

August 15th 1914. --- Last night I dined with the Colonel, Grant-Watson, and Kidston at the Palace. I was looking forward to a lot of interesting talk, as the Colonel had just come from the front. Just as we were settling down to our conversational Marathon, up walked -----, the ----- Chargé and bade himself to dine with us. He is strongly pro-German in his sympathies, and, of course, that put a complete damper on conversation. We talked about everything on earth save the one thing we were interested in, and sat tight in the hope that he would move on. Not only did he stay, but after a time the ---- First Secretary came and joined us, and we gave up in despair. The only result of the evening was that I gathered the impression that there is a good deal of apprehension on the part of the allies as to the result of the next big battle, which may occur any day now. The Germans are undoubtedly pretty near now, perhaps a good deal nearer than we know. Just before dinner the War Office announced that there would be no further official communiqués as to the operations. That looks as though they were battenning down the hatches for the next big engagement.

Yesterday's papers announced France's declaration of war against Austria. This morning comes the news that Montenegro has also declared her intention of wiping Austria off the map. Our daily query now is "Who has declared war to-day?"

Every minute we are not hammering away at our work, we sit around and talk of the latest developments. These things make such an impression that I can quite understand old veterans boring everybody to death with reminiscences. I see some forty years from now that people will be saying: "I don't want to let old man Gibson get hold of me and tell me all about the war of 1914"

This morning I received a telegram from Richard Harding Davis, who wants to join the Belgian forces. We are trying to arrange it this morning, and I expect to see him any day now.

We are going to have a lot of newspaper men in our midst. I met two more of them last night. None of them who have so far appeared speak any language but English, but they are all quite confident that they can get all the news. I look next for Palmer and Jimmy Hare and the rest of the crowd.

Maxwell, the *Telegraph* correspondent, yesterday showed me a photograph of a French bulldog that has been doing good service at Liège. His master, who is an officer in one of the forts, fastens messages in his collar and shoves him out onto the glacis. The puppy makes a blue streak for home and, as he is always sent at night, has managed so far to avoid the Germans. His mistress brings him back to the edge of town and starts him back for the fort.

The Belgian troops have so far had to dam the flood of Germans with little or no help from the allies. The Kaiser expected, so far as we can make out, to sweep through Belgium with little opposition and be fighting in France in three days! The Belgians have knocked his schedule out by twelve days already, and there is no telling how much longer they may hold out. "My military advisers" tell me that in view of the great necessity for a quick campaign in France, so as to get the army back in time to head off the Russian flood when it begins to pour over the northern frontier, the loss of this much time is equivalent to the loss of the first great battle. The moral effect is also tremendous.

The Minister to-day had a card from Omer which began: "*J'ai l'honneur de faire savoir à Votre Excellence que je suis encore toujours vivant!*" *Encore*

toujours sounds as though he were pretty emphatically alive. We were all relieved to hear from him.

Villalobar, the Spanish Minister, came in after dinner---just to visit. His household is greatly upset. His cook and three footmen have gone to the war. He apologised for not inviting us to dine during these depressing days, but said he could not, as his cook was a Lucretia di Borgia. He is confident that the war is going to knock Brussels life into a cocked hat this winter. So many of the families will be in mourning, and so much poverty will come as a result of the war. Life goes on so normally now, save for the little annoyances of living under martial law, that it is hard to realise that such great changes are imminent.

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 interesting compare with what **Roberto J. Payró** told about the same day in his *Diario de un testigo* (*La guerra vista desde Bruselas*) :
Original Spanish version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140814%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20TOMA%20FUERTE%20LONCIN%20FORTALEZAS%20BELGAS%2013.zip>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140814%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20FR%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140815%20PAYRO%20PRISE%20DU%20FORT%20DE%20LONCIN%20FORTERESSES%20BELGES.pdf>

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%20guerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf