

Wednesday (Brussels, September 23, 1914). --- Late yesterday afternoon I got a note from Princess P----- de B-----, asking me to go to see her. I got away from my toil and troubles at seven, and went up to find out what was the matter.

The old lady was in a terrible state. A member of her immediate family married the Duke of -----, a German who has always lived here a great deal. At the beginning of the war, things got so hot for any one with any German taint that they cleared out. For the last few days, German officers have been coming to the house in uniform asking to see the Princess. The servants have stood them off with the statement that she was out, but she cannot keep that up indefinitely. They are undoubtedly anxious to see her, in order to give her some messages from the -----'s, some of her other relatives in Germany; but if it gets around town that she is receiving officers in uniform the town will be up in arms, and the lady's life would be made miserable whenever the Germans do get out. She wanted me to start right away for Antwerp and take her along, so that she could send her intendant around afterward to say that she was away on a journey. and could not see the officers who had been sent to see her. I laboured with her, and convinced her that the best thing was to be absolutely frank. She is going to send her intendant around to see von der Lancken, and explain to him frankly the embarrassment to which she would be subjected by having to receive officers at her home. I am sure that Lancken will realise the difficult situation the old lady is in, and will find some way of calling his people off.

Went down to the Palace and had dinner with Pousette and Bulle and Cavalcanti, who were full of such news as there is floating around the town. There is a growing impression that the Germans do intend to invest Antwerp, and the Belgians are apparently getting ready for that contingency---by inundating a lot more of the country outside the ring of forts.

At noon, day before yesterday, I found a man with a copy of the *London Times*, and carried it in my overcoat pocket to the Palace Hotel when I went there to lunch. Last night, a lot of German civil officials were sitting at a table near by and holding forth in loud tones on the punishment that should be meted out to people who had forbidden newspapers in their possession. The most vehement one of the lot expressed great indignation that the *Amerikanischer Legationsrath* had been seen in that very restaurant the day before with an English newspaper in his overcoat pocket. Pretty good spy you have, Fritz.

A telegram has just been received from Liège, saying that Shaler and Couchman have been released and are on their way to Holland. A Dutch messenger was in after lunch. and told me that he had seen the two men at headquarters yesterday afternoon, and that they were far from happy. He said he did not blame them, as the Germans are dealing out summary justice to anybody who falls into their hands that they do not take a fancy to.

A. B. has been after me for a couple of days to take her up to the château, near Louvain, where Countess R. is left alone with twenty-eight German officers quartered on her. A man cousin was sent up to defend her, but was so badly frightened that he spent all his time in the cellar and finally ran away and came back to Brussels. Now she wants to go up to the rescue, and stay there. I have asked von der Lancken for a pass, and shall try to take her up to-morrow. She certainly has good nerve, but I am not sure how much protection she would be able to afford.

The supply of flour is getting pretty well used up, and I may have to clear out to-morrow afternoon or the next day to go to Antwerp and negotiate to have some supplies sent down for the relief of the civil population. The Government has volunteered to do this, if the Germans would promise that the food would not be

requisitioned for the troops. We have been given these assurances, and it only remains for me to go up and complete the arrangements.

When the Minister came back from Louvain he went over to headquarters and talked about the subject of my trip to Antwerp. He has been nervous about each of my trips and has worried a lot more about it than I have, but when he saw von der Lancken, that worthy made things worse by saying that there was artillery ready to begin business in every part of the country I was to traverse and that it would be a very dangerous trip. Now, the Minister is making superhuman efforts to find some other way to get the letters and papers through to Antwerp.

A note has just come in from Princess P. de Z-----, to say that she followed my advice, and that everything has been settled with the German authorities to her complete satisfaction. She is now easy in her mind.

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/19140920%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140922%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140923%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140920%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140922%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140923%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