

**Brussels, Sunday, August 30, 1914.** --- Our place has got to be the local diplomatic corner grocery, where all the village loafers come to do their heavy loafing. They bring in all the fantastic rumours that are abroad in the land, and discuss them with all solemnity. In the last day or so we have had it "on the best authority" that the Queen of Holland has had her consort shot because of his pro-German sympathies; that the Kaiser has given up all hope and taken refuge in Switzerland; that the United States had declared war on Germany and Austria; that the King and Queen of the Belgians had fled to Holland, and that all was over. These are just a few.

Troops have been pouring through the town steadily all day on the way to Vilvorde, where the Belgians are still fighting, and to the south, where there is heavy cannonading going on. The Belgians are making a big fight on the Antwerp road, evidently to hold the attention of one German army corps and lighten France's load by just that much. It is a hopeless fight so far as they themselves are concerned, but it throws their courage and fighting qualities into higher relief.

We are now the pampered pets of both sides. The German troops cheer our flag when the motor noses its way through them. The people of the town are equally enthusiastic, and many of them are wearing small American flags in their buttonholes. How long it will last there is no telling, but while it does, our work is made just that much easier.

Lunched at the Palace Hotel with Bulle and Blount. Riseis, the Italian Secretary, came in and joined us. Bulle told him the story of our trip to Louvain with embellishments that made my eyes start from my head. I had not realised what a desperate adventure we had been on until I heard it as it should be told. It made the real thing seem mild.

Before lunch we drove to Blount's to learn whether the cannonading to the south was still going on. It was heavy booming of German guns; no French guns to be heard. Late in the afternoon Blount and I drove off into the country to see whether we could locate the fighting to the south. We got as far as Nivelles, but all was as peaceful as it should be on a perfect Sunday afternoon. The people there were surprised that anyone should have thought there was fighting there. It was still much farther to the south. We drove around in search of evidence of fighting, but could find none. And this after circumstantial accounts of hand-to-hand struggle through all this part of the country !

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/19140830%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140830%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%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](http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20Oguerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf)