

**Brussels, September 3, 1914.** --- This afternoon, at four o'clock, von der Goltz (Field-Marshal Baron von der Goltz Pacha, to be exact) arrived with a staff of seven officers to make a formal call. A crowd quickly gathered in the street, as their big gray military cars snorted up to the door. All the neighbourhood was in a great state of excitement. The great man is pretty old and dodderly, wears spectacles about an inch thick, and a large collection of decorations. His staff was also brilliant in decorations and silver helmets, etc. I met them at the foot of the stairs, and escorted them up. The Marshal is apparently blind as a bat, for he never turned on the landings and would have walked straight into the walls if I had not steered him around the corners.

After one good look we decided that he was to be a figure head and leave the real work to the troop of officers and functionaries he had brought with him.

It was supposed to be a purely formal call, but the old gentleman seemed to have no thought of leaving, and did not budge for half an hour. The conversation was not thrilling.

They finally left after much clicking of heels, and the bemonocled Count Ortenburg nearly broke his neck by tripping over his sword. However, we got them safely out of the house, while all the servants leaned out of the windows and took in the show.

The new Governor-General has addressed a Proclamation to the Belgian people, and has had it posted on the walls:

### PROCLAMATION.

His Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, after the occupation of the greater part of Belgian

territory, has been pleased to appoint me Governor-General in Belgium. I have established the seat of the General Government in Brussels.

By His Majesty's orders, a civil administration has been established with the General Government. His Excellency Herr von Sandt has been made Chief of this Administration.

The German armies advance victoriously in France. My task will be to preserve quiet and public order in Belgium.

Every act of the population against the German military forces, every attempt to interfere with their communications with Germany. to trouble or cut railway, telegraph or telephone communications, will be punished severely. Any resistance or revolt against the German administration will be suppressed without pity.

It is inevitable in war that the punishment of hostile acts falls not only upon the guilty but also on the innocent. It is the duty of all reasonable citizens to exercise their influence with the turbulent elements of the population to restrain them from any infraction of public order. Belgian citizens

desiring to return peaceably to their occupations have nothing to fear from the German authorities or troops. So far as is possible, commerce should be resumed, factories should begin to work, and the crops harvested.

### BELGIAN CITIZENS

I do not ask any one to forego his patriotic sentiments, but I do expect from all of you a sensible submission and absolute obedience to the orders of the General Government. I call upon you to show confidence in that Government, and accord it your co-operation. I address this summons particularly to the functionaries of the State and of the communes who have remained at their posts. The greater your response to this appeal, the greater the service you will render to your country.

The Governor-General,  
BARON VON DER GOLTZ  
*Field-Marshal.*

*Brussels, September 2, 1914.*



Field-Marshal Baron von  
der Goltz Pacha, First  
Governor-General in  
Belgium



The signatures to the "  
scrap of paper

At about five o'clock, Bulle came along, and we went for a long walk together---the first time I have tried anything of the sort since the war began. We tramped out to the Bois and made a swing around the circle, not getting back until half-past seven, when we repaired to the Palace Hotel and had dinner with several of the colleagues. When von der Goltz left us, he had started for the Spanish Legation; but we learned from the Spanish Secretary that he had never arrived. Instead, at the last minute, an aide-de-camp had come clanking in to express His Excellency's regrets that he was unable to come, and say that he would have to defer his visit until a later date. Something happened to him after he left our Legation.

X----- had an experience yesterday which made him boiling mad. He left town in the afternoon with his Consul, to go to Alost for telegrams and letters. He was in a car flying his flag, and had his *laisser-passer* from the German military authorities. Near Assche, he was stopped by an outpost, and told he could not go any further. He accepted this in good part, and said he would go back. At this point, an old turkey gobbler of a General arrived and lit into him for being there. He replied that he had done nothing to which exception could be taken; that his papers were in

order, and that he was ready to return at the first indication from the military authorities. This seemed to enrage the old soldier who announced that they would do nothing of the sort; that they were prisoners of war and would be sent back under armed guard. X----- protested that this was an outrage against the representative of a friendly country, but in spite of this two armed soldiers were placed in the car with them and another beside the driver, and they were brought back to town as prisoners. By dint of arguments and threats they were taken to headquarters instead of jail, and succeeded in seeing General von Lüttwitz who piled on the excuses. It does you no good to have legitimate business and papers in order if it suits some apoplectic officer to clap you into jail.

One of the officers I saw to-day told me that the Germans were deliberately terrorizing the country through which they passed. It is a perfectly convincing explanation of German doings in this country, but I did not think they were prepared to admit it so frankly. This frank fellow made no claim that civilians had attacked the German troops; his only observation was that they might do so unless they were so completely cowed that they dared not raise their hands. He emphasised the fact that it was not done as a result of bad temper, but as part of the scheme of things in general. For my information, he remarked that in the long run this was the most humane manner of conducting war, as it discouraged people from doing things that would bring terrible punishment upon them. And yet some of these Belgians are ungrateful enough to complain at being murdered and robbed.

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/19140903%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140903%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)

