

Belgium Asks World To Judge Her Case

The Belgian Legation in Washington Issues An Official Statement in Which a Moving Appeal to "Universal Conscience" is Made Against Germany's Violation of Her Neutrality—Belgium "Would Rather Die With Honor Than Live Dishonored," and Humanity Will Uphold Her Stand For Right.

(Continued from page 1.)
 by Germany. Herr Von Jagow went again into the reasons why the Imperial Government had been obliged to take this step, namely, that they had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavor to strike some decisive blow as early as possible. It was a matter of life and death to them for if they had gone by the more southern route they could not have hoped, in view of the paucity of the roads and the strength of the fortresses, to have got through without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would mean time gained by the Russians for the bringing up of their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German asset, while that of Russia was the inexhaustible supply of troops. (Official report of the British Ambassador in Berlin to the British Government.)
 Honor, not Consequences.
 "This conversation preceded by a few minutes that in which the German

ported by no proof, falls to the ground.
 "To continue the analysis of the German note one reads: 'If Belgium consents to assume in the war which is about to commence the attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany the German Government on its side, engages, when peace is restored, to guarantee the integrity of the Kingdom and its possessions.'
Belgium Forced to Fight.
 "Could Belgium, without being false to her duties of neutrality, take up the position which the German Government calls 'friendly neutrality'? That is to say, could she allow the German armies to pass without opposition through her territory? Can the German Government itself answer that question?
 "It is enough to re-read the conversation given above between the British Ambassador and German Secretary of State to come to a clear conclusion in that respect. If the violation of Belgian territory was to procure so signal an advantage to Germany that she had no fear of bringing on a war with England to attain it, then for Belgium to lend herself to the passage of German troops must have meant the certainty of fatal consequences for France. Thus for Belgium to have yielded to the German ultimatum would ipso facto have conferred a considerable advantage to Germany to the detriment of the other belligerent, and would have constituted a breach of neutrality.
Indulged in Threats.
 "Germany concludes her note by threats. She engages, on the condition already defined, to evacuate Belgian territory at the conclusion of peace. If Belgium behaves in a hostile manner, that is to say, if she does her duty, Germany will be obliged to consider Belgium as an enemy. She would then leave the ultimate arrangements of the relations of the two states to the decision of arms. In other words, if Belgium does not agree to violate the treaty, Germany will treat her as an enemy, and adds a veiled threat of annexing a part or the whole of her territory.
 "The moral fibre of nations is not always measured by their size or power. Belgium is small and weak, but her answer bears witness to her love of justice and to her respect of the right. She would rather die with honor than live dishonored.
Belgium's Answer.
 "That was made clear by the answer of her government. The answer was as follows:



"The German note has been a painful surprise to the Belgian government. The intentions which the note attributes to France are in contradiction to the formal declarations which were made to us on August 1 'in the name of the republic. Besides, if contrary to our expectations, France is about to violate the neutrality of Belgium, Belgium would be obliged to fulfil its neutrality obligations and her army would offer to the invader the most vigorous resistance. The treaties of 1839, confirmed by the treaties of 1870, commit to the guarantee of the powers, and notably to the government of his majesty the King of Prussia of the Kingdom of Belgium."
"Necessity Knows No Law."
 "The Chancellor of the German Empire said in a sitting of the Reichstag on August 4: 'We are in a state of legitimate defence. Necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and have perhaps already penetrated into Belgium. This is against the law of nations. France, it is true, has declared to Brussels that she is determined to respect the neutrality of Belgium as long as her adversary respects it, but we know that France was ready to invade Belgium. France can afford to wait; we cannot. A French attack on our flank in the region of the lower Rhine might have been fatal. It is for that reason that we have been compelled to ignore the just protests of the governments of Luxemburg and Belgium. The injustice which we thus commit we will repair as soon as our military object has been attained.'
Worth Nothing.
 "It has been shown above how much value can be attached to the assertion of the alleged intention of France to invade Belgium. That intention and the realization of that intention belong exclusively to Germany, and they must be left in her possession. This is especially the case in view of the fact that the military dispositions undertaken by France absolutely refute the allegations of the German Chancellor. So true is this that when he violation of Belgian territory became an accomplished fact, and when he King of Belgium appealed, under the terms of the treaty of 1859, for support in maintaining the neutrality of Belgium which these powers had guaranteed, France was so little prepared to invade Belgium that it took her more than ten days to get her troops into the country.
 "The world is familiar with the way Germany has repaired in Belgium the injustice of which she was guilty, to use the words of the German Chancellor.
Barbarous Acts.
 "Under the pretext that her troops were attacked by civilians, and even under no pretext at all, whole villages have been razed to the ground. Important towns whose boast it was to represent part of the common inheritance of civilization were not spared. Their monuments, which have been respected during the centuries in all the constant wars of which Belgium has been the theatre, were deliberately destroyed. Open cities were bombarded. Exorbitant taxation was imposed upon conquered towns, and when the inhabitants were unable to pay the taxes a large number of their houses were set on fire. That is what happened to Wavre, among other cities, whose 8,500 inhabitants were unable to pay a tax of \$600,000. Termonde, with 10,000 inhabitants, was utterly destroyed. On September 15 there only remained in that town 282 houses out of 1,400. The town of Aershot, with 3,000 inhabitants, is now nothing but a mass of ruins, and more than 150 of its inhabitants have been shot.
Antwerp and Louvain.
 "Dirigible balloons have thrown bombs at night into Antwerp. It cannot be maintained by those who were in the balloons that they were trying to hit the forts, as the forts are outside the boundaries of the town, and a good distance outside them as well. Nor could the bombs thrown have had any effect upon the forts which are even stronger than those of Liege. There was no warning of this bombardment, a fact which constitutes a violation of Article 26 of the Fourth Convention of The Hague, and more than a dozen people were killed, all of

them non-combatants and several of them women and children.
 "The town of Louvain, with its 42,000 inhabitants, was one of the centres of Belgian culture. It had no mercy shown to it and has been nearly obliterated. Several quarters of the town were set on fire, the Church of St. Pierre, a marvelous example of Gothic art; the building of the University, including the library with more than 70,000 volumes, of which a large number were ancient manuscripts, the collection belonging to the University, nearly all the scientific institutions and nearly all the houses of the town were deliberately burned. They are now nothing more than heaps of ashes. Their destruction has been a loss to the whole civilized world.
 "Numbers of absolutely innocent women and children lost their lives in the fire which was started by the order of the German military officials. Of those who were saved, several thousands, including women expectant by age and children in arms, are to-day wandering homeless over the roads without food or clothing. They are not to blame for anything, unless it is because they belong to a nation which has refused to purchase peace at the price of dishonor. That can be the only crime accounted to them, and it is for that they have lost all their possessions upon the earth.
 "From the declaration made by the Imperial German Chancellor it may be seen that the German government is conscious of its wrongdoing. As one of the guarantors of Belgium's neutrality, it wanted to force Belgium to relinquish its neutrality for Germany's benefit. Because Belgium would not consent to this perfidy and because Germany would not reproach her with anything else, Germany invaded and proceeded with blood and ruin a small peaceful country of hard-working and honest people, a country which it had promised to protect.
 "This attack upon her neutrality is the first violation for which Belgium asks judgment from the universal conscience.
 "The entire Belgo-German question to-day is dominated by the fact of Belgium. Therefore, there is not a single shot fired by a German soldier in Belgium which is not manifestly and avowedly betraying most sacred things; the keeping of a solemn pledge and the right of an honest nation that never wanted war, nor showed aggressive disposition, to be allowed to live its peaceful and neutral life.
 "Such is the Belgian case: Humanity will judge it!"
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