

**Hôtel des Régates, Havre, October 26, 1914.** -This is the third town where I have paid my respects to the Belgian Government. I would gladly have foregone the experience, for it is depressing.

I left Waterloo station at 9:15 last night. Instead of the usual two-hour run to Southampton, we pattered along and did not arrive until after one. I had a compartment and made myself as comfortable as possible. When we arrived I found poor Colonel Swalm, the Consul, waiting for me. The Ambassador had telegraphed him to see me off, and he did so regardless of the hour. I felt horribly guilty to have him waiting about for me, but it certainly did make things a lot easier.

I got straight to bed, but had a hard time sleeping, as there was a tremendous racket of loading all night long. Nearly all the passengers were British officers on their way to the front. Among the others I found de Bassompierre of the Foreign Office, and a Mr. and Mrs. W-----, who were coming over with a Rolls-Royce, to be presented to the Belgian General Staff. If I go to the front, he will take me. We sailed at daybreak and were here by two o'clock. Our Consul, Osborne, was waiting for me at the dock with Henry Needham, the correspondent of *Colliers*. I was let straight through the customs, where a *woman* marked my bag, and then came to this hotel overlooking the sea.

This was the first thing we saw as we came into the harbour. It is in a suburb called Nice Havrais. built by old Dufayel of Paris. It was a curious and pathetic sensation to see the Belgian flags still flying bravely. The different Ministries are set up here, and one villa has been set aside for the King and Queen, who have not yet left Belgian soil. The Legations are all established in this hotel and are bored to extinction, as their work has dropped very much. This little suburb enjoys all the privileges of extraterritoriality, and even the French Minister to Belgium goes

through the motions of being accredited to a foreign Government in his country. The cars of the various Legations go buzzing around among the French and Belgian and British cars. The streets are full of troops of the three nations, while some twenty transports ride at anchor in the open roadstead. Fresh troops from England are arriving constantly, and march singing through the town to the camps outside, whence they are sent to the front. There are two British hospitals near this hotel---one of them the Casino---and wounded are everywhere. The place is astonishingly calm, but everybody knows there is a war. The French have their teeth set and are confident of the final outcome. Women are in the custom house, drive the trams, collect the fares and do a hundred other things that are usually out of their line.

I found the hall filled with colleagues, and exchanged greetings with the crowd before going over to the Foreign Office to make my bow. I found Colonel Fairholme packing, and ready to leave this evening for England.

The Foreign Office has a pretty little villa in a pretty little garden and keeps busy. I saw everybody, from Monsieur Davignon down to the porters, and spent an hour and a half there. Then at their request I went to the "Palace" and talked with General Jungbluth. He will try to arrange my business for me by telegraph, and will let me know in the morning whether I am to go up to the front to see the King and Queen.

When I came away from this call, Osborne was waiting for me and took me down to the Consulate for an hour's talk. Then back to the hotel to dine with Sir Francis. After dinner we all went out and bade the Colonel farewell.

**Tuesday.** - General Jungbluth was waiting for me when I came down this morning, to say that I should go to the front. Osborne was waiting with his car, and took me to the Ministry of War, to ask for a lift to Dunkerque in a military car. As luck would have it, to-day's car had left ten minutes before, so I was put off until to-

morrow morning, when I shall go up with the W-----s. I have spent a good part of the day getting my papers in order---both French and Belgian---and in the tiresome occupation of being photographed.

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/19141025%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141026%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022-1102%20PAYRO%20EN%20HOLANDA.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141025%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141026%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022-1102%20PAYRO%20EN%20HOLANDA%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](http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20guerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf)