

Brussels, September 16, 1914.---To-day has brought a long string of callers, and between times we took satisfying looks at the passing troops, which have been pouring into town steadily yesterday and to-day. Nobody has established to my satisfaction whence they come or whither they are going. There are all sorts of explanations offered, each explanation being quite convincing to the one who offers it. Most people say that they are being brought in for the siege of Antwerp, which is about to begin. The siege of Antwerp has begun so often and never materialized that I decline to get excited about it at this stage of the game. Another explanation is that the German retreat in France is so precipitate that some of the troops and supply trains are already pouring through here on their way home. I cannot get up much enthusiasm for that either. Some imaginative souls maintain that these are forces being brought back to fight against the Russians. None of these stories sound good to me and I have resigned myself to the belief that the only really safe conjecture is that this "is a movement of troops."

This morning Baron von der Lancken came in and asked me to testify as to what we had seen at Louvain. Of course what we saw had no bearing on the original cause of the trouble and there is no reason for me to push my way into the controversy. Besides, I can't do it without orders from Washington.

We are getting quite accustomed to having no communications with the outside world. Railroads, of course, have ceased to work, except for military purposes, and there is no way for the general public to get about. There has been no postal service since the Germans marched in on August 20th, and we don't know when we shall have any. All telephones were cut off within a few hours of the arrival of the German army. There are no newspapers, and all the information we are supposed to have about happenings in the outside world is fed to us in the form of placards on the walls of the city. Nobody takes any great amount of stock in what these placards

tell us, although they have sometimes told us the truth, and consequently there is a great demand for the few copies of Dutch and English newspapers that are smuggled across the border and brought to Brussels. The prices vary according to the number of papers to be had, and run from five francs to one hundred francs for a single copy of the Times. Those who do not care to spend so much can rent a paper by the hour-and customers are not wanting on this basis. By way of discouraging this traffic it is said that the Germans have shot several men caught smuggling papers. Those caught selling them in Brussels are arrested and given stiff terms of imprisonment. All taxis disappeared many days ago and altogether the normal life of the town has ceased. It will be a rollicking place from now on.

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/19140914%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140915%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140914%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140915%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

Original Spanish version about Adolphe MAX :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDADANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX.pdf>

French version about Adolphe MAX :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDADANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX%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%20guerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf