

yet, Townsend's force may not be able to hold out. It consisted originally of over a division, but there are probably not more than 10,000 soldiers left. The only hope seems to be in a very rapid advance of the Russians from the east toward Bagdad.—Toronto Globe, April 29.

Later—General Townsend surrenders his army of 10,000 to the Turks at Kut-el-Amara.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

"AGIN THE GOVERNMENT"

Special Cable to the CATHOLIC RECORD (Copyright 1918, Central News)

London, April 29.—The Coalition Ministry has gone during the last two weeks through its most trying and testing experience. The conflict was double in character; partly political and partly personal. The underlying point and the principal one was conscription. To be perhaps more accurate it was the particular date and form of conscription rather than the principle itself, for the principle disappeared as the living issue when the military compulsion measure was passed.

For some days it looked as if the ministry would break up but probably the reports in the newspapers were exaggerated. It is now clear that the differences of the ministers were never as great as the sensational newspaper writers suggested. A little common sense and some give and take was all that was necessary to produce a harmonious cabinet. Therefore it is now certain that the cabinet will come before the House of Commons united, with a common programme.

It is equally certain that except for a growl here and there from a small section of convinced anti-conscriptionists, the ministerial proposals will receive practically the unanimous support of Parliament and the country.

Everybody regrets the tone of the personal antagonist introduced into the discussion again by partisan newspapers and everybody approves the action of the ministry in warning newspapers that such disruptive discussions would be closely scanned and nothing would be allowed for publication which was calculated to comfort the enemy.

Indeed the furious partisan intervention of the newspapers in the revelation of personal and political differences, real or alleged, is often less real than alleged, has amounted to a scandal and there is danger of the country getting sick of it.

It expects the ministry to defend itself against such disturbing and embarrassing and unpatriotic assaults. Of course government interference with the liberty of the press is open to serious apprehension, unless the government uses its great powers with breadth and discretion. But there is little ground for fearing that such intervention will go beyond the legitimate demands of a ministry that is fighting a tremendous war.

So far as their personal relations are concerned they are much better, too, than the sensational statements would lead one to suppose, the closest friendships existing between ministers who in the past have been strong political opponents.

Nor is it true that Prime Minister Asquith and David Lloyd George have become either personal or political opponents. Their relations continue as they always have been, friendly and appreciative.

Out of such a strange portent as this strange results should flow. These strange results confront every old member of the House of Commons in every part of the chamber. Men's places there both as individuals and as members of a Party are fixed by long usage. When therefore you see on the right hand of the Speaker—that is to say on the side of the House which is always taken by the Party in power—some peculiarly stout and even virulent Tory of the old type, and when moreover this man sits just behind Mr. Asquith, the great Liberal leader, or Mr. Lloyd George, the chief Tory bugbear of pre-war times, you begin to rub your eyes and wonder what has happened.

Again when you look at the Front Opposition Bench and see side by side Sir Edward Carson and so vehement a Liberal as Sir Alfred Mond, you once more ask yourself if the world has turned topsy-turvy. So I might go on with the extraordinary transformation indicated by these signs.

One party alone, of course, is where it has always been since Parnell was elected Leader in 1880. Now as before the war the Irish Party sits on the Opposition benches; it remains "agin" this and every other Government until Ireland receives her self-government. This is the official position as a matter of fact, the Irish Party is more resolutely a Ministerial Party than any other in the House. It is united; it knows its own mind; it has as its definite policy the vigorous and successful prosecution of the war; and it opposes by all its powerful force any attempt to create trouble by dividing the Ministry or the House or the country.

Among the strangest of results, however, are the personal relations between men who for all their political lives have been political opponents, and in some cases have even been personal enemies. In the present Cabinet there are no two men who understand or like each other better than Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour. But this has always been the case—even when they were

on opposite sides. This is largely due to the fact that though they come from very different stocks originally, there is much in their life that is common. They are both university men; they are both scholars; they are both great readers; though there is lacking in Mr. Asquith that interest in metaphysics and theology which is so essentially Scotch and therefore natural in Mr. Balfour. They are both essentially students who have brought to the politics of the hour all that accumulated learning of all the schools.

A friendship between two such men is not unnatural or unexpected; but it is curious to find that another of Mr. Asquith's great friends and admirers is Mr. Bonar Law. Between him and Mr. Asquith there is no common ground in either heredity or upbringing. Mr. Bonar Law is a typical Scotchman. He is not a university man; he had to go into the metal market in Glasgow when he was quite young. He is as Scotch as Mr. Asquith is Yorkshire. Yet whenever a question arises of interfering with Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law is the first man to be up in arms against it. He insists that Mr. Asquith has great qualities, and that his sense of these qualities has been enormously increased by his intimacy with Mr. Asquith in the Cabinet Councils.

Another man whose whole outlook, personal as well as political, has been enormously modified by the war and the Coalition is Mr. Walter Long. Here is one of the most typical figures of English country life and of the English country party that has ever appeared in present-day politics. For centuries his family have been large land-owners in Wiltshire; for centuries they have represented their native county.

Physically as well as mentally Mr. Walter Long is just what you would expect from his heredity and from his opinions. He has a red face—as of the man who rides to hounds, looks over his fields, and spends as much of his time as possible in the open air. Once when he received a number of unexpected compliments from an Irish Nationalist member, he made a playful allusion to his appearance by saying that he would have blushed if nature had not prohibited his face from showing a more scarlet hue. When poor George Wyndham—one of the modern tragedies of the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland because of the too strong Liberal tendencies he revealed, Mr. Walter Long was chosen to take up the thankless office in the certainty that he would not err on that side, and would bring back the office to its old traditions of stubborn resistance to all change. The Orangemen who regarded him as one of their own, hailed the appointment with uproarious delight, and he was even elected for an Irish constituency, for the county of Dublin in fact, where neglect of registration by the Nationalists and careful preparation of it by the Tories, had for a brief space given a Tory majority. And Mr. Walter Long lived up to expectations; for to every Nationalist demand in the direction of Home Rule he gave stern and unbending opposition.

Yet it was a curious fact that he was never personally unpopular. Indeed there are few men in the House of Commons who enjoy greater personal popularity. He is so transparently honest, so free from complexity; so straightforward, and withal so goodnatured, that it could not be in the heart of any man to dislike him. But still up to the Coalition he was always put down as one of the irreconcilable Tories. It was in his favour that even during the worst hours of the struggle over the Union in the Home Rule agony, he went out of his way to declare that he did not share the fear that the Irish Nationalists and Catholics would lead themselves to religious persecution. His chief fault as a politician was that he spoke with some diffuseness. There is a story of somebody asking Mr. Balfour when Long would finish the speech he was then engaged in making. Mr. Balfour's characteristic reply was that Walter had finished long ago, but that when he would end, God only knew.

Then came the Coalition, and Mr. Walter Long, going back to his old office as head of the Local Government Board, suddenly found himself thrown into one of the most difficult and one of the most contentious of all the Government departments. This department had a lot to do with recruiting, and the fierce struggle between the Conscriptionists and the anti-Conscriptionists was quite sufficient to make his office a bed of thorns. But he had also to deal with all the vast series of questions which arose out of the pecuniary embarrassments of the war especially among the lower middle-class who had gone to the war and left wife and children to face the difficulties of living without the assistance of the head of the household. This involved breaking of leases, moratoriums of rent and a number of other revolutionary expedients which were enough to make the ancestors of Walter Long turn in their graves. But Mr. Long took the jump without hesitation, and carried the bills through with great tact and skill.

And his Parliamentary reputation and indeed his Parliamentary gifts have risen to the occasion. He is now the man put forward whenever there is a ticklish situation; and no Minister—except perhaps Mr. Bonar Law—speaks with greateradroitness and effectiveness. Among the many Parliamentary gifts which Mr. Asquith

has displayed since the war, none is greater than the admirable dexterity with which he has pushed forward these two old opponents into positions of delicacy and responsibility—thereby raising their reputations and safeguarding the Ministry.

To destroy Mr. Asquith his enemies have to pass the outer guard which is held firmly in his favour by Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Walter Long.

CARDINAL MERCIER'S PASTORAL

CONDEMNED BY GERMAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT

Special Correspondence of The New York Times
London, April 6.—Following is the full text of Cardinal Mercier's pastoral letter which brought a strong protest and warning from Gen. Von Bissing, Military Governor of Belgium.

Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1916. On our return from Rome.

My dear Brothers: It is impossible for me to tell you my joy at finding myself among you again. Misfortune has drawn us together, just as the early Christians who, under the continual threat of danger, had only, according to the lives of the saints, one heart and one soul—Credentium erat cor unum et anima una—the Belgians have crowded together around their priests; the priests have felt their responsibilities increase—and the flame of paternal feeling grow; and hence it is that to-day, in occupying Belgium, as in strange lands, the sons of our soil are impelled by one single spirit, and call upon us more insistently than ever to be their interpreters before God and to tell them what Divine Providence requires from them and so give them hope.

"The Pontiff," says the Apostle Paul, "is a man whose mission is to treat with God concerning the interests of humanity"—Pontifex, ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis, quae sunt ad Deum.

I realize how much and with what devotion you have prayed for us during our journey. My prayers have been heard. My first act on my return from Rome was to go into our beloved Cathedral and say a fervent Te Deum; and to our dear Mother, "Cause of our joy"—Causa nostrae laetitiae,—as well as "Virgin in grief and in tears"—Dolorosa et Lacrymabilia Virgo Maria—an act of gratitude. Our Lord has blessed our journey far more than we had dared to hope.

There are many things which I cannot say, you will understand me. Our abnormal position prevents me from laying before you openheartedly exactly what is in my soul—that is to say, what is best and most intimate, what, coming from on high and affecting you most nearly, is my firmest support and would be for you, could I speak of strongest comfort. But you will not doubt my word; you will believe me when I tell you that my journey has been especially blessed, and that I return happy very happy.

The Holy Father's kindness was touching. Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, we bestow with all our heart the Apostolic Benediction, with the assurance that we are always with him, and that we share his sorrow and his anguish, since his cause is our cause also.

One day, with a heart full of gratitude, I went to tell the sovereign Pontiff that he could never doubt the untiring, filial piety of the Belgian people, and that we had conceived a plan to give a new proof of it.

"Dear Father," I said to him, "on the first Sunday of May we wish to ask our people in the whole country to make a general Communion for the intentions of your Holiness."

"And in my case," quickly answered the Holy Father, "my intention shall be for Belgium."

PAPAL BENEDICTION FOR ALL

Encouraged by this reception I wrote to the Cardinals of Paris, London, Armagh in Ireland, and Italy, and I am confident that from all our allied countries one eucharistic prayer will ascend to heaven on the first Sunday in May; presented to God by the august hands of the head of the Catholic world, this prayer will hasten the glorious resurrection of our dear Belgium. The Holy Father grants to all parish priests in all the churches the power on that day to give the papal benediction to their flocks, with the plenary indulgence applicable to the souls of those soldiers who have fallen on the field of honor.

You have doubtless heard echoes of the acclamation with which, on the whole of our journey there and back, in Switzerland and in Italy, the name "Belgium" was received. Let us even suppose that the final issue of the gigantic duel now being fought in Europe and Asia Minor should be uncertain, one fact is already established in civilization and in history—the moral triumph of Belgium. In union with your King and Govern-

ment, you have made an immense sacrifice for your country. Out of respect for your word of honor, in order to affirm that, in your consciences, right goes before everything, you have sacrificed your possessions, your hearths, your sons, your husbands, and, after eighteen months of constraint, you remain as proud of your deed as on the first day; heroism seems so natural to you that you have no thought of gaining by it glory for yourselves. Had you been able, like me to go beyond our frontier and see Belgium from outside, if you had heard the people, the man in the street, as the English say, I mean the laboring man, the small employer, the woman who suffers; if you had collected the evidence, spoken or written, of those who represent with authority the great social forces, politics, press, art, science, diplomacy, religion, you would realize better the magnanimity of your bearing, and your souls would have thrilled with joy and even, I think, with pride.

The most heartfelt expressions of respect and admiration, of appreciation of the moral grandeur, and of the nobility of soul, the calm patience and determination of the Belgian nation, come to us from the cities and villages of Switzerland, Italy, Spain, France, England, and went, carried by enthusiasm, to those who personify Belgian patriotism, our rulers, our Government, the clergy and our brave army.

Such tributes as we received we constantly diverted to you, for a secret instinct ever reminded us that it was you who by your endurance deserved them and inspired them. In our hours of reflection we thanked Providence for the progress which public opinion had made us from the months ago I said to you: "Highly-placed men who ought to have judged things from a loftier point of view did not scruple to say, 'But why did Belgium need thus to sacrifice herself for the defense of her soil? Would not a verbal protest have sufficed, and would it not have brought her from the havoc that has sown here to the verge of ruin?'"

This language revolted me, as I told you, and more than once I then let my indignation have free rein. In my heart such language now on the banks of the Yser. The moral level of neutral peoples, formerly neutral, has risen. The spirit of sacrifice is understood; homage is done to it. Others are grateful to you for it; you are admired; your generation has taken its place gloriously in history. Is that not a conquest, my brethren? And, in the same measure that moral welfare is superior to material welfare, are you not the most glorious of conquerors?"

I cannot refrain from applying to the present situation the words of Our Lord in the Gospel: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Oh, yes! You weep, mourning sweats, the hearts of mothers and wives are broken. Lives are being lost on the banks of the Yser. The imprisonment of the nation on its own soil is sadly prolonged. Our finances are involved, our factories and our commerce are idle. I know all this, and you know me well enough to know that I suffer with you and that I suffer because you suffer. But, after all, what are these trials of a day in the face of eternity, where we shall all sooner or later live our true life? What matters a terrestrial success for which one would have to pay eternal happiness? After all, what is a momentary grief, an ephemeral depression, a death, humanly speaking, premature, compared with the provision that beyond is happiness without alloy and without shadow for those Christians who have lived here on earth in a Christian manner and encouraged one another to the sacrifice in a Christian spirit, will find themselves reunited on God's bosom in heaven for ever?

One day, as I was going toward the Basilica of St. Paul extra muros, making the pilgrimage which I had promised you before my departure, I visited the Basilica of St. Sebastian and found it filled with debris resulting from excavations which are being made there. The archaeologists who were conducting the work had set their various inscriptions. One of them particularly struck me, and I carried its words away in my mind for you. It said: "Et nos in Deo omnes"—"Let us unite together in Christ."

Let this also be the gerdon of our hopes—let this uphold unfailingly our courage: "Et nos in Deo omnes"—"Altogether in God."

A day will come when we shall weep no more, when we shall never again be separated, when the family will reunite, never again to be broken up. Think more of heaven than of earth. Live there already in spirit; as St. Paul says to the Philippians: "Nostra autem conservatio in coelis est"—"The Christian is a traveler and his home is heaven."

You will admit that I have never hidden my fears from you, I have preached patriotism to you, because it is a derivative of the main Christian virtue and charity. But from the beginning I have let you see that, according to my presentation, our deed would be long, and that success would be attained by the nation which should most endure. The conviction, natural and supernatural, of our final victory is more deeply than ever anchored in my soul. If that confidence could have been shaken, the assurances which various disinterested and careful observers of the general situation, belonging notably to the two Americas, have made me share with them would have solidly strengthened it.

We shall conquer, do not doubt it, but we are not at the end of our sufferings. France, England, Russia have pledged themselves to make no peace until Belgium has recovered her entire independence and has been largely indemnified. Italy, in her turn, has adhered to this pact. Our future is not in doubt, but we must prepare for it. We shall prepare for it by fostering in our hearts the virtues of patience and the spirit of sacrifice.

"Make your soul virile and your heart strong," says the psalmist, "by putting your hope in God"—"Viriliter agite et confortetur cor verum, omnes qui speratis in Domino." Have entire faith in Providence; it watches over those who respect the Kingdom of God and justice. Whatever happens, never lose hope in Providence. At no time of my life as much as during this last journey have I seen its influence upon the small incidents, apparently most insignificant upon events most unlikely according to our calculations.

"Love the good God," says St. Paul, "and be sure that all that happens will turn to your profit." Scimus autem quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum. Are we not, all of us, always more in the sight of the Almighty than the lily in the field and the bird that flutters on the tree? Make your plans, erect your batteries, organize your movements, it remains always that man proposes and God disposes.

"It is not a large army which saves the King," says the psalmist; "the horse is impotent to secure salvation; his vigor does not guarantee your deliverance. We hope in God. He is our help and our shield."

AN EPIDEMIC IN AN ARMY

Imagine a warring nation certain of its armies, its ammunition, its command, in a fair way to secure a triumph—let God allow the germs of an epidemic to spread among the ranks and, behold! in one moment the most optimistic provisions are ruined!

Above all, put your confidence in God. Make Him propitious by purifying your consciences. Purify your homes. Make pure, modest, Christian simplicity, reign there. Prepare yourselves with contrition for the accomplishment of your Easter duty. Do not be isolated from the Church. You are in her maternal bosom; live in her spirit. Lent is the time when the Church expects in prayer, in privations, in suffering, the reconciliation of her prodigal children, the birth of the catechumens to divine life. Lament, pray, stint yourselves, suffer with your Mother.

As a general measure we have decided to dispense you from fasting and abstaining, except on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, but do not take advantage of all the dispensations, if it is not necessary for you to do so. Impose upon yourselves extra mortifications. Apply yourselves to meditation; watch over your senses, your inclinations, so as to make more easy the flight of your soul toward Him who alone is your God, and who alone can give you peace; that is to say, quiet in order.

Pray with confidence; pray with perseverance. Pray at night, in families. Follow the Sunday services, the Mass, Vespers, the Salut. Above all, my dear brethren, attend as often as you can at the holy sacrifice of Mass, and participate in it by going to Communion. Many among you have at this moment responsibilities less stringent, and more liberty during the day. By making an effort of good-will, could you not find for your Fatherland, for our heroes of the Yser, living and dead; for all those who suffer or who are dying, not only on Sundays but each day, one-half hour which you can pass at the foot of the altar in union with Our Lord Jesus Christ?

Our divine Christ is there. He comes to remind us that He is the Man of Sorrows, possessing in full the knowledge of misery—Virtum dolorum et scientem infirmitatem—but He is risen. He is in the triumph of His glory, at the right hand of His eternal Father; and He condescended to live among us and to be our food in the Holy Eucharist, in order to fill us with His life and to help us to pass with Him along the road of sorrow, that we may follow Him into the happiness of the eternal tabernacles.

Courage, my brothers! Listen to my exhortations; assist every day at Mass, carry your missal there, follow the priest closely, take part with him in the Eucharistic Banquet, and you will soon notice your life change and that our Divine Saviour does not deceive you when He says: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."—Venite ad Me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et Ego reficiam vos.

Invoke St. Joseph during this month of March, which popular piety likes to consecrate to him. Celebrate his feast. Recommend your families to him; intrust your soldiers to him.

As we write these concluding sentences, the papers bring us the resumé of a letter addressed by the Pope to the Cardinal Vicar, in which His Holiness expresses a double desire to which we hasten to reply.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

The Holy Father implores of the Divine Mercy an end of the destruction which incardines Europe. During Lent, we ask the priests to replace the Collect pro tempore belli for the Collect pro pace.

The Holy Father asks also that on Good Friday, mothers and wives in mourning should stand at the side of the Mother of God at the foot of the

Cross and unite their sacrifice to the bloody sacrifice of Redemption. We all unite in the prayers of His Holiness. Belgium has already been consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to St. Joseph. We will consecrate ourselves on Good Friday to the Dolorous and Immaculate Heart of Mary. We are happy to honor the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and we do well; but, besides this privilege, gratuitously granted by God to her who was to become His Mother, let us not forget the title to our gratitude which she acquired through her sorrows. Pierced with the sword of martyrdom, the heart of Mary willingly associated, for the redemption of our souls, her compassion to the immolation of the Divine Victim of Calvary.

The dark hours we are passing through specially unite us to have recourse to the meditation of Our Lady of Sorrows. Thus, mindful of the ardent wish that has been expressed to me, I shall consecrate, in the depth of my soul at the service on Good Friday, my diocese and within the limits where I shall have the power, our fatherland to the Dolorous and Immaculate Heart of our Mother. I exhort the priests to join their intention with mine and the faithful to repeat with devotion this invocation, to which I have already attached an indulgence of 100 days: "Sorrowing and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us who have recourse to you."

This pastoral letter shall be read in all the churches and chapels of the diocese on the first Sunday after its recitation.

Given at Malines under our seal and our signature and the counter-seal of our Secretary,
D. J. CARD. MERCIER,
Archeveque de Malines.
L. MEUS, Secretary.

THE WAR'S LESSON

Without question the great war is harshly teaching a luxurious age how very simple life can be made. For Europe is now compelled to practice asceticism of the most rigorous kind and thereby is finding her soul. When peace returns at last, the permanent results of the mission God Himself is now preaching Europe may be the stronger faith, the purer morals and the simpler life that will be conspicuous in the nations engaged

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in this dreadful conflict. Thus will Divine Providence, as has so often happened in the world's history, bring lasting good out of passing evil.—America.

FATHER FRASER'S CHINESE MISSION

Taichowfu, China, Dec. 11, 1915.

Dear Readers of CATHOLIC RECORD:

It may be a little surprise to you to learn that it takes \$100 a week to keep my mission going. I am glad when I see that amount contributed in the RECORD, but when it is less I am sad to see my little reserve sum diminished and the catastrophe arriving when I must close my chapels, discharge my catechists and reduce my expenses to the few dollars coming in weekly. I beseech you to make one more supreme effort during 1916 to keep this mission on its feet. You will be surprised to learn what a great deal I am doing with \$100 a week—keeping myself and curate, 30 catechists, 7 chapels, and free schools, 3 churches in different cities with caretakers, supporting two big catechumens of men, women and children during their preparation for baptism and building a church every year.

Yours gratefully in Jesus and Mary.
J. M. FRASER.

Previously acknowledged. \$7,187 75

Table with 2 columns: Name and Amount. Includes entries like 'Flower' 3 00, 'Mrs. M. C. M. Forest' 1 00, 'T. S.' 3 00, 'The children of Apple Hill' 10 00, 'Fred Gilbert, Kenora' 5 00, 'Port Hope' 2 00, 'Edw. M. LeBlanc, Burdett' 2 00, 'Wm. Burns, Winnipeg' 1 00, 'Old Irishman' 1 00, 'Jas. Copeland, Belleville' 2 00.

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