

September 4th, 1914.---Autumn is coming with little gusts of wind and falling leaves. Clouds are thick, and there is a sort of hidden chill in the air. It is depressing in itself, and makes us think with some dismay of what is ahead of the millions of men who are in the field, if the war is to continue into the winter as seems probable.

I am sure there is something big in the air to-day. For several days there has been a growing nervousness at headquarters. For four days there has been no official proclamation of German victories. Persistent rumours come in of large numbers of British troops between here and the coast, advancing in the general direction of Brussels. X ----'s arrest, while on a trip to Alost, looks as though the Germans had some reason for keeping people from getting out that way with knowledge of military conditions here. Another thing.

We were to have returned the call of von der Goltz to-day at noon. Between here and the Spanish Legation yesterday, *something happened*. He never got to the Spanish Legation. This morning we got a message from the Etat-Major that von der Goltz had "telegraphed" to ask that we should postpone our call. Where he is, nobody would say. The officer who brought the message merely stated that he had been called away in great haste, and that it was not known when he would return. Troops are marching through the town in every direction, and in large numbers. Supply trains and artillery are creaking through the place night and day, and we are awakened nearly every morning either by the crunching of the heavy siege pieces or the singing of large bodies of troops as they march through the streets. Every day we realise more and more the enormous scale on which the operations are being conducted. It seems tremendous here, and we are seeing only a small part of one section of the field of operations.

Privately, the Germans continue to assure us that they are winning all along the line. They say that they have taken the whole of the first line of defences in France with the single exception of Maubeuge, where there has been long and heavy fighting and where the result still trembles in the balance. In addition to this they claim to have taken a part of the second line of defences. They say that the French Government has removed to Bordeaux, which seems quite possible, and even sensible. They tell us all these things every time that we go over to the General Staff, but they do not publish anything about it.

A British Red Cross doctor was in to-day and told us some items of interest. He said that he had been assigned to care for the wounded prisoners who were being brought back from France on their way to Germany, and that he had seen all the British prisoners who had been brought back by way of Brussels---about three thousand in all. He said that they were in good spirits and were sure that things would come out right in the end. There were the remnants of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, who went into action something over a thousand strong and came out only a handful.

I made two attempts to see Herwarth to-day but was kept on the sidewalk and in the courtyard by the big green dragons who guard the entrance to headquarters. After the second attempt I returned to the Legation and telephoned him that I should like to see him when he could get it through the heads of these people that we were not tramps. He was very nice and apologetic and had all the officers in the German army out in the street waiting for me when I went back for the third time. All the sentries were blown up and given the strictest sort of instructions that I was to be passed along without question whenever I appeared. I was also given another *Passierschein* to add to my collection, directing everybody to let me pass

wherever I wanted to go. In view of the fact that a lot of our work here is in behalf of German subjects, this is about the least they could do.

Some news has been brought down from Antwerp that makes it seem necessary for me to go there and get back again before the siege begins. I had hoped to get away this morning but have not yet been able to get a decision as to exactly what is to be done. I now hope to get away after lunch.

I spent all yesterday afternoon enciphering a telegram which I must get off either through Holland or Antwerp. We are able to send nothing but open messages over the military wire through Berlin and I have a strong suspicion that these are being censored.

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/19140904%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140904%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