to endless vexations and restrictions. Even freedom in going about on foot was not permitted—except through the use of a passport whimsically given or refused. Telephones were suppressed; the mail service was reduced to almost no service at all; and only open letters were accepted.

What is even worse, great quantities of raw material were requisitioned at the beginning of the occupation for instance, eighty-five millions of merchandise at Antwerp. This alone would have struck a heavy blow at the activity of the mills. These continued to operate, however, for a year or two, generally at a loss, and often only for a part of the week. The reserve funds of several large enterprises disappeared in this way. But things did not stop there. Germany had an inexorable plan, conceived by the great manufacturer, W. Rathenau, for the exploitation of Belgium. The requisitions were pushed farther and farther. The Germans began by seizing the materials, then they requisitioned machinery of every kind. Finally in 1917 everything that could be taken away was sent to Germany and the rest was utterly destroyed and reduced to scrap-iron. On various occasions the men who executed this sad business confessed that it was a question not only of exploiting the conquered country but of reducing it for years to come to economic helplessness.

Since this annihilation of the Belgian industrial equipment, the requisitions have continued. Copper in all forms has been taken from private homes. In the same way all wool was seized, especially that in mattresses. Leather and linen were also eagerly collected. The products of the soil

were collected in *Zentralen* and were sold to the inhabitants only after Germany has taken the best part of it. The forests of Belgium have nearly all been cut down by the enemy.

There were, besides, financial extortions of two kinds. Under the state budget which, according to the international conventions, should be used exclusively for the needs and for the administration of the occupied territory, Germany levied annually about sixteen million dollars for German interests.

Besides this, a heavy war tax was laid on Belgium for the support of the army occupying Belgium. Fixed at first at \$8,000,000 a month, it was increased afterwards successively to \$10,000,000 and \$12,000,000 (\$144,000,000 a year). In addition to this, townships had to pay large war taxes (Brussels \$10,000,000; Liège, \$4,000,000; Antwerp, \$10,000,000).

Under various pretexts, individuals or towns had to pay penalties—Brussels, for example, two million marks because the inhabitants had celebrated the national holiday in silence and contemplation.

On the 12th of September, 1916, the Germans seized the cash in the National Bank and from the Belgian General Society (about \$110,000,000), and deposited it in the Deutsche Bank. (The sum was returned after the signing of the armistice.)

It must be stated, moreover, that besides these exactions there were plunder, incendiarism, bombardments. At the end of 1914, Mr. H. Masson, a Brussels lawyer, estimated the damage caused by these outrages at \$1,100,000,000. Since then, destruction has multiplied. Ypres has been destroyed, West Flanders terribly ravaged, and each recoil of the Germans has been marked by destruction and plunder. The official commission for war damages, instituted by the Belgian Government, recently estimated the damage done to Belgium by destruction, requisitions, extortions, penalties, plunder, etc., at \$7,600,000.

Struggle Against the Evils of the War

I. IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM

Crushed by all the calamities of war and by the extortions of the Germans, the Belgians in the occupied territory made a great effort to lessen these evils wherever it was possible.

The principal organization was the National Committee for Relief and Feeding which acted in conjunction with the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Various kinds of relief work were created in connection with this organization. In July, 1915, it was decided, for example, that attendance on professional courses should become the condition of obtaining help from the committee. In this way the forced idleness of the workmen was not lost time. The *Comptoirs du Travail* made the laborers work uniformly in return for the food received from the Committee and required them to make clothing for the needy.

The food was portioned out in various ways. For example, the *Soupe Communale* in Brussels gave each day one-half pint of soup with 250 grammes of bread; one-third of the population took advantage of this distribution.

The Community Stores collected food products at reduced prices for those who had housekeeping cards. The Restaurants Bruxellois and the Cantines Communales furnished meals at very low cost to the lower middle class, employés, etc. They had more than one hundred thousand customers each day.

The *Ligue du Coin de Terre* likewise, under the direction

of the National Committee, took care to procure bits of ground for the workmen in order to occupy them and to permit them to add vegetables to their nourishment.

There was also incorporated in the National Committee a "Food Commission for Children," providing with funds the local organizations charged with procuring milk for the children and mothers. For older children there was an organization for school lunches. The "Little Bees" also operated canteens for mothers and children and distributed clothes and layettes.

The Patriotic Union of Belgian Women found employment for those out of work, furnished work for the lace-makers in Flanders, and shipped their products to foreign countries. There were, moreover, organizations and committees which gave money-aid to families formerly in easy circumstances whom the war had reduced to pecuniary embarrassment. Certain of these organizations brought relief to families deprived by the war of their means of support; others operated in a more extensive and far-reaching way, such as the "Assistance Discrète" and the Cardinal Mercier Fund.

These relief organizations had sections in a large number of towns. Everywhere those who were in only relative need did all they could to aid those who had nothing. This was the case in that part of Louvain which escaped destruction by fire. Here fourteen war committees operated for relief.

II. OUTSIDE OF BELGIUM, THE REFUGEES

Confronted with the invading Germans, a great number of Belgians left their homes. During the month of August, 1914, many Walloons joined the people from the north of France, fleeing towards the center and the south of that country. Later, when Flanders was threatened, thousands

of Belgians went over to England. At the capture of Antwerp about a million Flemings took refuge in Holland, where they were well treated, but these crowds constituted a great burden for this little country and their return to Belgium was advised. About sixty thousand Belgians remained, however, in Holland. At the same time England received a very large immigration of Belgians, especially of Flemings. From the time of the German advance towards the Yser, in October, 1914, a large number of people who had heard of the excesses committed at the time of the first invasion during the month of August, decided to cross the sea. Among these were the late visitors at the seaside summer resorts, interspersed with crowds of Flemish peasants. There was a real panic at Ostend, everybody trying to find passage on the small number of boats in port. Folkestone was soon overrun with refugees and new arrivals continued to come. England, guarantor for Belgian neutrality, felt it to be a matter of honor to show herself hospitable to the nation which her brave but too small army had not been able to save from invasion. A committee for War Refugees was formed in London and an appeal was made to the people. One hundred and fifty thousand homes opened immediately to the newcomers. It was not an easy task to portion out the two hundred thousand Belgians of every description to these houses, among which humble cottages were registered along with the mansions and palaces of the Lords. It was inevitable that some disorder should arise and that some assignments should have been unfortunate, a condition which brought certain difficulties in its wake. In a general way, however, the distribution was successfully made, and soon there was scarcely a village in the United Kingdom which did not have its Belgian family. The outbursts of generosity were touching. The war was prolonged; the hospitality offered the Belgians in the English homes could not con-

tinue, so after some hesitation the English undertook to find work for the refugees. A large number of Belgians found employment in the munition factories which sprang up in haste everywhere. Belgian workshops were also organized which employed Belgian labor by preference. Near Leeds arose a city of ten thousand inhabitants, all of them Belgians who were employed in the munition factories. At Whiteinch on the Clyde Belgian dockyards appeared for naval construction. The Belgian Government organized an employment bureau at London and applied itself to the task of procuring for Belgian subjects schools, priests, hospitals, and banks.

France likewise was very hospitable to the Belgian refugees scattered upon all her territory. Many among them also engaged in war industries. The Belgian Government itself was hospitably received by the French at St. Adresse, near Havre, where it had an important administration under its direction. France also gave shelter to the Belgian army instruction camps and to the manufactures furnishing to those camps arms and ammunition. An important part of the personnel of the munition manufacturers of Herstal near Liège, having succeeded in making their escape, founded near Paris a factory of expert operatives which has played a very honorable rôle in the manufacture of guns for the French army.

The Problem of Restoration

The war, which was cruel for all the people drawn into its vortex, proved to be particularly terrible for the Belgians because their country for four years had twenty-nine thirtieths of its territory occupied by an enemy with a fixed determination to exploit its victim to the utmost limit. Moreover, Belgium was densely populated, very prosperous and crowded with cities and buildings of artistic and historical interest.

If the kind of fighting which took place around Ypres and Roulers had been continued all through Belgium during a desperate retreat of the enemy, the destruction of unreplaceable treasures would have been tremendous. The signature of the armistice has prevented that final catastrophe, but the amount of damage has nevertheless been enormous. At the moment when this chapter was written the estimation of losses was not yet complete, but had been provisionally put at \$7,600,000,000. This total comprises the industrial losses, the destruction of cities and houses, the levies in cash.

The most urgent, although not the most important, damage to repair concerns the houses. Forty-five thousand of them have disappeared. More than four billion bricks will be required for their reconstruction. In anticipation of that situation, companies were constituted during the occupation which have bought large clay grounds—notably at Trazegnies. For the period of transition a few emergency houses in wood will be available. They have been prepared in the camps of refugees in Holland.

In view of facilitating the rebuilding of villages, the government had organized in 1917, already, the "King Albert Fund," which has considered the problems relating to the providing of plans, materials, labor, etc. Plans of model farms have also been prepared by the agricultural societies in Belgium. There is a strong movement for improving the housing conditions of peasants and workmen. The latter in particular have well deserved to be the object of special solicitude in the general restoration of the country on account of their admirable patriotism and their stubborn resistance to the efforts of the enemy to employ them in war work.

The rebuilding of monuments of historical interest is a very different problem. There has been going on for some time a discussion between Belgian artists concerning the advisability of reviving structures that have been practically razed to the ground by bombardment or fire. The prevalent view is that it would be unwise to restore them and indulge in mere soulless replicas. Only the monuments which have preserved their general aspect and their lines should be repaired by using as much as possible the old stones. The town council of Louvain has prepared a fine plan to rebuild in a more artistic manner the center of the city and to provide an appropriate frame to the splendid city hall which just escaped arson in 1914.

The Germans during their occupation had tried to induce the Belgians to rebuild immediately their destroyed cities, and financial plans had been proposed, but on account of the uncertainty of the immediate future and of the mistrust of German supervision and German taste the population was not interested. The Governor then gave an order that all ruins should be reduced to the height of a man, so that the streets of those burnt-down places now run between two walls like garden walls.

✓The restoration of means of communication has, of

course, even more importance in reviving the economic, social, and political activity of the country. The destruction here has gone very far. In Flanders, in the battle area and twenty miles behind it, rails have been cut into small pieces and everything must be built anew, which is no small problem in a time when there is no Belgian factory providing rails. In the eastern part of the country the armistice has prevented such a thorough annihilation, but the tracks are in a pitiful state. Besides, the question of the rolling stock is a serious one.) Although part of the cars surrendered by Germany have gone to Belgium, it will be some time before the railroads are in good working condition. Out of her previous equipment Belgium had saved 1900 engines out of 4572, 1700 passenger cars out of 7990, 11,000 freight cars out of 99,435. All this had been stored during the war at Oissel in France, but part of this rolling stock had been used for the Belgian army or lent to the Allies and is in poor condition. It is not surprising, therefore, that during many months after the evacuation, the lack of means of transportation seriously hampered the revival of the country. Few lines could be used, trains were very scarce and awfully slow. The restoration of the postal and telegraphic communications has also been every difficult. Not till the steel works are fully at work will the Belgian net of railroads and local railways resume the intense traffic of yore.

(In this general reconstruction of the means of transportation, one should not only reproduce a previous situation, brilliant as it was, but try to improve upon the past. The Belgian railroads had too much traffic to handle. An increase in the number of canals is the best solution of the difficulty, the more so that it would reduce the cost of transportation of raw materials, especially coal. The future of Antwerp is greatly involved in this scheme. A possible reduction in German transit, which has been repeatedly

used as a threat during the German occupation, should be compensated by attracting the products of the Lorraine mines and factories, through a canal to be made in the Chiers Valley connecting the Moselle region with the Meuse basin.) France could also help in the revival of Antwerp's prosperity by changing somewhat the tariff system which gives an artificial advantage to French harbors located much further from the industrial district of northern France. (Primarily, however, the prosperity of Antwerp will depend upon the development of the newly discovered coal basin of Campine, which was almost ready for exploitation when the Germans ordered the boring of pits to be given up. These collieries, located near Antwerp, together with the products of the Belgian industry when it has revived, will provide the return freight which used to be easily found in Antwerp.)

Belgian agriculture provides little for export outside vegetables and sugar. It does not produce enough cereals to feed the population. This situation has been made rather worse by the war. To be sure, land has enormously increased in value during those four years, but this is entirely due to the artificial situation created by the high prices reached by the farm products. In fact, the productivity has decreased. The very intensive type of cultivation in the Belgian fields cannot be maintained without using fertilizers. These have not been provided during the war, and the ground is exhausted. Horses for farm work have almost disappeared, and cattle have become scarce. For years, the efforts of the state, of the agricultural engineers, of the great farmers had tended towards producing a pure and sturdy race of cattle. All the results of that patient work are endangered at present by the loss of many reproducing animals which the Germans have commandeered with the rest. Fortunately some of these animals were sent in time to Holland, and it will be pos-

sible to reconstitute the race, but this will be a very long process indeed, and for years there will be few cattle to kill. The Belgians will have to import much chilled meat.

(The central problem of restoration, however, is evidently the revival of industry. The more Belgium will have to buy, and she will have to buy almost everything, the more she needs industrial products to give in return. Now, through the policy described in a preceding chapter, the Germans have ruined Belgian industry almost completely. The machines are gone, or they are broken, deprived of necessary pieces in copper or other metals. The buildings are often damaged. Raw materials are absent. If Belgium and northern France are left in that state for years, Germany is rather a winner than a loser in the war game.) It was comforting, therefore, to hear President Wilson say in his speech of December 2, 1918, that he will recommend that the orders for these regions be executed before all others. In view of centralizing purchases and avoiding duplication, over-bidding and disorder, the Belgians have constituted a "National Office for the Restoration of Economic Activity in Belgium." It will act as a representative of the industrial community in dealing with producers in foreign countries. This pooling had been advocated by important Belgian industrial leaders, such as Trasenster and Ranscelot, and by the great firms of the Charleroi district. It seems unavoidable for the period of reconstruction, but there is much opposition to its maintenance on the part of the Liège manufacturers and of many Belgians who believe that the success of Belgian industry was due to a system of freedom, congenial to the character of the people. A middle course is likely to prevail.) The economic future of Belgian industry is essentially dependent upon its finding markets.) Irrespective of the principles which will ultimately prevail in the question of tariffs, it is absolutely necessary to provide a period of transition

during which Germany will be prevented from flooding the world with her products at the expense of the countries she has ruined. Belgium, being a convalescent country, should receive for the time of recovery a privileged treatment at the hands of friendly nations, allowing her to sell the products of her renewed industry, which on the other hand should be protected from a deadly competition.

While these arrangements will greatly depend upon measures decided by the Treaty of Peace, these vital problems have already been considered during the war by two commissions working under the direction of the Belgian Ministry of Economic Affairs at Le Havre. Other commissions have been preparing an estimation of the war damages and studying the financial question.

The latter problem has come to the fore now that Belgium is liberated and must send to work as soon as possible the swarms of her unemployed laborers and in the meantime feed them. Resources must be created by means of loans. These will have to be granted both on the expectation of a German indemnity and on the basis of Belgium's inherent resources.

This is not the place to speak about the amount of money which Germany will have to pay or will be able to pay, nor about the mode of payment. The damage perpetrated in Belgium has a special right for indemnification, not only on account of the especially unjust character of the aggression, but because it is direct destruction of property, houses, or factories, confiscation of goods or machines, levying of taxes all material losses susceptible of estimation. Moreover, the indemnity paid to Belgium is not only the quickest and surest means of restoring fully the economic life of that country, but it will have a great moral significance, not only in a general way, but upon the Belgians in particular. While everything was going wrong around them, while all their notions of morality were

baffled by the conduct of the enemy, while they had to submit to the most unjust treatment, witness in cold blood the annihilation of the efforts of generations by plundering and destruction, they were always sustained by their unshakable belief that justice would finally prevail and that the work of the enemy would be undone. The indemnification by Germany herself is the only satisfaction that can be given to that thirst for justice, and it will do much towards inspiring confidence in the future in a generation that will have to spend most of its efforts in repairing what has been unjustly destroyed.

Since, however, the indemnification may be extended over a long period, and since the need of recovery is urgent, credits and loans must be obtained and this in fact is the chief preoccupation of the Belgian Government, which has so many other problems to solve. The guarantees which Belgium can offer to her creditors are, first of all, her good reputation as a debtor, her habits of thriftiness, industry, honesty, the skill of her engineers, glassmakers, and lacemakers trained for centuries in their delicate tasks. There is, moreover, the fertility of the great plains of Central Belgium, the lime, the marble, the porphyry of its quarries, the coal of its mines. New veins have been found some years ago south of the Hainault mines and the Campine basin, which is much more important, will in a few years double the yearly yield of coal in Belgium. (The new basin is supposed to contain eight billion tons of coal and, if so, represents more than the German debt to Belgium.) The Congo colony, saved from the German greed, and now ready for a normal exploitation after completion of important railroad lines is another asset, the possibilities of which, as aforesaid, are not yet gauged.

Belgium is, therefore, no beggar. She is resolved to approach on a business basis the powers who will help her

in this critical hour. These resources, however, while important as a guarantee to a loan, are not immediately available for actual work of reconstruction and for the feeding of the people. The real revival of Belgium is not to be expected before a long time. Since the armistice has been signed, many complications of the problem have been disclosed and this chapter is necessarily very incomplete. Moreover, there are many losses which cannot be directly made good for by way of loans, purchases, rebuilding, etc.

The period of occupation has taxed enormously the population with privations, forced labor, deportation, etc. It is still premature to attempt an estimate of the decrease of the population, of the reduction of efficiency of labor, of the chronic diseases which have set in everywhere. Numberless tuberculous persons and a great many invalids of the war will need special care. Among the hundreds of thousands returned to devastated areas or deprived of their former resources, there is an infinite variety of distress and many unsolved problems for which private initiative will have a large field of action. But there is a will to help one another; there is, in spite of some bewilderment in the presence of such an intricate situation, a firm will to revive and to hand over to the next generation a Belgium worthy of her past.

The Future of Belgium

There is much more involved in the restoration of Belgium than the return to normal life of a group of seven millions of persons whose means of existence have been seriously endangered by the war. There are important principles concerned in it. Deschanel has said that "Belgium is not only the stake of the great conflict but the pawn of international justice." Gladstone in 1870 had already said that "The absorption of Belgium in order to satisfy voracious appetites would be sounding the knell of public and international law." These statements refer primarily to the unique situation of Belgium—inasmuch as her independence was pledged by all the powers and bound them together in a solemn contract which may be considered as the first step towards a league of nations. But moreover the problem of Belgium was typical of all those weaker nations which should be entitled to the rights of existence. According to the German theory, the people of the second and third ranks are miserable and despicable institutions which are more dangerous to peace than the larger states. They should be suppressed.¹ This theory is consistent with the German conception of an imperialistic organization of the world resulting from the victory and the domination of the fittest race and the strongest sovereign state. Events have dealt a crushing blow to that Darwinistic construction, inherited from the nineteenth century conceptions. Coöperation, which is found in nature even more than the struggle for life, is the idea that will inspire

¹ U. Rauscher, *Voss. Zeit*, Feb. 11, 1917.

the twentieth century's thinking. In its extreme form—both mystical and anarchistic—it ignores all differences between men, and believes in a unified and homogeneous community. In its more rational expression, on the contrary, it takes the nations as the real units, and the national components of the great international society. So speaks Georges Renard, among the Socialists: "The great structure which we wish to build—vast enough to contain the whole human race—will have nations as its pillars. It will rest on their strong foundations, which have been cemented by the labor of ages, and whose destruction would bring about its own ruin." The Catholic conception is strikingly similar: "Every nation and state," says Weiss, "has a right to existence in order to perform its own tasks but occupies only a subordinate position in the society of mankind."

Whatever may be the fate of the first concrete realization of that conception, at the present moment, it is undeniable that the minds of the people are turned in that direction. In that great society of nations, the small peoples should be accepted as welcome associates. In mankind, as in nature, development and progress are inseparable from diversity; and it is through the variety of racial aptitudes that mankind can best realize its maximum of potentialities. More nations mean more autonomous centers with cultures of their own, more opportunities for capable men to reach the higher and more independent positions in society. It implies more sacred inheritances and ancient glory to live up to, more national honors to inspire effort and talent, more chances given for fruitful ideas to find a field of experiment. The loss of an original culture is unreplaceable and such loss unavoidable, at least to a great extent, when small countries are included in strongly constituted greater states.

While this is true of all small nationalities, it applies in

a much greater degree to Belgium, because of her especially interesting and beneficent national characteristics. She has played an important part in the development of civilization; and therefore she should be allowed to play the same rôle in the future. Belgium is the melting pot in which northern mentality has been reconciled with the spirit of the nations which have more directly inherited ancient civilization. She was a great factor in the very beginning of our civilization; then she became the real center of the Frankish kingdom, and more especially the cradle of the Carolingian family which gave Charlemagne to Europe, the first great figure of modern times and the first great Belgian. In the Middle Ages, when Gothic architecture and French literature penetrated into Germany through the Low Countries, Belgium still exerted a beneficent influence on civilization. Again in the sixteenth century when Louvain became the northern center of humanism, Flemish artists developed an original and powerful interpretation of the renaissance movement. In our own times also Belgian poets have enriched French literature; Verhaeren with his Flemish impetuosity, Maeterlinck and the other Belgian symbolists by injecting Flemish mysticism into modern verse. Flanders also rejuvenated Dutch literature by infusing it with the rich inspiration of the West-Flemish school.

This part of being a medium between two main types of mentalities in the modern world is not negligible; but perhaps Belgian's most important contribution is to be found in her democratic ideals, inaugurated in the Flemish communes and so stubbornly defended against all tyrannies until they found a splendid realization in the very liberal constitution of 1830. Since then, Belgium has admirably taken advantage of her privileged situation by making herself a pioneer in solving many problems of the modern world. The great French geographer, Elisée Reclus, has

called her "the field of experiment for Europe." In a book written in 1910, Henri Charriaux proclaims that "the Belgian nation has by degrees placed herself at the vanguard of the movement for better social conditions; and this conscious and persistent impulse towards progress is what makes her eminently interesting."¹ Belgium conceives this progress as a means of furthering all her powers—her material resources and her æsthetic and spiritual aspirations. She wants to produce more and ever more, but she believes in combining efficiency with freedom. This is why Belgium deserves to live; this is the great work which has been so brutally interrupted by the German invasion. The most urgent problem for Belgium at present is to revive; but amid her pressing needs she is busily engaged in rebuilding her national life on a stronger basis. She has scornfully thrown off the suffocating mantle of guaranteed neutrality which proved to be only a fallacious protection. She has already courageously attacked important problems, such as a further extension of suffrage, the eradication of alcoholism, the suppression of injustice against the Flemish language.

If Belgium is not disappointed in her hopes, if nothing interferes with the speedy restoration of her economic life, if she receives from the friendly nations a benevolent treatment during the period of reconstruction, she will have won in this war a greater consciousness of her national destinies, and she will be an active partner in the League of Free Nations, in which she will see the final realization of a conception which she introduced into the world.

¹ Henri Charriaux, *Belgique Moderne*, p. 1.

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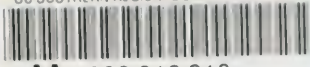
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