

CARDINAL SENDS GRATITUDE FOR U.S. HOSPITALITY

Admires Greatness of American Nation, Says Prelate, Back in Belgium.

BUSY WITH THE FUTURE

By FRANK W. ROSTOCK, Newspaper Enterprise Association Correspondent.

MALINES, France, Jan. 16.—Since his return from the United States, Cardinal Mercier, archbishop of Malines, has applied himself energetically to the task of the industrial reconstruction as well as promoting the spiritual progress of Belgium. He paused long enough when I visited him to send the following message of gratitude to the American people for the enthusiastic reception he received during his tour of the country.

"You ask me whether now that I am come home, I can give you any message for the American people, with regard to my journey through the states.

"Let me take up my first words on landing: I then said, 'I have come to see the people, to bring them a message of admiration and thanks.' That message was delivered wherever I went and is the best of my ability. And I think my first object has been achieved: I have seen the people, and I use the word 'seen' in the sense in which we are spiritually, meaning to know and to love."

I know the American people, and so their dominant characteristic of open-hearted frank spontaneity, has impressed me and gone to my heart. It is to this fact that I attribute the current of genuine sympathy which immediately flowed from them to me and back again."

REGALS WAR INCIDENTS.

I met the cardinal in the room of the archbishopdom where he received and answered the notes of Gen. von Bissing, when that iron-fisted Prussian savager was in command with his headquarters at Brussels. It was here that Cardinal Mercier penned the replies which will be his last.

But now Cardinal Mercier is busying himself with thoughts of peace and progress. The end of the war brought to him many problems.

"I am always glad to meet an American," he said, as he welcomed me into

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his study. "I learned to love America and Americans during my tour of your wonderful country. I hope to be able to visit your country again."

The cardinal was not the lone traveler to make many Americans meet at the close of his American tour. The tall form was noticeably bent with fatigue. Today he stands erect. The lines which told of physical weariness have disappeared from his face.

"I have traveled much and in many lands," said Cardinal Mercier. "I have made many friends and made many friends. But in all my travels I never felt more at home than I did in your country."

ADMIRES BIGNESS OF HEART.

"I admire the bigness of Americans and people. I do not mean the physical bigness of your country—it's great cities, its great buildings, but the bigness of heart and the bigness of mind and purpose."

There was a touch of sadness in the voice of the cardinal as he discussed the future of the Belgian people. Belgium has made tremendous strides in the matter of industrial reconstruction, but some institutions have made little progress.

Many of the churches in the archbishop's diocese are in a state of bankruptcy. Technical schools in which trades are taught trades are in a sad state.

I visited one of these schools in Malines, where hundreds of boys are being taught carpentry, cabinet-making, woodcarving, and similar trades. The school has tools. It lacks seasoned wood, above all, properly lighted rooms.

Lack of coal and consequently lack of electric light was responsible. The cardinal is planning money to build a

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