

believe in love. 'Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me?' *Quare tristis es anima, et quare conturbas me?* 'Hope in God. Bless Him always; is He not thy Saviour and thy God?' *Spera in Deo quoniam adhuc confitebor illi, salutare vultus mei et Deus meus* (Psalm xlii. 5).

When holy Job, whom God presented as an example of constancy to the generations to come, had been stricken, blow upon blow, by Satan, with the loss of his children, of his goods, of his health, his enemies approached him with incitations to rebellion; his wife urged upon him a blasphemy and a curse. 'Dost thou still continue in thy simplicity? Curse God, and die' (Job ii. 9). But the man of God was unshaken in his confidence. 'And he said to her: Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil? *Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit ita factum est. Sit nomen Domini benedictum*' (Job ii. 10; i. 21). And experience proved that saintly one to be right. It pleased the Lord to recompense, even here below, His faithful servant. 'The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. And for his sake God pardoned his friends' (Job xlii. 8, 10).

WHAT BELGIUM HAS SUFFERED.

Better than any other man, perhaps, do I know what our unhappy country has undergone. Nor will any Belgian, I trust, doubt of what I suffer in my soul, as a citizen and as a Bishop, in sympathy with all this sorrow. These four last months have seemed to me age-long. By thousands have our brave ones been mown down: wives, mothers, are weeping for those they shall never see again; hearths are desolate; dire poverty spreads, anguish increases. At Malines, at Antwerp, the people of two great cities have been given over, the one for six hours, the other for thirty-four hours, of a continuous bombardment, to the throes of death. I have traversed the greater part of the districts most terribly devastated in my diocese; and the ruins I beheld, and the ashes were more dreadful than I, prepared by the saddest of forebodings, could have imagined. Other parts of my diocese, which I have not yet had time to visit, have in like manner been laid waste. Churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, convents in great numbers, are in ruins. Entire villages have all but disappeared. At Werchter-Wackerzeel, for instance, out of three hundred and eighty homes, a hundred and thirty remain: at Tremeloo two-thirds of the village are overthrown: at Bueken, out of a hundred houses, twenty are standing: at Schaffen one hundred and eighty-nine houses out of two hundred are destroyed—eleven still stand. At Louvain the third part of the buildings are down; one thousand and seventy four dwellings have disappeared: on the town land and in the suburbs, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three houses have been burnt.

In this dear city of Louvain, perpetually in my thoughts, the magnificent church of St. Peter will never recover its former splendor. The ancient college of St. Ives, the art schools, the consular and commercial schools of the University, the old markets, our rich library with its collections, its unique and unpublished manuscripts, its archives, its gallery of great portraits of illustrious rectors, chancellors, professors, dating to the time of its foundation, which preserved for masters and students alike a noble tradition and were an incitement in their studies—all this accumulation of intellectual, of historic, and of artistic riches, the fruit of the labors of five centuries—all is in the dust.

Many a parish has lost its pastor. There is sounding in my ears the sorrowful voice of an old man of whom I asked whether he had had Mass on Sunday in his battered church. 'It is two months,' he said, 'since we had a church.' The parish priest and the curate had been interned in a concentration camp.

Thousands of Belgian citizens have in like manner been deported to the prisons of Germany, to Munsterlagen, to Celle, to Madgeburg. At Munsterlagen alone three thousand one hundred civil prisoners were numbered. History will tell of the physical and moral torments of their long martyrdom. Hundreds of innocent

men were shot. I possess no complete necrology; but I know that there were ninety-one shot at Aerschot, and that there, under pain of death, their fellow citizens were compelled to dig their graves. In the Louvain group of communes one hundred and seventy-six persons, men and women, old men and sucklings, rich and poor, in health and sickness, were shot or burnt.

In my diocese alone I know that thirteen priests or religious were put to death.* One of these, the parish priest of Gelrode, suffered, I believe, a veritable martyrdom. I made a pilgrimage to his grave, and, amid the little flock which so lately he had been feeding with the zeal of an apostle, there did I pray to him that from the height of Heaven he would guard his parish, his diocese, his country.

We can neither number our dead nor compute the measure of our ruins. And what would it be if we turned our sad steps towards Liège, Namur, Audenne, Dinant, Taminés, Charleroi, and elsewhere?†

And there where lives were not taken, and there where the stones of buildings were not thrown down, what anguish unrevealed! Families, hitherto living at ease, now in bitter want; all commerce at an end; all careers ruined; industry at a standstill; thousands upon thousands of working men without employment; working women, shop girls, humble servant girls without the means of earning their bread; and poor souls forlorn on the bed of sickness and fever, crying, 'O Lord, how long, how long?'

THE SECRET OF GOD.

There is nothing to reply. The reply remains the secret of God.

Yes, dearest brethren, it is the secret of God. He is the master of events and the sovereign director of the human multitude. *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus; orbis terrarum et universi qui habitant in eo.* The first relation between the creature and his Creator is that of absolute dependence. The very being of the creature is dependent; dependent are his nature, his faculties, his acts, his works. At every passing moment that dependence is renewed, is incessantly re-asserted, inasmuch as, without the will of the Almighty, existence of the first single instant would vanish before the next.

* Their brothers in religion or in the priesthood will wish to know their names. Here they are:—Dupierreux, of the Society of Jesus; Brothers Sebastian and Allard, of the Congregation of the Josephites; Brother Candide, of the Congregation of the Brothers of Mercy; Father Maximin, Capuchin, and Father Vincent, Conventual; Lombaerts, parish priest at Bovenloo; Goris, parish priest at Autgaerden; Carelste, professor at the Episcopal College of Louvain; De Clerck, parish priest at Bueken; Dergent, parish priest at Gelrode; Wouters Jean, parish priest at Pont-Brulé. We have reason to believe that the parish priest of Hérent, Van Bladel, an old man of seventy-one, was also killed; until now, however, his body has not been found.

† I have said that thirteen ecclesiastics had been shot within the diocese of Malines. There were, to my own actual personal knowledge, more than thirty in the dioceses of Namur, Tournai, and Liège; Schlögel, parish priest of Hastière; Gillet, parish priest of Couvin; Pieret, curate at Etaille; Alexandre, curate at Mussyla-Ville; Maréchal, seminarist at Maissin; the Rev. Father Gillet, Benedictine of Maredsous; the Rev. Father Nicolas, Premonstratensian of the Abbey of Leffe; two Brothers of the same Abbey; one Brother of the Congregation of Oblates; Poskin, parish priest of Surice; Hollet, parish priest of Les Alloux; Georges, parish priest of Tintigny; Glouden, parish priest of Latour; Zenden, retired parish priest at Latour; Jacques, a priest; Druet, parish priest of Acoz; Pollart, parish priest of Roselles; Labeye, parish priest of Blegny-Trembleu; Thielen, parish priest of Haccourt; Janssen, parish priest of Heuro le Romain; Chabot, parish priest of Forêt; Dossogne, parish priest of Hoc-kay; Reussonnet, curate of Olme; Bilande, chaplain of the institute of deaf-mutes at Bouge; Docq, a priest, and others.