

# THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN: GREAT BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION.

1914-1925.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE month of July (1925) witnessed the shipment to Louvain of the twelfth and probably the final consignment of books collected under the scheme inaugurated by the Governors of the John Rylands Library in 1914, for rendering assistance to the authorities of the University of Louvain in their heavy task of making good the ruin wrought by the war.

This twelfth consignment, which consisted of sixty-eight cases containing 6,671 volumes, included the splendid collection of Oriental and general literature bequeathed to his *Alma Mater* by the late Bishop of Salford, Dr. Louis Charles Casartelli, and raised the total number of volumes obtained by the British Committee under this scheme to the substantial figure of 55,782.

Now that the Committee's aim, of securing for our friends at Louvain a live collection of books of at least fifty thousand volumes, has been so abundantly realized, it may not be out of place briefly to recall the circumstances which led up to the proposal, and the steps which were taken to carry it into effect.

The scheme originated with the desire of the Governors of the John Rylands Library, to give some practical expression to their deep feelings of sympathy with the authorities of the University of Louvain in the grievous loss which they had sustained through the wanton destruction of their famous library. This they felt could best be accomplished by means of a gift of books to form the nucleus of a new library to replace the splendid collection of manuscripts and printed books which had been involved in that senseless act. Consequently, at the December meeting of the Council of the Library, of which

Sir Alfred Hopkinson was at that time Chairman, the librarian was authorized to make a selection from the stock of duplicates in their possession, which had gradually accumulated through the purchase *en bloc*, from time to time, of large and special collections which invariably included a number of works of which copies were already to be found on the shelves of the library, together with a set of the printed catalogues and other publications which had been issued under the auspices of the governors.

A list of works forming the first instalment of the proposed gift, numbering 200 volumes, was drawn up to accompany the offer when it was made to the authorities of the University, through the medium of Dr. A. Carnoy, the Louvain Professor of Zend, Pehlevi, and Greek Palæography, at that time resident in Cambridge. The offer was gratefully accepted, and in acknowledging the gift Professor Carnoy described it as :

“ . . . actually the first which had been effectually given to the future University Library of Louvain . . . one of the very first acts which tend to the preparation of our revival.”

As the exiled university was for the time being dismembered and homeless, we undertook to house the volumes until such time as Belgium had been freed from the invaders, and the University had been repatriated.

Having given that undertaking it occurred to us that there must be many other libraries and similar institutions, as well as private individuals, who would welcome the opportunity of sharing in such an expression of practical sympathy, and in the subsequent issue of the “BULLETIN of the John Rylands Library,” which made its appearance in April, 1915, we launched our first public appeal for help, in which we announced our willingness to undertake the custody of any suitable works which might be entrusted to us for the purpose of assisting in the equipment of the new library. And in order to obviate the needless duplication of gifts, we requested would-be contributors to be good enough, in the first instance, to submit to us lists of the books they were willing to offer.

Our scheme included the preparation of a register of the names and addresses of the various contributors, with an exact description of their gifts, for presentation to the University at the appropriate time, to serve as a permanent record of this combined effort to repair some

of the damage which had been wrought. It was also decided to equip this collection, whatever dimensions it might ultimately assume, with a carefully compiled card catalogue, so that when the time came for its transference to its new home, it might be placed upon the shelves prepared for its reception and be ready for use forthwith.

We were anxious that the combined gift should be an acknowledgment not unworthy of our indebtedness to the incomparably brave nation and their valiant Sovereign, who sacrificed all but honour to preserve their independence, and thereby safeguard the liberties of Europe by frustrating the invaders' plans. We owe to Belgium more than we can ever repay, but it was fitting that we should seize such an opportunity to repay at least some part of our debt. It was true that much of the mischief done in Louvain and elsewhere in Belgium was beyond repair, but we believed that some of it might be remedied or at least mitigated by those who felt sympathy with our noble and self-sacrificing allies in the hour of their affliction.

Our appeal met with an immediate and generous response, of which the most gratifying feature was that all classes of the community participated in it. Offers of help reached us not only from all parts of the United Kingdom, but from other parts of the English-speaking world, as well as from several of the allied and neutral countries.

Evidence of the far-reaching interest which the appeal evoked is to be found in the accompanying list of contributors, numbering nearly seven hundred, containing, as it does, names of institutions which have made liberal contributions of eminently suitable works from their stock of duplicates; names of individual collectors who have given with equal liberality and eagerness, from their own shelves, volumes of great interest and often of great rarity, and also names of struggling students, whose gifts partake of the sanctity of a sacrifice, since in many cases they consist of treasured possessions which had been acquired through the exercise of economy and self-denial.

This gratifying result has been obtained largely through the ready and valuable assistance which has been rendered by the press throughout the eleven years that have elapsed since we issued our first appeal, by giving to it a publicity it would have been impossible to secure in any other way.

When, as early as July, 1915, the encouraging nature of the first fruits of our appeal came to the knowledge of Dr. Van der Essen,

Louvain's Professor of History, he wrote to us in the following terms :—

“ Writing as a Professor of the University of Louvain, let me thank you for all that you have done for us since the crime of Louvain. It is such a wonderful thing in this time of horror to see how the scholars of all countries—the central empires excepted, alas !—have manifested their friendship and proved to us by so many deeds and words that scientific international solidarity is still alive. Especially has England done splendid work, and among that I rank your . . . initiative as one of the most, if not the most effective. I had, indeed, opportunity in America to see what your appeal was bringing forth, and how by your kind intermediary practical help was being prepared. It is noble work you are doing, work which will have a fine result, and I can assure you that never will the University of Louvain forget that the appeal went out from Manchester. . . . I hope to have the pleasure to come . . . and to witness the rebirth of our poor library, on the very soil of your splendid and glorious country. ‘ Kultur ’ has destroyed the treasures of Louvain : it is a fact full of consequence that what has been destroyed, will have been restored by the kind intermediary of one of the celebrated centres of English culture.”

In one of the earliest reports of the progress of our scheme we ventured to express the hope that the new library, which was already rising phoenix-like out of the ashes of the old one, would be far richer and more glorious than its predecessor, and that the agencies through which that was to be accomplished would be as widely representative as possible. It was a source of great encouragement, therefore, to learn with what promptitude a number of learned societies and institutions had resolved to participate in this scheme.

Lest we should appear to claim too large a share in the initiation of this scheme it should be explained, that when we made our first appeal we were unaware that similar proposals had been made by several societies, libraries, and universities, although no definite steps or public announcements in respect of them had been made. The Classical Association, for example, had made an appeal to its members to assist in the reconstruction of the classical side of the library ; the University of Manchester had forwarded an address of sympathy to the authorities of the University of Louvain, and had resolved to set aside a set of the publications of the University Press, together with a number of duplicates from the Christie Library, proposing at the same time to invite the co-operation of other universities. Similar resolutions were passed by the Trustees of the British Museum, the Bodleian

Library, the Signet Library, the National Library of Wales, the Universities of Aberdeen, Cambridge, Durham, the University College of Oxford, and others. For a variety of reasons definite action in most cases was postponed for a while, and in the meantime, we, unconscious of these decisions, ventured to launch our appeal. We cannot regret our action, since it revealed a widespread desire to give tangible proof to the people of Belgium of the high and affectionate regard in which they were held, and provided for the co-ordination of these and other proposals that were in contemplation, the ultimate result of which has been a considerable accession of strength to the new library.

In the early part of 1916 a new impetus was given to our scheme through the initiation by the British Academy of a further movement fraught with great possibilities. Representatives of the principal libraries and learned institutions in the United Kingdom were called together under the presidency of Viscount Bryce, to consider the advisability of co-operating with the Institut de France in the formation of an International Committee, whose aim should be the restoration of the University of Louvain and its library. The meeting was held at Burlington House, and resulted in the formation of a small executive committee, consisting of the following representatives: The Lord Muir Mackenzie, G.C.B., K.C.; Sir J. P. Mahaffy, G.B.E., C.V.O.; Sir F. G. Kenyon, K.C.B.; Sir A. T. Davies, K.B.E., C.B.; Sir Alfred Hopkinson, K.C.; Sir Edmund Gosse, K.C.B.; Sir Israel Gollancz, K.B.E.; Sir Norman Moore; Sir Arthur Shipley, F.R.S., Master of Christ's College, Cambridge; Dr. M. R. James, Provost of Eton; Dr. Henry Guppy; Dr. J. W. Mackail; Dr. C. T. Hagberg Wright; Falconer Madan, Esq.; C. G. Kekewich, Esq.; H. R. Tedder, Esq.; with Lord Muir Mackenzie as Chairman, and the Librarian of the House of Lords (Hugh Butler, Esq.) as Honorary Secretary, to consider the best way of organizing the movement effectively, and to take whatever steps were considered necessary.

At the first meeting of the Executive, which was held in the Library of the House of Lords, it was decided to co-operate with the Governors of the John Rylands Library in the development of the scheme which they had already inaugurated. Several appeals have since been made on behalf of the Committee by Lord Muir Mackenzie, with excellent results.

As soon as our first appeal reached America, in the early months of 1915, it was given a most enthusiastic welcome, and we were much encouraged to receive from Miss Da Costa Green, Librarian to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, a cablegram in which the offer was made to provide a centre in New York to which contributions from that side of the Atlantic might be sent. Miss Green followed up her cablegram by a written communication in which she generously undertook to do everything in her power to further the objects of our scheme, and at the same time informed us that Mr. Pierpont Morgan with great cordiality had set aside a number of duplicates of fifteenth-century books and other works of great interest from his own library, together with a set of such of his own printed catalogues and other publications as were still available. In the course of our correspondence we pointed out that with the co-operation of the United States it should be possible not only to replace the incinerated contents of the library, but to provide a new building to house them. A committee was subsequently formed, but after careful consideration, it was decided that so long as the United States maintained her position of neutrality it was obviously unwise to take any outwardly active part in the movement. It is now quite evident that whilst outwardly active participation in the scheme was suspended for the time being, our friends were quietly organizing their resources in readiness for the time when active co-operation would be feasible. To that end a strong and influential National Committee, representing the best interests in that great country, was formed, under the chairmanship of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University, to co-operate with the International Committee in the restoration of the Library of the University of Louvain.

On the 11th of November, 1918, the day on which the Armistice was signed, an appeal was issued, and one of the first active steps to be taken was to commission the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Clifford N. Carver, to wait upon the Rector of the University of Louvain, with an offer to rebuild the library. The offer, needless to say, was gratefully accepted, and steps were immediately taken to provide an up-to-date building from the designs of one of America's leading architects, whose plans were approved by the authorities of Louvain, and on the 21st of June, 1921, the scheme was advanced another stage by the laying of the foundation stone.

At the same time a sub-committee was formed, under the chairmanship of Dr. Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of the Congressional Library, to co-operate with the other National Committees in the matter of providing the literary equipment of the projected new building. Arrangements were entered into between Dr. Putnam and ourselves, with a view of obviating duplication and overlapping.

The aim with which we inaugurated our scheme, as we have already explained, was to replace the contents of the library, and we had little doubt of the ultimate success of our project, but we did not dare to anticipate any result so completely satisfactory as that which has been obtained through the enlightened generosity of our friends in America. But for their timely intervention it is unlikely that the library building as well as its equipment could have been restored with anything approaching the same thoroughness and dispatch.

It was with a very liberal view of the scope of the modern university that we entered upon our task of providing our friends at Louvain with at least the nucleus of a new library, designed to meet the immediate requirements of a progressive general university, in which provision is made for everything useful in the development of mind and matter.

We realized that the methods of modern education have undergone so complete a revolution in recent years, that an ever-increasing part of its energies is now devoted to the encouragement of investigation and research, with the result that the library has acquired a much more important place in its organization than heretofore. It is now the centre of activity and has been appropriately described as "the laboratory of the humanistic departments."

Furthermore, there was a time when the university library was innocent of anything so mundane as the literature of trade and industry ; but such have been the developments of the modern up-to-date institution that it is no longer limited to things academic. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the term "academic," under modern conditions, has acquired a new and broader significance. In consequence of this broadening conception of the scope of education, and in order to meet the public demand for vocational training, the modern university has developed into a place where everything useful may be studied, and as a result a demand has sprung up, in the University of Louvain as elsewhere, for the literature of technology and the

useful arts, surrounded by a whole new literature relating to various crafts. Nothing is now alien to the university library, which, in consequence, is called upon to give shelter to universal literature.

Whilst keeping in view the general character of the library we had in contemplation, we were anxious that it should be thoroughly representative of English scholarship, in other words, that its equipment should include the necessary material for research in the history, language and literature of this country, together with the contributions which British scholars have made to other departments of learning. In the attainment of that object we felt that the learned societies of the Empire could render very material aid by contributing sets of their transactions and publications, and this view was amply justified by the splendid response which they made to our appeal, with the result that sets of the transactions of the principal historical, literary, philological, philosophical and scientific societies have been included in the gift.

We were also fortunate in being able to enlist the sympathy and help of the leading publishers, who had it in their power, more than any other section of the community, to assist us in the building up of the collection on its modern side. It was quite obvious that if the library was to respond to the varied demands that were likely to be made upon it, it was necessary that it should be equipped with the latest and best authorities in every department of knowledge. A number of the publishers with great generosity invited us to make a selection of the works announced in their current catalogues, and as a result some thousands of volumes were added to the collection, greatly to its enrichment.

Another interesting feature in the accompanying list, which should not be overlooked, is the number of contributions which have been made in memory of deceased friends. In this way the names of several prominent scholars, recently deceased, have been commemorated, such as : Dean Church, Canon Scott Holland, Professor James Hope Moulton, Professor H. W. Hogg, Dr. Swete, Professor Emmott, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Dr. Lloyd Roberts, and Sir Peter Le Page Renouf. There could be no more appropriate way of perpetuating the name of a relative or a friend than by dedicating, in this way, a gift to their memory, in the interest of scholarship.

In the month of January, 1919, Belgium having been freed from the hateful presence of the invaders, the University of Louvain was



repatriated by the return of the authorities to the devastated scene of their former activities and triumphs, there to reassemble their scattered students, to resume their accustomed work, and to take a prominently active part in the immediate business of effecting a transition to a peace footing, as well as in the educational and other schemes of reconstruction which were already taking shape.

Writing under date of the 21st of September of that same year, the Rector of the University (Monsieur P. Ladeuze), in the name of his *Alma Mater*, at the conclusion of the first session of its revival, referred in terms of gratitude and appreciation to what had been accomplished by the Governors of the John Rylands Library in collaboration with the Executive of the National Committee, and with the aid of the many contributors, both individual and institutional, who with great promptitude and generosity had responded to the appeals for help.

During that first year of its revival no fewer than 3200 students were in attendance at the University, and during the ensuing session a still larger number were enrolled. Their work, however, was sorely hampered through the absence of a library. That was not to be wondered at, for one of the first essentials in the organization and equipment of any university is a library, for without one, as Thomas à Kempis has expressed it: "C'est comme une table sans mets, un jardin sans fleurs, une bourse sans argent." Fortunately that was a deficiency which it was possible to remedy during the second session. Temporary premises had been secured to serve as library and reading-room pending the erection of the new building, and it was our privilege to assist in the furnishing of the shelves with a live up-to-date collection of books, calculated to meet the immediate requirements of staff and students, consisting of 30,427 volumes, which had been gradually accumulated here in Manchester, as the outcome of the combined efforts of the many friends who had taken so active an interest in furthering the objects of the scheme.

In a letter dated the 30th of January, 1920, soon after the first consignment of books had reached Louvain, Monseigneur Ladeuze, the Recteur Magnificus, writing on behalf of the University, expresses himself as follows:—

" . . . Les résultats que vous avez obtenus sont merveilleux. Vous avez atteint votre but. Grâce à vous nos professeurs et nos

étudiants ont encore une bibliothèque, et une bibliothèque utilisable, longtemps avant que les Allemands aient réparé leur crime. Par la richesse de son contenu, par les soins qui ont été donnés aux livres, par la peine que vous avez prise de dresser un catalogue soigné et une bonne partie des fiches, votre premier envoi de livres dépasse de loin tous ceux que nous avons reçus, jusqu'ici. La joie de nos professeurs devant ces beaux livres faisait plaisir ; j'aurai voulu que vous en fussiez témoin. Et voici qu'un nouvel envoi nous parvient encore plus précieux que le premier. Les listes que j'ai reçues me permettent d'en apprécier toute l'importance, et en particulier l'utilité que nous pourrions en retirer toute de suite pour nos études. Du plus profond de mon cœur, je vous dis mon meilleur merci."

Again, under date of the 23rd of February, upon receipt of the detailed lists of the contents of the cases of the third consignment, Monseigneur Ladeuze writes :—

" . . . Ce nouvel envoi va être réellement d'une grande utilité pour nos professeurs et nos étudiants. La liste du contenu de chaque caisse, que je reçois en même temps que votre lettre, me le prouve surabondamment, et je vous demande la permission de ne pas chercher de formules pour vous exprimer à nouveau notre vive gratitude . . . 16,390 volumes, choisis, bien ordonnés, en excellent état ! C'est déjà toute une bibliothèque, et une bibliothèque universitaire ! Et vous voulez bien me dire que ce n'est pas fini, qu'au contraire le nombre des dons s'accroît tous les jours ! Encore une fois, sans formules, merci de tout mon cœur ! "

Again under date of the 22nd May :—

" Je ne sais plus à quelles formules recourir pour vous dire mon admiration et ma gratitude.

" Il y a quelques jours, je parlais à M. le Professeur Van der Essen de vos envois. Et il me répondit : ' J'ai vu les débuts de la collection pendant la guerre ; ils étaient déjà magnifiques. Mais je n'aurais pas pu soupçonner alors les développements que cette collection allait prendre. . . . ' Ces paroles se rapportaient aux quatre premiers envois. Le cinquième va encore considérablement augmenter ces richesses, comme je puis en juger par les indications que vous voulez bien me donner, en m'annonçant son arrivée.

" . . . Soyez encore remercié 26,336 fois pour les 26,336 volumes, tous de choix, que nous vous devons !

" Les volumes des quatre envois précédents sont déjà à la disposition de nos lecteurs, et se trouvent bien établis sur les rayons de notre bibliothèque provisoire.

" Il est bien regrettable qu'il ne soit pas encore possible de commencer à construire notre nouvelle bibliothèque."

Yet again, under date of the 23rd of July, Monseigneur Ladeuze writes :—

" . . . Au moment où je reçois votre lettre et le catalogue de votre nouvel envoi, je suis sur le point de m'absenter pour plusieurs jours. Je veux cependant vous envoyer tout de suite une rapide mais très sincère expression de ma vive gratitude. Ce m'est un grand plaisir de faire connaître à tous ceux qui visitent notre bibliothèque provisoire l'importance extraordinaire de votre collaboration à l'œuvre de la restauration de notre dépôt. Nous voici 30,427 fois obligés envers vous ! Et combien ce nouvel envoi nous sera précieux, la brève description que vous m'en donnez, le montre éloquentement. La semaine prochaine aura lieu la grande réunion annuelle de notre conseil d'administration, présidée par le Cardinal Mercier. Je me ferai un devoir de lui exposer tous ce que nous vous devons."

Monsieur L. Stainier, Administrateur de la Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, who was charged with the direction of the restoration of the Louvain Library, and consequently has had the handling and direction of these earlier consignments, when acknowledging their safe arrival employs the same emphatic terms of appreciation. On the 6th of April he writes as follows :—

"Your letter of the 1st April reached us at the time the Easter bells were chiming in happy remembrance of the Saviour's Resurrection, and I could not refrain from associating their chimes with the joy of the resurrection of our library. . . .

"The first three consignments have caused the greatest satisfaction among the professors, but I think they will feel no less happy when the fourth consignment is ready for consultation. Such interesting and useful sets as the publications of the Early English Text Society, the Gibb Memorial Fund, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Gwatkin collection, etc., will enable our masters and students to resume their work anew.

Again on the 3rd of May, M. Stainier writes :—

" . . . Above all we congratulate you upon the system of transmission you have instituted ; the rapidity and smoothness of which is marvellous ; and we are now considering the application of the system to the recuperation in Germany, the beginning of which is in view."

Yet again on the 31st of May :—

" . . . Once more I am able to report the safe arrival of your latest consignment of sixty-three cases of books . . . no, of treasures !

"Positively such collections as the texts of the Manchester University Press and of the Clarendon Press at Oxford would be considered among the most useful collections already shelved in our stores, and I do not doubt of the satisfaction of masters and students when they are enabled to know the Mayhew and Jenner collections, and peruse the books gathered by such workers.

"In the case of the publications of the Folk Lore Society, we had

to open the cases in which they were contained, in order to satisfy the impatient professor who had been awaiting its coming since early morning.

"The 'Agrippa's Works' (a volume which at one time belonged to Louvain) was received as a prodigal son reintegrating his parents' home."

The 28th of July, 1921, marked a new epoch in the history of the University of Louvain, for it was on that day that the reconstruction of the library was advanced another stage, with the laying of the first stone of the new building, which was to be erected on a splendid site at the highest part of the town, overlooking the Place du Peuple, the exact spot where the little Belgian army, away back in the dark days of 1914, thrilled the world by defying the invading hordes of Germany.

The actual ceremony was preceded by a brilliant academic function in the great amphitheatre of the Collège du Pape, presided over by the venerable and beloved Cardinal Mercier, as Président du Conseil d'Administration de l'Université.

The guests included representatives of twenty-one nations, surrounded by the delegates of the scientific bodies and from the provinces S. of Belgium. "Tous accourus ici," remarked the venerable Prelate, "pour nous interroger sur nos espérances et pour nous aider à les réaliser."

The King and Queen of the Belgians, accompanied by the Princess Marie José, were greeted with cheers as they entered the amphitheatre, followed by Monsieur Poincaré, the Prince of Monaco, Marshal Pétain, the members of the Belgian Cabinet and of the Diplomatic Corps, and Dr. Murray Butler.

After solemnly blessing the assembly Cardinal Mercier opened the proceedings by an address of welcome, in which he recalled the dreadful night of 25-26 August, 1914, and his avowal of confidence in divine justice, which would not allow the burning of Louvain to be the final act in its long history. Here are the Cardinal's own words :—

"Nous savions que l'heure de la justice viendrait. Nous l'attendions. A nos soldats, à nos alliés de nous apporter la victoire. A nous de la mériter.

"Jamais pour ma part, je n'ai cru un instant que le Régulateur Suprême des événements humains, qui avait permis que notre foi fût soumise à pareille épreuve, pût nous abandonner.

"Aux heures les plus tragiques de notre épreuve, les évêques belges, gardiens et protecteurs de l'Université de Louvain, ne doutèrent jamais de sa résurrection prochaine et de ses glorieuses destinées. . . . Nous avons eu une foi indéfectible dans le triomphe final de justice."

His Eminence, in the course of his address, remarked that there were two dates which would ever be remembered in Belgium, dates which mark ruin and restoration, the one (25-26 August, 1914) the date of the burning of the library, the other (28 July, 1921) the date of the commencement of the erection, near its ruins, of the new building which is to replace it.

The Cardinal's reference to the King who was present throughout the whole of the proceedings, was received with renewed applause, due not merely to personal popularity, but because, as the Cardinal said of him : "Son Majesté le Roi calme au milieu des orages et sans peur des dangers, représente en lui-même ce qu'il y a de plus noble dans la vie et le caractère du peuple."

It was eminently appropriate that Cardinal Mercier should take the leading part in the ceremonies of the day which were to commemorate restoration, for was he not the man who had valiantly faced danger and loss whilst so wisely guiding his people in the days of their tragic distress. Resplendent in robes of scarlet, tall, spare but supremely dignified in bearing, the Cardinal from whose countenance radiated benedictions, seemed to dominate the whole assembly, and as he descended from the tribune at the conclusion of his address he was greeted with tremendous applause.

A message of good wishes for the University of Louvain from President Harding was read by the Ambassador of the United States to Belgium. This was followed by an address, in every sense worthy of a great occasion, by Dr. Murray Butler, Chairman of the American National Committee, which was formed to collaborate with the British and other committees in the work of reconstruction, and which made itself responsible for the erection of the new library building.

Monsieur Poincaré, the ex-President of the French Republic, followed with a spirited and eloquent oration, which was greeted point by point with tumultuous applause.

Other addresses followed, including one by Monsieur Carton de Wiart, Belgium's principal Minister of State, in which he referred in moving terms to the manifestation of international regard which that gathering stood for, and concluded on the following high note :—

"L'humanité s'est sentie violée dans ce qui, dit Pascal, est la principe même de sa dignité : sa pensée, reflet de la sagesse divin. Spontanément, dans l'unité de son âme, elle s'est vouée à l'œuvre qu'Émile Boutroux a parfaitement défini : réparer l'injure faite, par l'incendie de Louvain, à la civilisation tout entière.

"C'est un acte infiniment grand, infiniment beau. Il n'a pas de précédent dans l'histoire. Puisse l'avenir ne jamais vouloir qu'il puisse se renouveler.

"Pour cet acte de solidarité sociale et scientifique—qui va faire sortir la vie de la mort—la Belgique, profondément émue d'en être la bénéficiaire vous dit à tous, par la présence de ses Souverains aimés et respectés, le seul mot que la langue française connaisse, n'est il pas vrai, pour traduire le sentiment qui déborde en nous ! Merci !

"Merci à vous tous, Messieurs, dont la pensée a tout compris et dont le cœur a vraiment saigné pour Louvain !"

At the conclusion of the academic function, a procession was formed to proceed to the scene of the stone-laying, composed of the guests, the professorial staff of the University, preceded by the students grouped behind their respective banners, in which the King and Queen walked side by side with the Cardinal, who, vested in cope and mitre, with crozier in hand blessed the waiting crowds as he passed.

Every avenue of approach to the Place du Peuple was blocked by the orderly, but none the less enthusiastic crowds, and in the presence of a concourse of at least 30,000 people, the first chapter in the spiritual restoration of Louvain was opened.

Facing the stage, and at the approach to the spot where the first stone was to be laid, was a great scroll which set forth the meaning of the day's proceedings in the following inscription :—

HOSTILI INCENDIO EVERSA BENEVOLENTIA AMERICANA  
CONSURGO.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the laying of the stone it was blessed by the Cardinal, and for this ceremony an altar had been set up, on which stood a famous ivory crucifix, more than three feet high, made by the famous De Bouchardon, and at one time owned by Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The stone, which bears on one face the following inscription :

LAPIS PRIMARIUS BIBLIOTHECAE LOVANIENSIS NOBILITER  
REFICIENDÆ,<sup>1</sup>

was then well and truly laid by Dr. Butler.

<sup>1</sup> In Belgium it is the custom to commemorate important events by a Latin inscription in the form of a chronogram in which certain numeral letters, made

It was a thrilling moment when the Recteur Magnificus, Monseigneur Ladeuze, in a blaze of summer sunshine, and in the midst of this distinguished gathering, after voicing the thanks of the University to all who had in any way assisted in the restoration, recalled what had passed at that very spot seven years earlier. The destruction of Louvain began in the Place du Peuple, and the address delivered by the Rector of the University, himself an actual witness of the destruction wrought by the Germans, produced indescribable emotion among the spectators. Here, as we have already stated, was the exact spot where the little Belgian army, away back in 1914, thrilled the world by defying the invading hordes of Germany.

At the conclusion of this imposing ceremony the guests proceeded to the Salle des Fêtes in the Collège de la Sainte Trinité, where a banquet had been prepared over which Cardinal Mercier again presided. Nearly 500 guests were present. After the loyal toasts had been honoured there was a flow of eloquence, many well-known scholars taking part in the proceedings by offering congratulations on behalf of the governments or universities which they represented.

This was America's day. It was to America primarily that the gratitude of the University and of the people turned on this occasion. But the representatives of the English Committee, amongst whom were : Sir Alfred Hopkinson, K.C. ; Sir Arthur Shipley, the Master of Christ's College, Cambridge ; Dr. Cowley, the Librarian of the Bodleian, Oxford ; and the writer, the Librarian of the John Rylands Library, who represented the Rylands Governors and the British contributors, recalled with pardonable pride that it was in England that this movement began.

To the writer it was an event of peculiar interest and gratification, for in 1915, when we made our first appeal, we were regarded by some of our pessimistic friends with an air of tolerant pity, for daring to make such an appeal when Belgium was still in the occupation of the Germans, and, as they said, likely to remain so. We were not discouraged, however, for buoyed up with a spirit of incurable to appear specially conspicuous, on being added together express a particular date.

The letters are calculated according to the ancient method : M = 1000, D = 500, C = 100, L = 50, X = 10, U or V = 5, I = 1.

Hence the outstanding letters in the above inscriptions, when added together, give the date 1921.

optimism, we steadily persisted in our endeavours, with the encouraging result that books began to stream in by ones and by twos, and by hundreds, until the substantial total had been reached, to which we have already referred.

The two days succeeding the stone-laying were spent by the writer in Louvain and at Malines, as guest of the University. They were never-to-be-forgotten days, for the Rector, Monsieur L. Stainier, and several of the professors were untiring in their efforts to make our first visit to Louvain interesting. Many new friendships were formed amongst the members of the teaching staff, all of whom conspired with the Rector to make the visit in every sense a memorable one.

On the day preceding our departure, a banquet was given by the Rector, attended by members of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, the object of which was specially to honour the representative of the English Committee, and to express to him and through him to each and every contributor under our scheme, the affectionate regards and thanks of the members of the University for the inestimable service which collectively we had rendered to them—a service which will ever live in their grateful memories.

This occasion gave to us the desired opportunity for formally offering, on behalf of those we represented, to the University through its Rector, heartiest congratulations upon what might be described “the happy issue out of all their afflictions,” and also for expressing the confident hope that the future of the University might be richer and more glorious than even its memorable past.

The gratitude of our friends at Louvain knows no bounds. It is almost pathetic in its fervour. Said one of the professors : “ You cannot fancy what it is to have been deprived of such an indispensable tool as a library, and then to see streaming in the choice and valuable books that make it possible for us to resume our work.”

The new library was at that time temporarily housed in the Institut Spoelberch, and it afforded us great pleasure to see upon the shelves and again to handle some of the 38,000 volumes which had already passed through our hands on their way to their new home, as well as to turn over the catalogue cards which had been prepared at Manchester to form the nucleus of the new library catalogue.

Whatever dimensions the new library ultimately attains, the Rector informed us, the English gift will be kept apart, both on the shelves



and in the catalogue. It is to be an English library in the heart of Louvain, and it was frankly acknowledged that were no other books to be added to it, it would in itself be one of which any city might be proud.

We must not conclude this brief account of the proceedings of a day which will be memorable in the annals of the University of Louvain, and which will live in the memory of all who were privileged to be present, without extending to those of our readers, who so readily and generously lent a hand in this great work of reparation throughout the eleven years that have elapsed since we launched our first appeal, the expression of profound gratitude which fell from the lips of one speaker after another in the course of the day's proceedings.

Those expressions were summed up, reiterated, and emphasized by Monsieur Van den Heuvel, speaking in the name of the University, in a voice which was full of emotion, at the conclusion of the banquet which terminated the day's official proceedings.

Here are a few paragraphs gleaned from his speech :

"L'Université de Louvain a encore un devoir à remplir avant que se clôtüre cette admirable journée. En son nom je viens réitérer l'expression d'une profonde reconnaissance à l'égard de tous ceux qui ont eu la délicate et généreuse pensée de collaborer à la reconstruction de sa bibliothèque.

"Combien audacieux était le projet ! On ne s'occuperait pas de l'Allemagne. Elle avait détruit, elle avait la charge de réparer. Mais la bibliothèque incendiée devait au lendemain de la guerre être plus complète, plus riche, plus belle qu'elle ne l'avait jamais été. Comme on voit sur le frise du Parthénon la théorie des Panathénées apportant chacun leur offrande au Temple, ainsi les diverses nations seraient appelées à venir à Louvain les mains pleines de livres, d'objets d'art, et à exposer les progrès de la science de leurs pays. Mais pour que le plan fut complet, l'une d'elles devait consentir à prendre à sa charge la construction du sanctuaire où serait réunie cette universelle documentation.

"La conception était si grandiose qu'elle apparaissait presque chimérique.

"Et voici qu'elle se réalise sous nos yeux.

"Notre gratitude va aux gouvernements et aux comités des diverses nations ici représentées, et qui par leurs dons commencent déjà à meubler les rayons et à préparer la décoration du grande édifice de demain.

“Que le Ciel veuille nous accorder des années pacifiques ! Et puissions nous dans deux ou trois ans vous donner rendez-vous, non pas à la première pierre, mais au commencement de ce grand monument commémoratif, qui sera la future Bibliothèque. Vous y trouverez, comme dans une ruche vivante, des milliers d'étudiants à la recherche du miel de la science. Sur la tour élancée du bâtiment flotteront les couleurs de la Belgique et des Etats-Unis, encadrées par les drapeaux des diverses nations amies.”

The style of the new building is very appropriately that of the seventeenth-century Flemish Renaissance. No attempt has been made to reproduce the one destroyed, which was of a composite character, the ground-floor being fourteenth-century, whilst the first story was of the time of Louis XIII. Every detail of the new design is Flemish, and it will be constructed in brick and stone of local origin. The length of the façade, when completed, will be 230 feet, with a depth of 150 feet. On the ground floor will be a great open arcade fronted by a row of fine arches.

In the ornamentation of the façade over the principal entrance will stand a figure of the Blessed Virgin, whilst two escutcheons will bear respectively the arms of Belgium and of the United States. Along the base of the slate roof will run a stone balustrade worked in the form of letters, composing the words :

“FURORE TEUTONICO DIRUTA, DONO AMERICANO RESTITUTA.”

It will be an imposing building, recalling the purest traditions of Flemish and Brabantine art.

The book stacks are of steel construction and will provide accommodation for two million volumes in the completed building.

The first section of the building has been completed and occupied, and the books which were temporarily housed at the Institut Spoelberch have now been transferred to their new home.

Belgium, both urban and rural, including Louvain, has made a phenomenal recovery. Five years ago a journey to Louvain would have revealed nothing but a wilderness of shell-holes and rank grass. To-day there is little about the landscape to suggest that it has ever been devastated at all. Indeed, there are very few traces of the war left, with the exception of those deliberately perpetuated as reminders.

As we reflect upon this wonderful recovery, we recall to mind the spirit which sustained our allies throughout the years of captivity and

exile, as it was revealed in that moving editorial, with its confident note of faith in the justice of their cause, and in the ultimate success of their arms, which appeared in the first London issue of the exiled "Indépendance Belge." Here is one of the most striking paragraphs :—

"So shall we return, let us doubt it not, to our liberated country. We shall raise anew our towns, set our factories afresh in motion, repair our railways and our harbours, resume our rank among productive nations, and make a new and industrious Belgium great by her works, and high in the whole world's esteem."

When that manifesto was written, early in 1915, our allies could not foresee what bitter experiences were in store for them, but they could face the future with a courage and determination, coupled with self-sacrifice, which have been not only abundantly justified, but have evoked our admiration and our envy.

We cannot conclude this report without acknowledging our indebtedness to the Cork Steamship Company, Limited, for whom Messrs. J. T. Fletcher & Company of Manchester act as agents, for the great service which they have rendered, in so generously undertaking the entire responsibility of the transportation of the new library to Louvain. Six hundred and eighty-one cases of books have been collected from the John Rylands Library, shipped to Louvain, and delivered at the doors of the temporary home, and later at the new building, absolutely free of cost—a most liberal contribution, for which we are truly grateful. We have also to thank Mr. Jebson, the representative of Messrs. Fletcher & Company, for the great interest he has taken in the matter, and for the advice and help he has so readily given in making the necessary arrangements for shipment. Indeed, it is only bare justice to say that we are indebted to Mr. Jebson for obtaining for us this most valuable concession.

We should also like to thank those contributors whose names are to be found in the second list, for the invaluable service they rendered by their ready response to our appeal for gifts of money with which to meet the many expenses incidental to the organization of such a scheme. For example, amongst the books contributed there were a large number which required binding, rebinding, or repairs at the hand of a binder, in addition to many minor repairs effected by the members of the staff of the John Rylands Library, before they could be regarded as ready to be placed upon the shelves of the new building. Certain

of the contributors generously defrayed the cost of repairs to their own contributions, but there were many institutional and individual donors who were unable to do so. Added to these expenses, which were considerable, there was the cost of providing suitable packing cases, and other contingent expenses which had to be met.

Our grateful thanks are also due to several members of the staff of the John Rylands Library who, from the very inauguration of the scheme, have been simply untiring in their devotion to the work of registration, cataloguing, preparation of volumes for the binder and also for shipment. Special mention should be made of the names of Mr. T. Murgatroyd, and Mr. Ronald Hall, who have rendered invaluable service, in the performance of which they have been assisted by Mr. V. D. Shrewsbury. Two other members of the staff, whose removal by death we lament, Mr. Charles Groom, and Mr. G. W. Brophy, also rendered very valuable service during the earlier years of the organization of the scheme, which we here gratefully record.

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