



HYDRANGAEA PANICULATA GRANDIFLORA,  
A remarkable blooming bush photographed in East Toronto.

## BELGIUM DIED FOR EUROPE

An Eloquent Letter from G. K. Chesterton

Overroads,  
Beaconsfield, Bucks,  
5th August, 1915.

Editor Canadian Courier:

Sir,—I hope you will grant me space to say a few words about the Belgians still in Belgium. The admirable efforts of the National Committee for Relief in Belgium are going a long way to avert famine, but if the million-and-a-half destitute Belgians are to be kept alive the National Committee must have yet further support. The only conceivable cause of doubt in the matter must lie in a mere weariness in well-doing, produced not by any intellectual difficulty but by such wholly unintellectual things as time and fatigue. I think, therefore, the best way of preventing any possible neglect of so great a matter is to repeat once more the great truths upon which rested the whole original claim, not so much on our sympathy as on our common honesty. The simplicity and enormity of the Belgian story can best be set forth, perhaps, in four truisms, all toweringly self-evident.

First, of course, the mere badness of the story is almost too big to be held in the mind. There have been stories of a woman or a child actually robbed of reason for life by the mere ocular shock of some revolting cruelty done in their presence. There was really a danger of something of the kind paralyzing our protest against the largest and, by the help of God, the last of the crimes of the Prussian Kings. The onlookers might have been struck into a sort of gibbering imbecility and even amiability, by the full and indefensible finality of the foul stroke. We had no machines that could measure the stunning directness of the blow from hell. We could hardly realize an enormous public act which the actor did not wish to excuse, but only to execute.

YET such an act was the occupation of Belgium; almost the only act in history for which there was quite simply and literally nothing to be said. Bad history is the whole basis of Prussia: but even in bad history the Prussians could find no precedent and no palliation: and the more intelligent Prussians did not try. A few were so feeble-minded as to say they had found dangerous documents in Brussels, as if what they had done could possibly be excused by things they did not know when they did it. This almost piteous lapse in argument was, however, covered up by the cleverer Prussians as quickly as might be. They preferred to stand without a rag of reason on them than with such a rag as that. Before we come to the monstrous material suffering, there is in the existing situa-

tion an abstract unreason, nay an abstract insanity, which the brain of man must not bear. A nightmare must not abide to the end. The tiniest trace of Prussian victory that remains will make us think of something which is not to be thought of: of something like the victory of the beasts over mankind.

Second, it must be remembered that this murder has been done upon a people of such proximity and familiarity that there cannot be any mistake about the matter. There is some shadowy justification for the comparative indifference to the wrongs of very remote peoples: for it is not easy for us to guess how much slavery shocks a negro or cannibalism a cannibal. But the innkeepers and shopkeepers of Ostend felt exactly as the innkeepers and shopkeepers of Dover would feel. We have to imagine a pre-historic cruelty coming suddenly upon a scene which was civilized and almost commonplace. Imagine tigers breaking out of the Zoological Gar-

dens and eating all the people in Albany Street; imagine Red Indians exhibited at Olympia literally scalping every passer-by from that place to Hammersmith Broadway; imagine Jack the Ripper crowned king of Whitechapel and conducting his executions in broad daylight outside the Tube station at Aldgate; imagine as much as you can of what is violent and contradictory in an over-turn of all modern life by troglodytes; and you are still falling short of this fearful Belgian scene in that familiar Belgian scenery.

THIRD, this people we have heard of daily have endured this thing; and endured it for us. There are countless cases for compassion among the bewildering and heart-rending by-products of this war: but this is not a case for compassion. This is a case for that mere working minimum of a sense of honour that makes us repay a poor man who has advanced his last penny to post a letter we have forgotten to stamp. In this respect Belgium stands alone; and the claims even of other Allies may well stand aside till she is paid to the uttermost farthing. There has been self-sacrifice everywhere else; but it was self-sacrifice of individuals, each for his own country; the Serbian dying for Serbia, or the Italian for Italy. But the Belgian did not merely die for Belgium. Belgium died for Europe. Not only was the soldier sacrificed for the nation; the nation was sacrificed for mankind. It is a sacrifice which is, I think, quite unique even among Christians; and quite inconceivable among pagans. If we even privately utter a murmur, or even privately grudge a penny for binding the wounds of so solitary and exceptional a martyr, we ourselves shall be something almost as solitary and exceptional. We shall perhaps be nearest to the state of that unspeakable sociologist who persuaded his wife to partake of a simultaneous suicide; and then himself cheerfully lived on.

I therefore plead for further help for the Members of the National Committee who have taken this duty upon themselves. All subscriptions can be addressed to the Treasurer at Trafalgar Buildings, Trafalgar Square, London, or to Local Committees where they have been formed.

Yours faithfully,  
G. K. CHESTERTON.

## Where M.P.P.'s Till the Soil

SASKATCHEWAN Legislature is probably the nearest approach to a real agricultural parliament anywhere in the world unless it might be in South Africa. Two-thirds of the members of this House depend on farming as the main source of livelihood. These agricultural M.P.'s own among them 55,000 acres, of which 34,721 acres are under cultivation and 27,164 acres under crop this year. Do they raise wheat? Oh, yes, but they are not wheat miners. Trust the fine example of Minister of Agriculture, Hon. W. R. Motherwell, to encourage these legislative farmers to engage in the best kind of farming suitable to the country. Eight of these members are farming less than a section of land each. Not much land-hoggerly about that. Twelve others have farms running from 640 acres—a section—to 960 acres. Seventeen others top the list with farms that run from 1,100 acres to 1,600 acres.

This makes a total of 37 Saskatchewan M.P.'s engaged in tilling the soil according to practical, everyday methods by which the land is farmed and not bled white to be sold again. Most of them raise live stock because they know the value of having animals on the land to consume crops which almost any year average a percentage of wet-spoiled or frost-bitten grain. It is a good safe conjecture that the farms of these members are none of the down-at-the-heel, out-at-the-elbow variety with fences higgledy-piggledy and barns letting in the rain and cattle slatsided and lean. Probably some of the finest prize photos of well-kept, pleasant-looking,

prosperous farms could be obtained from these gentlemen who publicly make laws for the greatest wheat province in Canada and at home hold up their end among the real citizen yeomanry that create wealth.

Some of them, including two Cabinet Ministers, have been farmers in that country since any of it was railroaded much. They were scratching money out of fat soil and waggoning it over the black trails many and many a mile to the sparse elevators that loomed up here and there like the Pyramids of Egypt. Now they have come into a kind of Promised Land when bank barns and cement silos and fat cattle and private elevators and traction farming on a huge scale have made agriculture one of the lordly occupations of mankind. When the average number of live stock of all kinds on one of these legislative farms is 252 head, there is no doubt that any census of the most progressive and profit-making citizen farmers in the West must include these 37 M.P.'s. They don't, as a rule, spend their summers on the land and their winters out on the Coast as some of the plutocrat non-resident farmers do. For in the winter they have too many live stock at home to attend to, and down at Regina, too, many public problems to solve in that pile of beautiful buildings that cost the farmers of Saskatchewan so much money.

And as long as two-thirds of the members of Parliament in any Province are farmers there is not likely to be any howl about farmers' money being spent for public projects that are not good for the country.

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