

**Brussels, September 17, 1914.** --- This morning I spent digging my way out from under a landslide of detail work which has been piling up on my desk, until I could hardly see over it. I now have it out of the way, and can breathe again freely for the moment.

This afternoon Baron de Menten de Horne, a Lieutenant in the Second Regiment of Lancers, was brought in to the Legation, a prisoner, still wearing his Belgian uniform. He was captured last Friday near H----- while I was there. Nyssens, the Major who was in the convent with us, told me that one of his officers had gone off on a reconnaissance and had not reappeared; he was greatly worried about him, but could not send any one out to look for him. This was the man. He was surrounded, in company with several of his men, and took to cover in a field of beets. Night was coming on, and they thought that when the fight was over and the German troops who were all about them had retired, they would be able to work their way out and rejoin their own forces, but twenty-five Germans surrounded them, and after killing all the others, took this man prisoner.

His only idea is to be exchanged and rejoin his regiment; and, as is the case with pretty much everybody else nowadays, he turned to the American Legation. He made such a good plea that the German authorities brought him here yesterday, and left him an hour, on his giving his word of honour not to divulge anything as to the military movements he had seen while a prisoner.

Of course, we could not arrange to make the exchange, but he stayed on for an hour and told us of his adventures. He was a pathetic figure in his dirty uniform, sitting on a little chair in my office and telling in a simple way of all he had been through--laying more stress on the sufferings and death of his soldiers than on anything that had happened to him. His own brother had been killed in the fighting around Liège.

and he had heard that his brother-in-law, of whom he was very fond, had also been mortally wounded. While at Louvain, he had visited the military hospitals, and had a list of Belgian officers who were there. I took a list of them, by permission of the German officer who came after the prisoner, and shall send word to their families.

I went around to see the young man's sister, and sent her off to have a look at him at headquarters, where he is being well treated. It is a joy to be able to do some of these little errands. Nobody can realize the amount of bitter sorrow there is in this country---we cannot realize it ourselves, but now and then a wave of it rises up to confront and overwhelm us.

Miss T-----, an American owning a school here, was in late this afternoon to complain of the behaviour of a couple of officers and gentlemen who did her the honour of calling upon her. They came swaggering in, asked whether a certain German girl had attended the school and demanded her portrait. On being refused, they became nasty and finally so overawed the two women who were there alone that they found some snap shots and handed over a couple of them. Then they demanded a post card with a picture of the school, wrote a message to the girl, and tried to compel the two women to sign it. They flatly refused, and, in a rage, the elder German tore up the card, threw it at Miss T-----, flung down the photographs and stamped out of the house, slamming the doors.

The Minister is going over to see the military authorities in the morning and make some remarks that they will not forget in a hurry. The puppies ought to be horsewhipped.

**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/19140917%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140917%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%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)