

### DETESTATION OF GERMAN IS VOICED BY CARDINAL MERCIER

"One of Your Officers Ordered Bayonet Charge on Women," Baron von der Lancken is Told; Spies Follow Belgian Primate.

Cardinal Mercier's story, including his correspondence with the German government in Belgium during the war 1914 to 1918, edited by the Rev. Father Maurice H. J. ...

Explanatory Comment by Professor Ferdinand Mayence.

Two German officers, Von Woeller and Von Sandt, commandant at Malines—were witnesses of the long and candid interview between the Cardinal and Baron von der Lancken.

He was an adroit and experienced diplomat, and had served for ten years as counselor of the German embassy in Paris. His French was impeccable and he was a master of several other languages.

Mercier was on familiar ground here. As a professor in Louvain university he had given much intellectual attention to Kant and long before the war he squarely opposed the teachings of the German philosopher.

In fairness to Von der Lancken, it should be said that he fully realized that his antagonist was a master of his craft.

At their last session, just before the armistice, the diplomat came not as an argumentative commander, but as a humble suppliant.

The primate promised help. Von der Lancken's sense of dramatic value rose to the situation.

"Now I know," he reported at headquarters shortly afterward, "that Mercier is a great man."

AND if I were a sedition monger, Baron, what a splendid game I might have played! What a lovely subject for a sensational pamphlet to appear at Paris or London!

What a lovely subject for a sensational pamphlet to appear at Paris or London! In it I might have narrated the antics at Malines and your preposterous repression of the episcopal blessing and the mild gesture of my private secretary.

But I refrained; and just as you found me unbending in carrying out my pastoral duties, so did I desire to pass over merely personal incidents.

It prudent to retire for some days to l'Hermitage in order to withdraw from any likely manifestations of public sympathy.

With your preconceived ideas regarding me, you imagined my retreat could have no other motive than revolutionary projects.

"Oh! revolutionary, no." "The Belgian people are calm and patient, abiding their time. There were no franc-tireurs when your armies invaded our territory.

Only lately I had occasion to see all the clergy of my diocese assembled at Malines for the clergy retreat and I urged them to say to the people: 'The defense of our country must be left to our army; it is not your task to make irregular assaults on the enemy.'

Why, Baron, as to the heart of the Belgian people, know that you have not captured it, nor will you ever do so.

Let me say with all freedom and be not ruffled by the apparent rudeness of my words, the Belgians do you no evil and never will; but in their hearts they hold your rule in detestation.

That is the truth, and after a whole year's experience, strange to say, you do not seem to grasp it.

"But We Are Patient." "You imagine that your method of ruling, successful as it may be in Germany, must needs succeed here.

You grossly deceive yourselves. I have spent my life in teaching. In so doing I have learned that in a young man's education you must first learn to know him before applying formulas.

To make laws and to apply them are two different matters. You seem to be ignorant of these primary truths, hence your mistakes. We keep our hearts unshaken, but we are patient.

And what I said in the month of January to those who came to complain in the governor-general's name of my first pastoral I repeat to you today.

It is by giving our people the assurance that Belgium is and will remain a free country that we are able to preach patience and to see that it is practiced in spite of you.

"I believe I have thus met the first complaint drawn up against me by the governor-general and I have at the same time implicitly furnished an answer to the second."

"The governor-general finds there is a lack of agreement between the language of my pastorals and the kindly disposition of which I gave him an assurance when he promised on his part to do all in his power to heal all our wounds."

Country First Thought. "Of course, I desire to spare my country fresh sufferings; and when the governor-general declares to me that it is his ambition to heal our wounds rather than to embitter them, of course I am ready to second him."

"But the governor-general's mistake, and yours, too, begins the moment you imagine that you can treat us as submissive children. This you cannot do; Belgium is not a conquered country which you have the right to treat as your own; it is a free nation which has preserved and hopes still to preserve her independence and her king."

"I know, Baron, that in an interview with my secretary, Canon Loncin, you were good enough to acknowledge that not one of the priests shot by your armies at the time of invasion had been proved guilty. I am pleased with this overdue recognition of our innocence. But what has been proved

in the case of our priests will be proved tomorrow, if you allow it, in the case of our massacred and imprisoned civilians. It is just this investigation we demand; and no longer as our rights and the sincerity of our attitude have not had due recognition, between you and us no understanding is possible.

"Allegiance Goes Elsewhere." "You would be quite wrong to doubt of the governor-general's kindly intentions. I, who in ways near him and know him, I can assure you that he has the sincerest desire to do all he can for the Belgians."

"I do not doubt the governor-general's sincerity. When I had the honor of seeing him he spoke with an accent of sincerity which I believed then and believe still. But between him and us there is a fundamental misunderstanding. He would wish to see us submissive, and we claim the right to remain interiorly, in heart and soul, unconquered. We respect your external regulations in so far as they are requisite for the maintenance of public order; but our allegiance goes elsewhere."

"This is how we understand your position: You are a mighty power confronted with a very small country. You have trampled our soil under foot without any invitation from us; and your own heads have acted as spokesmen in declaring that you were sorry to have to invade our territory against your will, from necessity, and that you were desirous to repair as soon as possible the wrong done us."

"Remembering the conditions under which you have taken possession of the greater part of our soil, you ought logically to have said to your selves: 'We will make Belgium suffer as little as we can; we will show her all such considerations as are consistent with the needs entailed by our occupation of the country; for when we come to think of it, she was not our enemy, and after all it is we who have brought upon her the necessity of opposing our passage across her territory.'"

Young Men Eager. "Why then bar the road so roughly against a few young men who are burning with a desire to fulfill their patriotic duty at their comrades' side?"

"But they would all go!" "And if they did all go, where is the great evil in your heart of having 8,000,000 soldiers? What can a few hundreds, more or less, do against you?"

It is not that; believe me, we are not afraid of them.

"Very well then, we are agreed. You need not be afraid of them. In that case let them pass. They will be practicing a virtue which you Germans prize above all others, namely, military patriotism. It will, therefore, be a good thing. Then you will rid Belgium of youths disgruntled, humbled and without work, who at a given moment—I look at it from your own point of view—may become turbulent and dangerous to public order, which you wish and ought to preserve. Look, for example, at those young men from our universities who are champing the bit in forced inaction. Would it not be a thousand times better for them to be at the front? Or at least, if you will not let them go, if you think you ought to apply your military regulations in their case, let it be so; arrest all you may succeed in catching; prevent them from beginning their pranks again, but I beg you not to treat them as criminals."

Names Are Withheld. "And if a brave priest gives these dear young fellows, of whom, after all, Belgium is legitimately proud, some friendly advice, or puts them on their road, or in general affords them help, in his sufficient reason to imprison him, consign him to a dungeon, or deport him?"

"I could be more precise in what I am about to say by mentioning names, but discretion will not allow me to reveal them to you. I refer to a personage, and no one less than a member of your own entourage. To a priest who expressed himself surprised at the frequency of arrests among priests and religious, this politician answered: 'They are re-regulating themselves on the priests for the attitude taken up by the Cardinal.' Is that good will? Is that justice?"

"Dear me; who can have said that?" "You may ignore my confidence if you like; I have no wish to impose on your credulity. But I assert that I know the person we are talking about, and that the priest to whom

he spoke, and who himself related this to me, is absolutely a trustworthy witness."

3. You were saying, Baron, that his excellency the governor-general finds it difficult to reconcile my habitual attitude with my frequent appeals to him in favor of my countrymen. You have not, I believe, uttered the word ingratitude, but it is the one which would sum up this fresh complaint. Well, I am going to astonish you and, I fear, hurt your feelings.

"Not at all; say what you think." (To Be Continued.)

Astoria Rotarians Organize. ASTORIA, Or., Dec. 17.—(Special.)—The Astoria Rotary club was formally organized here today with the assistance of a delegation of 17 members of the Portland club, headed by Dr. G. H. Douglas, president, and Walter Whiting, acting secretary.

One of the features of the gathering was an address by Charles Cochran of Portland. The local club, of which R. W. Skallrud is president, has a charter membership of 25.

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—The tone supremacy of the Widdicomb is unrivaled. —The Widdicomb may be had in different styles and a variety of prices, beginning at \$135.

—See the Widdicomb in all its handsome models on "Our Musical Floor," the Seventh.

—Hear them played, and order at once this Gift of Gifts to be sent out. Pay for it on convenient terms, without interest.

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to a personage, and no one less than a member of your own entourage. To a priest who expressed himself surprised at the frequency of arrests among priests and religious, this politician answered: 'They are re-regulating themselves on the priests for the attitude taken up by the Cardinal.' Is that good will? Is that justice? 'Dear me; who can have said that?' 'You may ignore my confidence if you like; I have no wish to impose on your credulity. But I assert that I know the person we are talking about, and that the priest to whom he spoke, and who himself related this to me, is absolutely a trustworthy witness.'

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