

Brussels, August 27, 1914.---The day after my last entry I started on a trip to Antwerp, got through the lines and managed to wriggle back into Brussels last night after reestablishing telegraph communication with the Department and having a number of other things happen to and around about me.

All I can remember now of the 23d is that it was a Sunday, and that we could hear cannonading all day long from the east. It was hard to tell just where it came from, but it was probably from the direction of Wavre and Namur. It was drizzly all day. The German troops continued to pour through the city. From time to time, during the last few days, their march has been interrupted for a couple of hours at a time, apparently as a result of a determined attempt on the part of the French and English to stop the steady flow of troops toward the French frontier. Each time we could hear the booming of the cannon, the deep voices of the German guns and the sharp, dry bark of the French. At night we have seen the searchlights looking for the enemy or flashing signals. Despite the nearness of all this fighting and the sight of the wounded being brought in, the streets barred off to keep the noisy traffic away from the hospitals, and all the other signs of war, it has still been hard to realize that it was so near us.

Our little German General, von Jarotzky, has kept clicking his heels together and promising us anything we chose to ask. We have run around day after day with our telegrams, and not one has got farther than the Hôtel de Ville. Being naturally somewhat touchy, we got tired of this after a few days, and decided that the only way to get any news to Washington was for me to go to Antwerp and get into direct communication over the cable from there. We got our telegrams ready and made a last try on the General Monday morning. He was still effusively agreeable and assured us that he had determined to place a military field wire at our disposal so that we could communicate with Washington via Berlin. Our previous experiences

had made us suspicious, so it was decided that while depositing our messages here, I would make a try at getting through the lines and send whatever I thought best from Antwerp or any other place I could reach. We told the General frankly what we intended to do, and he was all smiles and anxiety to please. At our request he had an imposing passport made out for me, signed with his hand and authorized with his seal. The Burgomaster wrote out an equally good letter for us when we reached the Belgian lines. Providence was to take care of us while we were between the lines, and, just to make it unanimous, He did.

We wanted to get away during the morning, but one thing after another came up and I was kept on the jump. We had to stop and worry about our newspaper correspondents, who have wandered off again. Morgan came sauntering in during the morning and announced that he and Davis had set out on foot to see whether there was any fighting near Hal; they had fallen in with some German forces advancing toward Mons. After satisfying themselves that there was nothing going on at Hal or Enghien, Morgan decided that he had had enough walking for one day, and was for coming home. Davis felt that they were too near the front to give up, and with a Sherlock Holmes sagacity announced that if they stuck to these German troops, they would succeed in locating the French and British armies.. Morgan thought this so probable that he was all for coming back, and left Davis tramping along behind an ammunition wagon in search of adventure. He found it.

After getting out of their trouble at Louvain, McCutcheon, Cobb and Lewis set forth on another adventure. There are, of course, no motor cars or carriages to be had for love or money, so they invested in a couple of aged bicycles and a donkey cart. Cobb, who weighs far above standard, perched gracefully on top of the donkey cart, and the other two pedalled alongside on their wheels. They must have been a funny outfit, and at last accounts were getting along in good style. The air is filled

with nervousness, however, and there is a constantly increasing list of people who are being thrown into jail, or shot as spies, and there is little time for careful and painstaking trials for wanderers who are picked up inside the lines of the fighting armies and are unable to render a convincing account of themselves. I shall be rather uncomfortable about them until they reappear.

While we were waiting for the final formalities for our trip to be accomplished, I invested in a wristwatch and goggles. We also bought a fuzzy animal like a Teddy bear, about three inches high, and tied him on the radiator as a mascot. He made a hit with all hands and got a valuable grin from several forbidding-looking Germans. We had signs on the car fore and aft, marking it as the car of the American Legation, the signs being in both French and German. As we were the first to try to make the trip, we thought it up to us to neglect nothing that would help to get us through without any unpleasant shooting or bayoneting.



Letter signed by Burgomaster Max requesting the Belgian authorities to allow Mr. Gibson to pass through the lines on his way to Antwerp. This was one of the last documents signed by the Burgomaster before he was sent to Germany as a prisoner of war.

After formally filing all our telegrams with the German General, Blount and I got under way at half-past two. We pulled out through the northern end of the city,

toward Vilvorde. There were German troops and supply trains all along the road, but we were not stopped until we got about half way to Vilvorde. Then we heard a loud roar from a field of cabbages we were passing and, looking around, discovered what looked like a review of the Knights of Pythias. A magnificent-looking man on horseback, wearing several orders, surrounded by a staff of some ten or twelve others, was riding toward us through the cabbages, waving angrily at us to stop. The whole crowd surrounded the car and demanded hotly how we dared venture out of town by this road. While they were industriously blowing us up, the Supreme Potentate observed the sign on the front of the car, GESANDTSCHAFT DER VEREINIGTEN STATEN, whereupon he came straightway to salute and kept it up. The others all saluted most earnestly and we had to unlimber and take off our hats and bow as gracefully as we could, all hunched up inside a little racing car. Then I handed out our pass, which the chief of staff read aloud to the assembled notables. They were all most amiable, warned us to proceed with great caution, driving slowly, stopping every hundred yards, and to tear back toward town if popping began in our immediate neighbourhood. They were so insistent on our not getting in the way of bullets that I had to assure them, in my best rusty German, that we were getting into this ragged edge of their old war simply because it was necessary for business reasons and not because of any ardent desire to have holes shot through us. They all laughed and let us go our way with a final caution. From that time on we were in the midst of German patrols. We religiously observed the officers' advice to drive slowly and keep a lookout. Five minutes later we began to meet peasants running away from their homes in the direction of Brussels. They reported fighting near Malines, and said that we were running straight into it. They were a badly frightened lot. We decided that the only thing to do was to go ahead, feeling our way carefully, and come back or wait if things got too hot for us. We were stopped several times by troops crossing the road to get into trenches that were

already prepared, and once had to wait while a big gun was put in place. It was a ticklish business to come around a turn in the road and light on a hundred men sneaking along behind a hedge with their rifles ready for instant action. Just beyond Epeghem we met a troop of cavalry convoying a high cart filled with peasants, who had evidently been taken prisoners. The officer in charge was a nervous chap, who came riding at us, brandishing his revolver, which he had tied to the pommel of his saddle with a long cord. He was most indignant that we had been allowed to come this far and reluctantly admitted that our pass was good. All the time he talked with us, and told us of the skirmishing ahead, he kept waving that large blunderbuss in our faces. I tried a little humour on him by saying, as nearly as the unwieldy structure of the German tongue would permit: "Please point that thing the other way; you can never tell when it may go off and hurt somebody." He was quite solemn about it, however, and assured us that he had perfect control over it, emphasising his remarks by shaking it under our noses. I was glad to get out of his range, for I verily believe that if somebody had shouted boo! he would have let that gun off with a bang.

The German officers we talked with from time to time said that the Belgians were advancing, and that several skirmishes had taken place; that a big engagement was expected during the night or in the morning. We passed the last of the German outposts about two miles this side of Malines, but for fear we might tell on them, they would not tell us whether we had any more of their kind ahead of us. We shot along through the open country, between the last Germans and the edge of Malines, at a fairly good rate, and kept a lookout for the English flag, which we had been given to understand was flying from the tower of the Cathedral. That is what we had been given to understand in Brussels, but along the road they were very noncommittal about the whereabouts of the British troops. When we finally did get a clear view of the Cathedral spires, we saw the Belgian flag standing straight out in

the good breeze that was blowing, and while that showed that the English troops had not taken over the place, it at least convinced us that the Germans were behind us. As we drove through the little suburb on this side of the canal which runs through the edge of the town, we found that all the houses were battened up tight. One lone man, who came out from a little café, told us that the Germans had been through about fifteen minutes before, and had shot up the town, until they were driven off by a small force of Belgian cavalry which had appeared from nowhere and had as quickly gone back to the same place. Not knowing what forces were ready to start in again on short notice, all the inhabitants who were fortunate enough to have cellars were hiding in them, and the rest were trying to get into town as best they could, leaving their belongings.

When we reached the canal, we found that the drawbridge had been taken up, and that there was no way to get across. There were a few gendarmes on the other side, and a few carts on our side of the canal. All were anxious to get across, but the Burgomaster had ordered traffic suspended until things had quieted down. We prevailed upon a genial gendarme to run back and get orders to govern our special case. After waving our credentials and showing how much influence we had with the local administration, we were quite popular with the panic-stricken peasants who wanted to get into town. Orders came very soon, and we made straight for the Hôtel de Ville to thank the Burgomaster for letting us in, and also to pick up any news he had as to conditions. We did not get any great amount, however, as he could not get over the fact that we had come straight through from Brussels without having been shot by the German or the Belgian patrols, who were out with orders to pick up strays like us. We tried several times to get information out of him, but he could do nothing but marvel at our luck, and above all at our *prouesse*, which left him quite bowled over. We gave him up and went our way. He has had other things to marvel about since.

Not far out of Malines, we ran into the first Belgian outpost. When we were about fifty yards from them, they surged across the road and began brandishing rifles, swords, lances---a veritable armory of deadly weapons.. Blount put on the emergency brakes, and we were bracing for quick and voluble explanations when we saw that they were all grinning broadly and that each one was struggling to get our particular attention. We had our *laisser-passers* in our hands, and waved them in the air. No one would pay the slightest heed to them. From the hubbub that was seething about our ears, we learned that ten minutes or so before they had finished a little brush with the Germans, and that the articles they had been waving in our faces were the trophies of the combat. Each fellow was anxious to show us what he had taken, and to tell just how he had done it. They seemed to take it for granted that we were friends and would enjoy the sight, and share their delight. One of the boys---a chap about. eighteen---held aloft a huge pair of cavalry boots which he had pulled off a German he had killed. It was a curious mixture of childish pride and the savage rejoicing of a Fiji Islander with a head he has taken. We admired their loot until they were satisfied, and then prevailed upon them to look at our papers, which they did in a perfunctory way. Then, after shaking hands all round, they sent us on with a cheer. We were hero-curiosities as the first civilians who had got through from the German lines since the occupation of Brussels. And perhaps we were not glad to be safely inside the Belgian lines! It was nervous work that far, but once inside we found everybody friendly and got through without any trouble, although we were stopped every kilometer or so. Soon after we passed the first outposts, we began passing Belgian troops advancing toward Malines in large force. They seemed in good spirits and ready for anything. Our position here has gone steadily up since the beginning of the hostilities, and everywhere we went, the flag was cheered and we got a warm welcome.

This forward movement of the troops was a part of a concerted operation by which the Belgians were to attempt to push through to Brussels while the main German army was engaged in attacking Mons and Charleroi.

About twelve kilometers out of Antwerp, we were stopped at a little house and asked if we would take a wounded man into town to the hospital. He had been shot through the hand and was suffering from shock and loss of blood, but was able to chew on a huge chunk of bread all the way into town. He had no interest in anything else, and, after trying one or two questions on him, I let him alone and watched the troops we were passing---an unbroken line all the way in. The main Belgian army and a lot of the Garde Civique were inside the ring of forts and were all being put on the road with full contingents of supply wagons, ambulances, and even the dog artillery. These little chaps came tugging along the road and turned their heads to bark at us with enthusiasm.

For a mile or so outside the *enceinte*, which has been thrown up around the town, the roads are heavily mined, and small red flags planted between the cobbles to warn passers-by to tread gently and gingerly. We did not require the urging of the sentries to make us proceed with caution over these places, which were so delicately mined that heavy carts were not allowed to pass. I breathed more easily when we were once out of this.

We found the military hospital and handed over our wounded soldier to the attendants, who bundled him inside and then-rushed back to hear what we could tell them. They had not heard a word from the outside world---or rather from our part of the outside world---since the withdrawal of the Belgian army to Antwerp, and they greeted us as they would greet fellow-beings returning from a journey to Mars. They had a few newspapers which were being published in Antwerp, and handed

them over to us, we being as anxious as they for the news that we had not been able to get.

From the hospital we drove to the Hôtel St. Antoine and asked for rooms. The proprietor was very suspicious of us, and we had a tremendous time convincing him that there was nothing the matter with us. He *knew* that we could not have come from Brussels, as nobody had been able to make the trip. Our papers were *en règle*, but that made no difference. German spies and other suspicious characters had managed to get forged papers before that. Fortunately, all the other diplomats were living in the hotel, and I asked that he hunt up some of them and verify what we had to say for ourselves. Webber, of the British Legation, was brought out and acted as though he had seen a ghost. He calmed down enough to assure the proprietor that we were respectable citizens, and that he could safely give us rooms. All the other people were away from the hotel for the moment, so we deposited our things in our room, and made for the Consulate-General. It was then half-past six, and the Consul-General had gone for the day. A well-trained porter refused to tell where either he or the Vice-Consul-General lived, but we managed to find out and got to the Vice-Consul-General's house after a hunt with a *chasseur* of the hotel on the box.

He was not at home, but his wife was there. We talked with her for a few minutes, and then went back to the hotel to await Sherman's (Vice-Consul-General) coming. He called in the course of a few minutes, and we made arrangements to go to the Consulate after dinner and get off our telegrams.

By the time we could get washed up and ready for dinner, the crowd had come back, and when we set foot on the stairway, we were literally overwhelmed by our loving friends. First, I met Sir Francis Villiers and accepted his invitation to dine.

He and Prince Koudacheff, the Russian Minister, a lot of other colleagues, and goodness only knows who else, fell upon us with demands for news. I took refuge in Sir Francis's office, and saw as many people as I could until dinner time. Baron van der Elst, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, and M. Carton de Wiart, the Minister of Justice, forgetting all about the requirements of the protocol that I should make the first call upon them, came flying around to see if I had any news of their families. Luckily I had, and was able to tell them that all was well. I did not know that I had so much first-hand knowledge of the people in Brussels, but was able to give good news to any number of people. It became a regular joyfest, and was more fun for me than for anybody else. By eight o'clock we got out to dinner, but hardly got two consecutive bites without interruptions. In the midst of soup, General Yungbluth, Chief of Staff to the King, came around in full regimentals and wanted to get all sorts of news for the Queen. Before we got much farther, others began to arrive and drew up chairs to the table, filling up all that part of the room. As we were finishing dinner, several Ministers of State came in to say that the Prime Minister wanted me to come to meet him and the Cabinet Council which was being held---just to assure them that all was well with their families and to tell them, in the bargain, anything that I felt I properly could. However, I had my real work ahead of me---getting off my telegrams to Washington. I tore myself away from the crowd and, joining Sherman, who was waiting for me in the hall, I made for the Consulate-General. The Consul-General was already there, anxious to hear the news. I had to get before the Department all the news I could, and as comprehensive a statement as possible of everything that had happened since communications had been cut. I pounded away until after eleven, and got off a fat bundle of cables, which Sherman took to the office for me. I then made for the Grand Hôtel, where the Cabinet Council was waiting for me.

I have never been through a more moving time than the hour and a half I spent with them. It was hard to keep from bursting out and telling them everything that I knew would interest them. I had bound myself with no promises before I left about telling of the situation, but none the less I felt bound not to do it. I was able to tell them a great deal that was of comfort to them, and that could give no ground for objection if the Germans were to know of it, and, on these subjects, I gave them all they wanted. After telling them all I could about their families and friends, I let them ask questions and did my best to answer those that I could. The first thing they wanted to know was how the Germans had behaved in the town. The answer I gave them was satisfactory. Then they wanted to know whether the Royal Palace had been respected, or whether the German flag was flying over it; also whether the Belgian flag still flew on the Hôtel de Ville. Their pride in their old town was touching, and when they heard that no harm had as yet been done it, you would have thought that they were hearing good news of friends they had lost. Then they started in and told me all the news they had from outside sources-bits of information which had reached them indirectly via Holland, and the reports of their military authorities. We have never had such complete information given us---enough to justify the trip even if I had not restored communication with the Department.

We stayed on and talked until nearly half-past twelve, when I got up and insisted on leaving; perhaps it is just as well. They did not want to break up the party, but when I insisted, they also made up their minds to call it a day's work and quit.

We brought van der Elst back to the hotel, and with his influence ran our car into the Gendarmerie next door. Then to bed.

Blount and I had a huge room on the third floor front. We had just got into bed and were settling down to a good night's rest when there was an explosion, the like of

which I have never heard before, and we sat up and paid strict attention. We were greatly interested, but took it calmly, knowing that the forts were nearly four miles out of town and that they could bang away as long as they liked without doing more than spoil our night's sleep. There were eight of these explosions at short intervals, and then as they stopped there was a sharp purr like the distant rattle of a machine gun. As that died down, the chimes of the Cathedral---the sweetest carillon I have ever heard---sounded one o'clock. We thought that the Germans must have tried an advance under cover of a bombardment, and retired as soon as they saw that the forts were vigilant and not to be taken by surprise. We did not even get out of bed. About five minutes later we heard footsteps on the roof and the voice of a woman in a window across the street, asking some one on the sidewalk below whether it was safe to go back to bed. I got out and took a look into the street. There were a lot of people there talking and gesticulating, but nothing of enough interest to keep two tired men from their night's sleep, so we climbed back into bed and stayed until morning.

Blount called me at what seemed an unreasonably early hour and said we should be up and about our day's work. When we were both dressed. we found that we had made a bad guess, when he looked at his watch and discovered that it was only a quarter to seven. Being up, however, we decided to go down and get our breakfast.

When we got down we found everybody else stirring, and it took us several minutes to get it through our heads that we had been through more excitement than we wotted of. Those distant explosions that we had taken so calmly were bombs dropped from a Zeppelin which had sailed over the city and dropped death and destruction in its path. The first bomb fell less than two hundred yards from where we slept---no wonder that we were rocked in our beds! After a little breakfast we sallied forth.

The first bomb was in a little street around the corner from the hotel, and had fallen into a narrow four-story house, which had been blown into bits. When the bomb burst, it not only tore a fine hole in the immediate vicinity, but hurled its pieces several hundred yards. All the windows for at least two hundred or three hundred feet were smashed into little bits. The fronts of all the surrounding houses were pierced with hundreds of holes, large and small. The street itself was filled with debris and was impassable. From this place we went to the other points where bombs had fallen. As we afterward learned, ten people were killed outright; a number have since died of their injuries and a lot more are injured, and some of these may die. A number of houses were completely wrecked and a great many will have to be torn down. Army officers were amazed at the terrific force of the explosions. The last bomb dropped as the Zeppelin passed over our heads fell in the centre of a large square---la Place du Poids Publique. It tore a hole in the cobblestone pavement, some twenty feet square and four or five feet deep. Every window in the square was smashed to bits. The fronts of the houses were riddled with holes, and everybody had been obliged to move out, as many of the houses were expected to fall at any time. The Dutch Minister's house was near one of the smaller bombs and was damaged slightly. Every window was smashed. All the crockery and china are gone; mirrors in tiny fragments; and the Minister somewhat startled. Not far away was Faura, the First Secretary of the Spanish Legation. His wife had been worried sick for fear of bombardment, and he had succeeded only the day before in prevailing upon her to go to England with their large family of children. Another bomb fell not far from the houses of the Consul-General and the Vice-Consul-General, and they were not at all pleased. The windows on one side of our hotel were also smashed.



Boy Scouts at Belgian headquarters, Lierre



Reading from left to right:
a Belgian Staff Officer,
Colonel Fairholme,
Colonel DuCarie and
Captain Ferguson.
(Malines Cathedral in the
background)



List of the
civilians killed
by the Germans
at Tamines on
August 20, 1914

We learned that the Zeppelin had sailed over the town not more than five hundred feet above us; the motor was stopped some little distance away and she slid along in perfect silence and with her lights out. It would be a comfort to say just what one thinks about the whole business. The purr of machine guns that we heard after the explosion of the last bomb was the starting of the motor, which carried our visitor out of range of the guns which were trundled out to attack her. Preparations were being made to receive such a visit, but they had not been completed; had she come a day or two later, she would have met a warm reception. The line of march was straight across the town, on a line from the General Staff, the Palace where the Queen was staying with the royal children, the military hospital of Ste. Elisabeth, filled with wounded, the Bourse, and some other buildings. It looks very much as though the idea had been to drop one of the bombs on the Palace. The Palace itself was missed by a narrow margin, but large pieces of the bomb were picked up on the roof and shown me later in the day by Inglebleek, the King's Secretary. The room at

the General Staff, where I had been until half an hour before the explosion, was a pretty ruin, and it was just as well for us that we left when we did. It was a fine, big room, with a glass dome skylight over the big round table where we were sitting. This came in with a crash and was in powder all over the place. Next time I sit under a glass skylight in Antwerp, I shall have a guard outside with an eye out for Zeppelins.

If the idea of this charming performance was to inspire terror, it was a complete failure. The people of the town, far from yielding to fear, are devoting all their energies to anger. They are furious at the idea of killing their King and Queen. There is no telling when the performance will be repeated, but there is a chance that next time the balloon man will get a warmer reception.

In the morning I went around and called at the Foreign Office, which is established in a handsome building that belonged to one of the municipal administrations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs took me into his office and summoned all hands to hear any news I could give them of their families and friends. I also took notes of names and addresses of people in Brussels who were to be told that their own people in Antwerp were safe and well. I had been doing that steadily from the minute we set foot in the hotel the night before, and when I got back here, I had my pockets bulging with innocent messages. Now comes the merry task of getting them around.

At the hotel we were besieged with invitations to lunch and dine with all our friends. They were not only glad to see somebody from the outside world, but could not get over the sporting side of our trip, and patted us on the back until they made us uncomfortable. Everybody in Antwerp looked upon the trip as a great exploit, and exuded admiration. I fully expected to get a Carnegie medal before I got away. And it sounded so funny coming from a lot of Belgian officers who had for the last

few weeks been going through the most harrowing experiences, with their lives in danger every minute, and even now with a perfectly good chance of being killed before the war is over. They seem to take that as a matter of course, but look upon our performance as in some way different and superior. People are funny things.

I stopped at the Palace to sign the King's book, and ran into General Jungbluth, who was just starting off with the Queen. She came down the stairs and stopped just long enough to greet me, and then went her way; she is a brave little woman and deserves a better fate than she has had. Inglebleek, the King's Secretary, heard that I was there signing the book, and came out to see me. He said that the Queen was anxious I should see what had been done by the bombs of the night before. He wanted me to go right into the houses and see the horrid details. I did not want to do this, but there was no getting out of it under the circumstances.

We drove first to the Place du Poids Publique and went into one of the houses which had been partially wrecked by one of the smaller bombs. Everything in the place had been left as it was until the police magistrate could make his examination and report. We climbed to the first floor, and I shall never forget the horrible sight that awaited us. A poor policeman and his wife had been blown to fragments, and the pieces were all over the walls and ceiling. Blood was everywhere. Other details are too terrible even to think of. I could not stand any more than this one room. There were others which Inglebleek wanted to show me, but I could not think of it. And this was only one of a number of houses where peaceful men and women had been so brutally killed while they slept.

And where is the military advantage of this? If the bombs were dropped near the fortifications, it would be easy to understand, but in this instance it is hard to explain upon any ground, except the hope of terrifying the population to the point

where they will demand that the Government surrender the town and the fortifications. Judging from the temper they were in yesterday at Antwerp, they are more likely to demand that the place be held at all costs rather than risk falling under the rule of a conqueror brutal enough to murder innocent people in their beds.

The Prime Minister told me that he had four sons in the army---all the children he has---and that he was prepared to give every one of them, and his own life and fortune, into the bargain, but that he was not prepared---and here he banged his fist down on the table and his eyes flashed---to admit for a minute the possibility of yielding to Germany. Everybody else is in the same state of mind. It is not hysterical. The war has been going on long enough, and they have had so many hard blows that the glamour and the fictitious attractiveness of the thing has gone, and they have settled down in deadly earnest to fight to the bitter end. There may not be one stone left upon another in Belgium when the Germans get through, but if these people keep up to their present level they will come through---what there is left of them---free.

Later in the afternoon I went to the Foreign Office and let them read to me the records of the commission which is investigating the alleged German atrocities. They are working in a calm and sane way and seem to be making the most earnest attempt to get at the true facts, no matter whether they prove or disprove the charges that have been made. It is wonderful to see the judicial way they can sit down in the midst of war and carnage and try to make a fair inquiry on a matter of this sort. If one one-thousandth part of the charges are proven to be true. . . .

The rest of the afternoon was spent seeing people who came in for news of Brussels, and who had messages to send home. I had had to tell the hotel people that I would be there from four to seven to see people, and that the rest of the time I

must have free for my own work. They came in swarms; all the diplomats, the Cabinet Ministers, and the Ministers of State, army officers, and other officials---a perfect mob. I had a package of cards on which I noted names and addresses and the messages which were to be delivered. These messages have been sent out today, after being submitted to the military authorities, some of them in writing and some by word of mouth, and if they have afforded one-tenth the comfort that I hope, the sum total of misery in this town has been reduced a good deal this day.

Colonel Fairholme left for the front, with the King, early in the morning, and was with him during the battle at Malines. He thought we were going back during the day, as I had told him the evening before. About noon he called up from the telephone and told Sir Francis that under no circumstances was I to be allowed to start, as the town was being bombarded with heavy siege pieces and all traffic was absolutely stopped; that we could not only not get by, but that any part of the trip by the regular road was extremely dangerous. I was just as glad that we had decided to stay over. The Colonel stayed out all that night and had not returned to Antwerp when we left yesterday. During the morning he called up again and asked about us, again advising against our starting. Pretty decent of a man who has as much to think of as he had to be worrying about us enough to take time to telephone us as to the dangers of the road.

During the evening bad news came in from France, and everybody was down in the mouth. The French Minister came in and told me what he had received. Everybody was plainly worried, and altogether things looked pretty dismal. We sat around a little while and then decided for a good night's sleep.

To make sure of offering no unnecessary chances for Mr. Zeppelin the authorities had ordered all the lights on the streets put out at eight o'clock. It was dark as

midnight and there was no use in thinking of venturing out into the town. The Cathedral clock was stopped and the carillon turned off for the first time in heaven only knows how many years. It was a city of the dead. Guns were posted in the streets ready for instant use in case the airship should put in another appearance. As a result of this and the searchlights that played upon the sky all night, our friend the enemy did not appear. Some people know when they have had enough.

Yesterday morning I looked out of my window at the Cathedral clock, and saw that it was twenty-five minutes to ten. I tumbled through my tub, and rushed downstairs to get through my morning's work, only to find that it was half-past six. I had forgotten that the Cathedral clock had been stopped.

It was just as well that I was up early, however, for there was plenty to be done. I found a lot of telegrams waiting for me at the Consulate, and had to get off another string of them. Then an orderly held me up on the street to tell me that the King's Secretary was hunting for me all over the place, and that I was wanted at the Palace. When I got there, he had started off on another hunt for me. He finally got me at the hotel, and kept me for half an hour.

By the time that I got through with him, there was word that the Minister of Foreign Affairs wanted to see me, so I made a bee-line over there. Then there was another call to the Consulate to answer some more telegrams. After attending to various matters at the Palace, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Consulate General, and seeing a few more people at the hotel, the morning was gone and it was time for lunch and a quick get-away.

All hands came out and bade us farewell. You would have thought we were on our way to Heaven, except for the fact that they urged us to come back.

As we could hear the cannonading, we decided that we would avoid the Malines road and would try to skirt around the zone of trouble and work our way into Brussels from the west. We got ferried across the Scheldt on a terrible tub of a steamer that looked as though she would go down under the weight of the military automobiles that she had to get across in order to take ammunition to the front. We all got away in a bunch from the other side, but we drew ahead of them as we had not such a heavy load; and within three-quarters of an hour we were outside the Belgian lines. Van der Elst had secured for us a most imposing *laisser-passer*, which took us through with practically no trouble except that it was so impressive that we were held at each barricade while all the men on duty took turns reading it. The only ticklish part of the trip to the Belgian outposts was working our way through the villages which had been mined in anticipation of a German invasion. It is bad enough working one's way through there in a motor with everybody helping you to keep out of harm's way, but it must be a trifle worse to do it in a mass with a man on a hill a little way off waiting for you to come up to the signal post so that he can touch a button and send you in small pieces into the next world.

We struck out through St. Nicholas, Hamme, Termonde and Assche, and got into Brussels from the west without mishap. We have got quite used to having people poke bayonets in our faces and brandish revolvers at us, so the latter part of the trip with only that to contend with seemed quiet and almost boring.

On the road in from Assche, we passed near Epeghem and Vilvorde, where the fighting had been going on for a couple of days. After news had been received in Antwerp of the defeat of the French and English at Mons and Charleroi, the Belgians were ordered to fall back on Antwerp and had left these little villages to be occupied by the Germans. As they occupied them, they had set them afire and the

flames were raging as we came by. They were quaint little towns, and had excited our admiration two days before when we had gone through---despite the fact that we had other things on our minds beside admiring the beauties of architecture. Now they are gone.

The Germans gave us no trouble, and we got back to the Legation by a little before five. Everyone poured out to meet us, and greeted us as prodigal sons. When we had not come back the day before, they had about made up their minds that something dreadful had happened to us, and the rejoicing over our return was consequently much greater than if we had not whetted their imaginations just a little.

I found that the situation in Brussels had undergone big changes while I was away. General von Jarotzky had been replaced by General von Lüttwitz, who is an administrator, and has been sent to put things in running order again. There was no inkling of this change when I left, and I was a good deal surprised. Guns have been placed at various strategic points commanding the town, and the Germans are ready for anything. The telephone wire they had put through the town to connect the two stations and headquarters was cut day before yesterday by some cheerful idiot who probably thought he was doing something good for his country. The military authorities thereupon announced that if anything of the sort was done again they would lay waste the quarter of the town where the act was committed.

Some of the subordinate officers have since told us that von Jarotzky was a fighting general, and had no business staying in a post requiring administrative ability. The new man is cut out particularly for this sort of work, and is going to start a regular German administration. Functionaries are being brought from Berlin to take things over, and in a short time we shall, to all intents and purposes, be living in a German

city. The first trains ran to-day in a halting fashion to Liège and the German frontier. Perhaps we shall have a newspaper.

Most distressing news has come through from Tamines. I had a long talk to-day with a trustworthy man from there, and his story was enough to make one's blood run cold. He says that on the evening of the twenty-first the Germans entered the village after a brush with French troops which were still in the neighbourhood. Infuriated by the resistance offered to their advance, they proceeded to vent their rage on the town. They shot down a lot of villagers, and arrested many more. A great many escaped to the country. A lot of houses were first sacked, and then burned. The orgy continued during the night, and through the next day. On the evening of the twenty-second, something over four hundred men were collected near the church and lined up to be shot. The work was done for a time by a firing squad which fired into the crowd with more or less system, but this was too slow, and finally a rapid-fire gun was brought out and turned loose. Of course, a great many were not killed outright and lay groaning among the dead. Now and then a German would put one out of his misery by a bayonet thrust. Others settled their own troubles by rolling themselves into the nearby river. Altogether over six hundred people were shot down, but it is hard to get any exact figures yet. After the shooting was over, other civilians were brought out and compelled to bury the dead. My informant says that some of the scenes attending this duty were quite as poignant as the shooting itself, for some buried their own fathers and brothers. One man about to be thrown into the trench was found to be still alive, but the German doctor, after a cursory examination, ordered him buried with the rest. The man had enough life left in him to raise his hand in appeal but the doctor shrugged his shoulder and repeated his order. There were many incidents, most of them horrible. The man who told the story seemed still dazed and spoke quietly, with few

adjectives and little emphasis on anything he said. It was a bare recital of facts, and far more moving than if he had striven for effect.

Davis got back yesterday from his trip to the front, and we learned that he had been through a perfectly good experience that will look well when he comes to writing it up, but one that gave him little satisfaction while it was in progress. He started off to follow the German army in the hope of locating the English. After leaving Hal, some bright young German officer decided that he was a suspicious-looking character, and ought to be shot as an English spy. As a preliminary, they arrested him and locked him up. Then the war was called off while the jury sat on his case. One of the officers thought it would be a superfluous effort to go through the form of trying him, but that they should shoot him without further to do. They began considering his case at eleven in the morning, and kept it up until midnight. He was given pretty clearly to understand that his chances were slim, and that the usual fate of spies awaited him. He argued at length, and apparently his arguments had some effect, for at three o'clock in the morning he was routed out and told to hit the road toward Brussels. He was ordered to keep religiously to the main road all the way back, on pain of being shot on sight, and to report at headquarters here immediately on his arrival. By this time he was perfectly willing to do exactly what was demanded by those in authority, and made a beeline back here on foot. He turned up at the Legation yesterday morning, footsore and weary, and looking like a tramp, and told his story to an admiring audience. I was still away on my little jaunt, and did not get it at first hand. The Minister took him down to call on the General, and got them to understand that Richard Harding Davis was not an English spy, but, on the contrary, probably the greatest writer that ever lived, not excepting Shakespeare or Milton. The General said he had read some of his short stories, and that he would not have him shot. Just the same, he was not keen about having him follow the operations. He is now ordered to remain in this immediate neighbourhood until

further orders. To-day' he had several interviews with the General in an attempt to get permission to leave the country, but had no luck.

The last we saw of Davis, he came in late this afternoon to tell us that he did not know what to do next. He said that he had been through six wars, but that he had never been so scared as he was at that time. If he is allowed to get out of Belgium, I think that he will not darken the door of General von Lüttwitz for some time to come.

I was surprised to learn that Hans von Herwarth, who used to be military attaché in Washington, and whom I knew very well, is here as Adjutant to our new Governor. I have not yet had time to get over to see him, but shall try to do so to-morrow. I am glad to have somebody like that here to do business with. He is a real white man, and I anticipate a much better time with him than with any other officer they could send here in that capacity.

Baron Capelle came in late this afternoon to tell me that the Germans were bringing in a lot of priests on carts filled with cows and pigs, and were planning to hold them as hostages. One of them had called out and asked him to notify us that Monseigneur de Becker, Rector of the American College at Louvain, was among these prisoners. He is the priest I went to see when I was in Louvain ten days ago. I had told him he was perfectly safe, and scoffed at his fears.

The Minister was out when this news came, but I sallied forth and tried to locate the Monseigneur. He was not to be found anywhere. When I got back to the Legation, both the Minister and Villalobar were here and I told them all about what had happened. The people of the town were getting excited over the treatment that was being meted out to their priests, and it was in a fair way to result in serious trouble. Both Ministers made for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where the German

Government is established, and before they left, had secured orders for the release of all the hostages. A lot of these terrible things are done by subordinate officers, and the people at the top seem only too anxious to learn of such affairs and do what they can to remedy them. The day has been dreadful with stories of suffering and murder and pillage.

Not only are we cut off from communication with the outside world, but a lot of the ordinary conveniences of life have already disappeared. We have no newspapers, no trams, no taxis, no telephones. Milk is no longer to be had, and within a day or two we shall have no butter or eggs. Then it will begin to look like a real siege. In a day or so I am to have a list of Jarotzky's demands for supplies, so that I can cheer myself with thoughts of what our life is to be like.

There is bad news from Louvain. The reports we have received agree that there was some sort of trouble in the square before the Hôtel de Ville a day or two ago. Beyond that, no two reports are alike. The Germans say that the son of the Burgomaster shot down some staff officers who were talking together at dusk before the Hôtel de Ville. The only flaw in that story is that the Burgomaster has no son. Some Belgians say that two bodies of Germans who were drunk met in the dusk; that one body mistook the other for French, and opened fire. Other reliable people tell with convincing detail that the trouble was planned and started by the Germans in cold blood. However that may be, the affair ended in the town being set on fire, and civilians shot down in the streets as they tried to escape. According to the Germans themselves, the town is being wiped out of existence. The Cathedral, the Library, the University, and other public buildings have either been destroyed or have suffered severely. People have been shot by hundreds, and those not killed are being driven from the town. They are coming to Brussels by thousands, and the end is not yet. This evening the wife of the Minister of Fine Arts came in with the news

that her mother, a woman of eighty-four, had been driven from her home at the point of the bayonet and forced to walk with a stream of refugees all the way to Tervueren, a distance of about twelve miles, before she could be put on a tram to her daughter's house. Two old priests have staggered into the ----- Legation more dead than alive after having been compelled to walk ahead of the German troops for miles as a sort of protecting screen. One of them is ill, and it is said that he may die as a result of what he has gone through.

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/19140823%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDADANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140826%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140827%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

Original Spanish version about Dinant :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140823%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140826%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140827%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20SP%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

Original Spanish version about Leuven :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825-30%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCCION%20LOVAINA.zip>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140823%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDADANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX%20FR..pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140826%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140827%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

French version about Dinant :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140823%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20FR%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140824%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20FR%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

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<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140826%20PAYRO%20DINANT%20FR%20DOS%20REPRESENTANTES%20ARGENTINOS%20MUERTOS%20EN%20LA%20GUERRA.pdf>

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French version about Leuven :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCTION%20DE%20LOUVAIN.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140826%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCTION%20DE%20LOUVAIN.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140827%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCTION%20DE%20LOUVAIN%20FR.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%20Oguerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf