

extent, it is also for multitudes of souls an expiation, a purification, a force to lift them to the pure love of their country and to perfect Christian unselfishness?

ENDURANCE

We may now say, my brethren, without unworthy pride, that our little Belgium has taken a foremost place in the esteem of nations. I am aware that certain onlookers, notably in Italy and in Holland, have asked how it could be necessary to expose this country to so immense a loss of wealth and life, and whether a verbal manifesto against hostile aggression, or a single cannon-shot on the frontier, would not have served the purpose of protest. But assuredly all men of good feeling will be with us in our rejection of these paltry counsels. Mere utilitarianism is no sufficient rule of Christian citizenship.

On the 19th of April, 1839, a treaty was signed in London by King Leopold, in the name of Belgium, on the one part, and by the Emperor of Austria, the King of France, the Queen of England, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, on the other; and its seventh article decreed that Belgium should form a separate and perpetually neutral State, and should be held to the observance of this neutrality in regard to all other States. The co-signatories promised, for themselves and their successors, upon their oath, to fulfil and to observe that treaty in every point and every article without contravention, or tolerance of contravention. Belgium was thus bound in honour to defend her own independence. She kept her word. The other Powers were bound to respect and to protect her neutrality. Germany violated her oath; England kept hers.

These are the facts.

The laws of conscience are sovereign laws. We should have acted unworthily had we evaded our obligation by a mere feint of resistance. And now we would not rescind our first resolution; we exult in it. Being called upon to write a most solemn page in the history of our country, we resolved that it should be also a sincere, also a glorious page. And as long as we are compelled to give proof of endurance, so long we shall endure.

All classes of our citizens have devoted their sons to the cause of their country; but the poorer part of the population have set the noblest example, for they have suffered also privation, cold, and famine. If I may judge of the general feeling from what I have witnessed in the bumbler quarters of Malines, and in the most cruelly afflicted districts of my diocese, the people are energetic in their endurance. They look to be righted; they will not hear of surrender.

Affliction is, in the hand of Divine Omnipotence, a two-edged sword. It wounds the rebellious, it sanctifies him who is willing to endure.

God proveth us, as St. James has told us, but He "is not a tempter of evils." All that comes from Him is good, a ray of light, a pledge of love. "But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence. . . . Blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him."

Crucify, then, my brethren, to all murmurs of complaint. Remember St. Paul's words to the Hebrews, and through them to all of Christ's flock, when, referring to the bloody sacrifice of our Lord upon the cross he reminded them that they had not yet resisted unto blood. Not only to the Redeemer's example shall you look, but also to that of the thirty thousand, perhaps forty thousand, men who have already shed their life-blood for their country. In comparison with them, what have you endured who are deprived of the daily comforts of your lives, your newspapers, your means of travel, communication with your families? Let the patriotism of our Army, the heroism of our King, of our beloved Queen in her magnanimity, serve to stimulate us and support us. Let us bemoan ourselves no more. Let us deserve the coming deliverance. Let us hasten it by our virtue even more than by our prayers. Courage, brethren. Suffering passes away; the crown of life for our souls, the crown of glory for our nation, shall not pass.

DUTY UNDER INVASION

I do not require of you to renounce any of your national desires. On the contrary, I hold it as part of the obligations of my episcopal office to instruct you as to your duty in face of the Power that has invaded our soil and now occupies the greater part of our country. The authority of that Power is no lawful authority. Therefore in the soul and conscience you owe it neither respect, nor attachment, nor obedience. The sole lawful authority in Belgium is that of our King, of our Government, of the elected representatives of the nation. This authority alone has a right to our affection, our submission.

Thus, the invaders' acts of public administration have in themselves no authority, but legitimate authority has tacitly ratified such of those acts as affect the general interests, and this ratification, and this only, gives them juridic value.

Occupied provinces are not conquered provinces. Belgium is no more a German province than Galicia is a Russian province. Nevertheless, the occupied portion of our country is in a position it is compelled to endure. The greater part of our towns, having surrendered to the enemy on conditions, are bound to observe those conditions. From the outset of military operations the civil authorities of the country urged upon all private persons the necessity of abstention from hostile acts against the enemy's army. That instruction remains in force. It is our army, and our army solely, in league with the valiant troops of our Allies, that has the honour and the duty of national defence. Let us entrust the army with our final deliverance.

Towards the persons of those who are holding dominion among us by military force, and who assuredly cannot but be sensible of the chivalrous energy with which we have defended, and are still defending, our independence, let us conduct ourselves with all needful forbearance. Some among them have declared themselves willing to mitigate, as far as possible, the severity of our situation, and to help us to recover some minimum of regular civic life. Let us observe the rules they have laid upon us so long as those rules do not violate our personal liberty,