

Brussels, Aug. 10, 1914. --- The Belgian Government has finally got out a proclamation, urging German subjects to leave the country, but stating that in the event of a general order of expulsion, certain classes of people will be allowed to remain, such as, very old persons, the sick, governesses, nurses, etc., and even others for whom Belgians of undoubted reputation are willing to vouch. There are quantities of Germans who have lived here all their lives, who are really more Belgian than German, have no interest in the present conflict and are threatened with financial ruin if they leave their interests here, and it is pretty hard on them if they are to be obliged to get out, but they are only a few of the many, many thousands who are suffering indirectly from the effects of the war. It is not any easier for the manufacturers in the neighbourhood of Liège, who will see the work of many years wiped out by the present hostilities. Some inspired idiot inserted in the papers yesterday the news that the Legation was attending to the repatriation of German subjects and the consequence is that our hallways have been jammed with Germans all day, making uncouth noises and trying to argue with us as to whether or not we are in charge of German interests. The mere fact that we deny it is not enough for them! I suppose that the hallways will continue to sound like a celebration of Kaisersgeburtstag until we have sent off the last of them.

This morning a large, badly frightened darkey came in looking for a passport. He awaited his turn very quietly, and grew visibly more and more apprehensive at the long series of questions asked of the people ahead of him. When he moved up to the desk, the first question was:

"Where do you want to go?"

"Jes as fur as the stature of Libbuty."

"Are you an American citizen?"

"Me? Lawd bless yuh! No, I ain't nuthin' but a plain ole Baltimoh coon."

Then they gave him the usual blank to fill out. One of the questions on it was:

"Why do you desire to return to the United States?"

Without any hesitation he wrote:

"I am very much interested in my home at the present time."

Everybody here is intensely curious as to what has become of the British army; the most generally accepted story is that troops have been landed at Calais, Dunkirk and Ostend, but although this is generally believed, there seems to be absolutely no official confirmation of it. Everyone seems to take it for granted that the British will turn up in good form when the right time comes, and that when they do turn up, it will have a good effect. If they can get to the scene of hostilities without everybody knowing about it, it increases by just so much their chances of success and anyone that knows anything at all is keeping mum and hoping that no British soldier will stumble over a chair and make a noise and give away the line of march.



Mr. Brand Whitlock. American
Minister to Belgium. Taken
during a Fourth of July
luncheon at the Royal Golf
Club.



Burgomaster Max

Our letters from London indicate intense satisfaction with the appointment of Kitchener and confidence that he will get a maximum of service out of the forces at his command.

We have been looking from one moment to another for news of a big naval engagement, but suppose the British Navy is somewhere waiting for a chance to strike.

Colonel Fairholme, the British Military Attaché, has made a number of trips to the front and reports that the morale of the Belgian troops is excellent, that the organisation is moving like clockwork, and, as he expresses it, that "every man has his tail up."

This evening I went over to the British Legation to see the Colonel, and learn whatever news he had that he could give me. There was a great scurrying of servants and the porter was not to be found in the chancery. The door to Grant-Watson's room was ajar, so I tapped, and, on being bade in a gruff voice to "Come

in," walked into the presence of a British officer in field uniform, writing at Webber's desk. He was dusty and unshaven, and had evidently come in from a long ride. I promptly backed out with apologies and was hustled out of the place by Kidston, who came running out from the Minister's office. I asked him if the rest of the army was hidden about the chancery, and his only reply was to tell me to run along and find the navy, which they themselves had not been able to locate. They evidently have all they need to know about the whereabouts of the army, but have succeeded in keeping it dark.

C. M. came over to the Legation this afternoon to get some books for her mother. We fixed her up and put her in her car, when she announced that on the way over she had been arrested and taken to the police station as a German. People are pointing out spies on the street, and anybody that is blond and rosy-cheeked stands a fine show of being arrested every time he goes out. She had impressed this car with a suspected number and paid for it by being made into a jail bird.

My day's work began with a visit to the German Legation. The Government asked me to secure and return the number for the automobile of von Stumm, the German Counselor. I had his machine put in the Legation the day after he left, although he had offered it to me. I presented myself at the door of the Legation with the note from the Foreign Office, asking for the number, but was refused admittance by the Gardes Civiques. They were very nice, but stated that they had the strictest orders not to let anybody come in or out, and that they had not discretionary powers. At a visit at the Foreign Office later in the day, I told of my experience and asked that I be furnished by the military authorities with a *laisser-passer* which would enable me to enter the Legation whenever I so desire. This afternoon I received a formidable document from the Military Governor which gives me free passage---so

far as I can make out---to enter the Legation in any way save by telephone or telegraph.

I shall go around to-morrow and rub it in on the Gardes Civiques.

The question of passes has been changed and made more strict each day, and has got to be a sort of joke. I first used my card, that was declared insufficient almost from the first. Then I tried my *permis de circulation*, which was issued to allow me to get into the railway stations without paying. That was good for a day or so. Then I tried my passport (as a bearer of despatches), and that got me through once or twice. Then the Minister for Foreign Affairs gave me his personal card with a *laisser-passer* in his own hand, but that was soon turned down on the ground that the military authorities are in control and the civil authorities cannot grant passes. Finally the Government has got out a special form of *laisser-passer* for the diplomats, and it may prove to be good---although it is not signed by the military authorities. I have taken the precaution of keeping all the aforementioned documents and some others on my person, and am curious to see how soon I shall have to have some other. The Garde Civique is no longer content with holding up the car every few blocks and examining the *pièce d'identité* of the chauffeur; they must now be satisfied as to the bona fides of each passenger. Doing some errands around town this afternoon I was held up and looked over eleven times. I now pull out all the documents I own and hand out the bunch each time I am stopped. The Garde then, in most cases, treats the matter rather humorously, and the next time I pass lets me go on without going through the whole performance again. In front of the German Legation, however, which we nearly always pass on our way to or from town, we are invariably held up and looked into seriously. I know most of the people on the different shifts by this time and wish them well each time they look at the well-remembered papers. I shall keep the credentials and any others that may

eventually be added to them, and perhaps some day I shall be able to paper a room with them.

In the course of the morning there were several matters of interest which made it necessary for me to go to the Foreign Office. All their messengers are now gone, and in their place there is a squad of Boy Scouts on duty. I had a long conference with van der Elst, the Director-General of the Ministry. In the course of our pow-wow it was necessary to send out communications to various people and despatch instructions in regard to several small matters. Each time van der Elst would ring, for what he calls a "scoots," and hand him the message with specific instructions as to just how it should be handled. The boys were right on their toes, and take great pride in the responsibility that is given them. Some of them have bicycles and do the messenger work through the town. Those who have not, run errands in the different buildings and attend to small odd jobs.

The Red Cross is very much in evidence. I went around to the headquarters after my call at the Foreign Office, to make a little contribution of my own and to leave others for members of our official family. The headquarters is at the house of Count Jean de Mérode, the Grand Marshal of the Court. The entrance hall was filled with little tables where women sat receiving contributions of money and supplies. I had to wait some time before I could get near enough to one of the dozen or more tables, to hand in my contributions. This is the headquarters, but there are any number of branch offices, and they are said to be equally busy. The society has been quite overcome by the way people have come forward with gifts, and they have been almost unable to get enough people together to handle them as they come in. The big cafés down-town nearly all have signs out, announcing that on a certain day or days they will give their entire receipts to the Red Cross or to one of the several funds gotten up to take care of those suffering directly or indirectly from the

war. Many of the small shops have signs out of the same sort, announcing that the entire receipts for all articles sold on a certain day will be handed to one of the funds. They must have gathered an enormous amount of money, and I don't doubt they will need it. The wounded are being brought in in great numbers and many buildings are quite filled with them. In nearly every street there is a Red Cross flag or two, to indicate a temporary hospital in a private house or a hotel or shop, and people are stationed in the street to make motors turn aside or slow down. There are almost no motors on the street except those on official business or Red Cross work; and, because of the small amount of traffic, these few go like young cyclones, keeping their sirens going all the time. The chauffeurs love it and swell around as much as they are allowed to do. I pray with ours now and then. but even when I go out to the barber, he seems to believe that he is on his way to a fire and cuts loose for all he is worth.

Quantities of German prisoners continue to be brought here for safe keeping, and many of them are taken on down to Bruges. Among those removed there for unusually safe keeping yesterday was a nephew of the Emperor.

Judging from the stories printed in the *London Times* which arrived to-night, the German Government aroused great enthusiasm by playing up the capture of Liège. The Germans evidently were led to believe they had gained a great victory; whereas the forts, which are the only object of the campaign, are still intact. The city itself is undefended, and there is no great military reason why the Belgians should not allow it to be taken. The German troops that had invested the town have not taken over the administration. but appear to be confining themselves to requisitioning provisions and supplies, of which they are in need. The Berlin papers made a great hurrah about the capture of the citadel, which is a purely ornamental old fort without military importance. From what they tell me, I judge that you could back an

American army mule up against it and have him kick it down without the expense of bombarding it. It sounds well in the despatches, however.

Eight French aeroplanes sailed over the city this afternoon, probably coming from Namur. One of the machines landed on the aviation field at the edge of the city, and the aviator was nearly torn to shreds by admirers who wanted to shake him by the hand and convince him that he was really welcome to Brussels. It is said that some of these fellows are going to lie in wait for the Zeppelins which have been sailing over Brussels by night to terrify the population. We hear that one of the Belgian army aviators did attack a Zeppelin and put it out of business, bringing to earth and killing all the crew. He himself went to certain death in the attempt.

The afternoon papers say that in Paris the name of the Rue de Berlin has been changed to Rue de Liège. Here the Rue d'Allemagne has been changed to Rue de Liège and the Rue de Prusse to Rue du General Lemane, the defender of Liège. The time abounds in *beaux gestes* and they certainly have their effect on the situation.

Kitchener says that the war may last for some time. At first it seemed to be taken for granted that it could not last long, as the financial strain would be too great and the damage done so enormous that one side or the other would have to yield to avoid national bankruptcy.

In GIBSON, Hugh (Secretary of the American Legation in Brussels, 1914) ; *A journal from our Legation in Belgium* ; New York ; Doubleday, Page & Company Garden City; 1917 :

<http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/memoir/Legation/GibsonTC.htm>

Footnotes.

It would be also interesting compare with what **Paul MAX** (cousin of the *bourgmestre Adolphe MAX*) told about the same day in his *Journal de guerre* (*Notes d'un Bruxellois pendant l'Occupation 1914-1918*) :

http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20Oguerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf