

to tell our countrymen how we should admire the heroism of Belgium, compassionate her sorrows, and relieve her distress.

I.

Admiration is the feeling one experiences in contemplating an extraordinary spectacle, a sentiment in which mingled joy, astonishment, and sympathy suddenly seize and overcome us, throwing us into a sort of ecstasy. It supposes that we recognise in the object of our admiration not only beauty but an immeasurable beauty which floods our faculty of vision. '*Admiratio*,' summarily says St. Thomas, '*consequitur apprehensionem alicujus excedentis nostram facultatem*.' In the physical order, it attaches itself to the horizons that our vision could not embrace in all their fulness, to the heavens sown with stars so numerous that man can not count them; to the oceans whose living waves extend ever further than our sight. In the intellectual order, the unlooked for victories of genius, of art, science, and of philosophy, give it birth, dazzling the mind and transporting the heart. But above all, it shines in the moral order, and in this order that which summons it to its loftiest height is the apparition of heroism. This is because heroism, with its halo of strength and splendour, is a prodigious phenomenon, the indomitable outburst of a virtue which, wishing to save itself and keep itself unstained, breaks all bounds, resists all powers, endures all tortures, and raises itself to so high a plane that according to the ancients, no one practises it save by drinking of the cup whereof drinks the invincible Divinity. On the heights encircled by the fires of heroism, life attains its maximum of intensity: nature, forgetful of the laws that ordinarily govern her, rises above herself, and assumes proportions that seem incompatible with her weakness. Happy the individuals and the nations who, scorning physical ease and their immediate interests, have abandoned themselves to the impulses of heroism: they have chosen the better part, an incorruptible portion which God Himself could not take from them. To refuse admiration to these chosen beings who are the glory of our race, would be to commit a crying injustice against which the upright conscience and the honest heart would eternally protest.

Belgium has known this access of grandeur, this super-abundance of energy, this intoxication of moral life that heroism brings with it. Heroic she was when, summoned to obey the ultimatum of a potentate possessing the most powerful army in the world or to face the horrors of a merciless war, she declared in the memorable session that did not last a quarter of an hour, for right against might. Heroic she was when, with a handful of warriors, she dared to resist the assault of countless invaders and, during unforgettable weeks, held them in check. Heroic she has been when, driven back from Liège to Namur, from Namur to Brussels, from Brussels to Antwerp, from Antwerp to Ostend, from Ostend to Dixmude, she refused the humiliating peace that they did not blush to offer her. Heroic she has been in this young and great King, who, careless of his own person, shares all the ordeals of his subjects, lives with his soldiers in the trenches, sleeps beneath the cannon, commands in the firing line, and, on the morrow of the worst catastrophes, cries proudly, 'Belgium is bruised, but she is not conquered.' (Applause.) Heroic she has been in that 'little Queen' who, ever at hand on the battlefield, tends the wounded and soothes by her grace, faith, and serenity of hope the last hours of the dying. Heroic has she been in her ministers, ever illustrious, who, seconding their sovereign, work incessantly for their country and serve her with a devotion, a disinterestedness, and an intelligence which perhaps has never been witnessed in history. Heroic has she been in her soldiers, who have checked, harassed, foiled, decimated, often even vanquished an adversary whose strength was equalled only by his insolence. Heroic has she been in her people, who have seen the waters of the Meuse, of the Sambre, of the Scheldt, of the Lys, running red with blood; who have seen the fortresses of Liège and Antwerp, and the monuments of Louvain and of Malines laid low, yet

never renounced their independence. (Applause.) Philosophy tells us that one day, one hour, one minute of heroism is worth more than a century of banal prudence or commonplace virtue. During the last three and a-half months, Belgium has lived a life of inexhaustible heroism. To-day she is the pride of humanity. (Applause.) She has an unassailable right to the admiration which will sustain her courage, to the public praise which will do justice to her greatness of soul, to the acclamations which, throughout the whole world, will bear testimony to her virtues and her prowess.

She has an especial claim on the land of France which her intrepid effort has saved for us. That humble return on our part will certainly not be denied her. O proud inhabitants of Flanders and of Brabant, there is not a generous being who is not moved in thinking of you, who has not his gaze fixed upon you. From the Thames to the Vistula, from civilised countries to remote deserts your praise is in all mouths, and I dare to believe that the celestial court bend over the walls of heaven to see you more clearly and to contemplate with delight your steadfastness and devotion. From the soul of France there ascends to you a living, glowing tribute of praise. It is not a silent tribute; our angels, our saints, our apostles, our doctors, our artists, poets, historians, will prolong the ringing echoes to the end of time and beyond time. Successive generations will ever hear repeated in heaven and on earth 'Honor to the King of the Belgians, Albert I.! Honor to the Queen of the Belgians, Elizabeth! (Applause.) Honor to Brocqueville, Prime Minister of the Belgians, and to his colleagues! Honor to the army of Liège, of Namur, of Antwerp, of Ostend, of Dixmude! To all the Belgian race, honor and benediction throughout all ages!' (Applause.)

II.

Heroism is a principle of glory, but suffering follows in its train. And this I further say, that the radiance of its glory is in proportion to the greatness of the sacrifices that it entails, and the more it is sensible of the sorrow it endures, the more it merits its name. The Christian who does not yield to blows of which he feels all the cruelty surpasses the stoic who, in misfortunes, affects indifference to suffering. Christ was sublime not because He gainsaid the effect of the torture on His body and soul, but because, though a prey to unutterable anguish, He refused to betray His divine mission. Belgium has been sublime not because she has said to her implacable enemy 'The blows do not hurt me,' but because she has said to him: 'The wounds that you inflict on me, so great, so deep, so severe though they are, will not overcome my tenacity.' Belgium has shown herself heroic because she has been able to endure, without flinching and without wavering, all the terrors of an awful agony. O brothers, how great you are, but how unfortunate! That King and Queen, how they have suffered when truly murderous projectiles burst above their dwelling and threatened the lives of their little ones, when the enemy invading their territory, made himself master in their palace, in their provinces, and in their capital! How those officers suffered when their fortresses were beaten down. How did these humble soldiers suffer when death swept down upon them! How these pastors suffered when the vaults, columns, arches, and the altars of their temples came down with a crash! How those magistrates suffered when their cities were suddenly demolished by the iron hail or destroyed by fire! How have those peasants and workers suffered, driven from their farms and their factories, and compelled to flee in haste and hazard! Above all, how have these fathers, mothers, and little ones suffered, from whom the terrible scourge has torn the beings most necessary to them, and most beloved! 'The ways of Sion mourn.' Along roads yesterday illumined by the rays of happiness I see only tears, I hear only sobs. The devastated fields weep, the waters of the rivers, red with blood, flow onward in murmurs of lamentation, and king and subjects show on their noble countenances the mark of the tragic emotions which wring their hearts. Oh! would that