

Government responsible for such action of its naval authorities. She cannot escape the conclusion that President Wilson and Secretary Bryan in their communications with the Mexican pretenders and rebel leaders have accustomed themselves to a tone that is not suitable for communications with the German Empire.' Count Reventlow declares that the American Government's request for assurances that its ships and citizens will be subjected only to search, even in the war zone, is utterly out of the question. 'The only way to preserve the existing relations between the German Empire and the United States,' he says in conclusion, 'is actual American recognition of the German war zone declaration and regard for the warning expressed therein.' That is what may be called fairly plain speaking: and it goes to show that, as we have before suggested, these American paper protests, with nothing behind them, are not taken in the least degree seriously by any of the belligerents.

CARDINAL MERCIER

As the powerful personality of Cardinal Mercier must appeal to the energetic and warm-hearted people of the United States, the following sketch of his Eminence's character will doubtless be of interest (says a writer in *America*). The Cardinal has a keen sense of humor and is noted for the readiness of his repartee. He has a special gift for silencing his opponents without wounding their feelings, and they even relish the wit that leaves them without a word to answer. This rare gift seems to have won the admiration even of the Socialists, for they have declared him to be 'quite the right sort,' and no longer attack him.

Cardinal Mercier's private life is one of real evangelical poverty. His table is plain and simple, as many a chance guest has experienced: yet, when he entertains he does so handsomely. For instance, about two years ago the convent of the 'Minimes' of Louvain presented his Eminence with a rochet made of the new 'Orient' lace invented by one of the nuns, and which received the gold medal at the Ghent Exhibition of 1913. Thereupon he invited to his palace all the working girls who had had a hand in making the rochet, sending them a generous banknote for their railway expenses. After saying Mass for them in his private chapel, he conducted the girls to one of the salons where a tempting breakfast awaited them. He then appeared clad in his Cardinal's robes, which he put on just to give the lace-makers the pleasure of seeing the effect of their work when worn over the scarlet silk. Afterward he produced some of his photographs, and, asking the name of each girl in turn, he wrote on the picture his autograph with a special blessing for her and her family. Cardinal Mercier spends very little on himself, that he may have more to give to the needy. Last year the cost of gas having risen, he had electric light placed in his house. While stringing the wires, the electrician had to pass through the Cardinal's bedroom, and, yielding to curiosity, examined it very carefully.

The Description He Gave of Its Poverty

caused a sensation in Mechlin, for the chamber was a small, plain, white-washed room with bare, unpolished floor, and furnished with a springless bedstead, a pallet of straw for a mattress, two chairs, a washstand, and a clothes-press, all of the cheapest kind. The electrician declared that in all Belgium the humblest servant in a decent family would scarcely be given so poor a room. Some years ago the Cardinal was presented with a motor car, which he gladly accepted, for it enabled him to call without ceremony, and at any moment of leisure, on any of the priests of his vast diocese. Though his clergy number 2500, he makes it a point to keep in touch with every one of them and to know all their needs and difficulties. Moreover the seeming luxury of a motor car proved a great saving to its owner. A Cardinal ranks in Europe with a prince of the blood royal, and consequently he is bound by certain forms of etiquette which are very costly. Each time he travels

by rail, for instance, he must give liberal tips to every employee of the stations at which he begins and ends the journey. Needless to say, on such occasions employees spring up like mushrooms. Besides this, he must take the entire railway carriage he travels in and must pay for all the compartments it contains. Thus the possession of a motor, bitterly criticised at first by the Socialists, saves his Eminence's charities several thousand dollars a year.

This automobile bears witness, moreover, to the Cardinal's extraordinary capacity for work. No sooner was the car received than his Eminence had it fitted up inside with a folding-desk at which, while driving from one village to another, he attends to much of his correspondence. The automobile is in a dilapidated condition now, and for the last two years his chauffeur has been constantly begging him to get a new one, but in vain, for the only answer is: 'Come now, Franz, think of my poor. Our old motor has not wholly collapsed yet.' Etiquette forbids his visiting any laymen except those of high rank, but in his eyes the poor are all of the blood royal and he visits them in their humble homes and tenements, bringing with him words of comfort and substantial relief. It is chiefly on their account that he is now in such distress because of the ruin of so many convents. As all who know Belgium intimately are aware, the working classes owe a great deal to the convents. Not only do the nuns train the women of Belgium to become the splendid housewives they are, but, besides this, the convents are important industrial centres, giving well-paid employment in lace-making, embroidery, lingerie, glove and corset-making, and other trades to thousands of women and girls. Cardinal Mercier's earnest desire is that all his priests shall lead

The Life of Evangelical Poverty

and renunciation which he lives himself, and great numbers of them do so. His zeal on this head is amply proved by two excellent books, his *Conferences* and his *Retreat to Priests*. He always spends his summer vacation preaching the annual retreat to his priests, who gather for the purpose at Mechlin in groups of some 350 at a time. This means giving three lectures every day, except Saturdays and Sundays, for six consecutive weeks. When he found in the beautiful life of Father Chevrier, of Lyons, his ideal of the true Catholic priest, he was so desirous that all his clergy should read the book and confirm their own lives to it, that out of his own meagre purse he bought over 2500 copies of the volume and presented one to each priest and seminarian of his very extensive diocese.

Cardinal Mercier has, in addition to his other gifts, a remarkably clear head for business and for all kinds of administration. He is constantly being consulted on such matters by high and low. Consequently on private audience days there is no fixed hour for his dinner. He continues receiving until all are heard. Hand in hand with his practical turn of mind goes an essentially different quality: a keen sense of the beautiful, especially in art and in poetry. Though now aged sixty-four, his Eminence's imagination seems to have

Lost None of Its Brilliancy.

For instance, about thirteen months ago, an Irish woman residing in the Mechlin diocese sent him a copy of *The Hound of Heaven*. Though English is one of the eight languages that Cardinal Mercier has mastered, yet the giver of the poem scarcely expected him to appreciate it fully. She was agreeably surprised, however, to find that he had sat up nearly a whole night making a literal translation of the poem into French to make sure that he thoroughly understood the beauty of the verses.

Cardinal Mercier's love for his flock is so strong that he would gladly shed his last drop of blood for them. On his return from Rome last autumn he found that his priests, in order to escape observation, had thought it prudent to let their beards grow and to adopt the secular dress. He at once expressed his desire that they should resume their clerical garb, so that in case of need every sheep of the flock should be able to distinguish them as priests. It was his wish that no word