

**November 19th, 1914.** - One day is like another in its cussedness.

The Germans have been hounding the British Legation and Consulate, and we have had to get excited about it. Then they announced to the Dutch Charge that our courier could no longer go---that everything would have to be sent by German field post. You would think that after the amount of hard work we have done for the protection of German interests and the scrupulous way in which we have used any privileges we have been accorded, they would exert themselves to make our task as easy as possible and show us some confidence. On the contrary, they treat us as we would be ashamed to treat our enemies.

This morning it was snowing beautifully when I woke up, a light, dry snow that lay on the ground. It has been coming down gently all day and the town is a lovely sight, but I can't get out. of my mind the thought of those poor beggars out in the trenches. It seems wicked to be comfortable before a good fire with those millions of men suffering as they are out at the front.

And now Grant-Watson ([1](#)) has been put in prison. He stayed on here after the Minister left, to attend to various matters, and was here when the Germans arrived. Recently we have been trying to arrange for passports, so that he and Felix Jeffes, the Vice-Consul, might return to England. The authorities were seemingly unable to make up their minds as to what should be done, but assured the Minister that both men would be allowed to return to England or to remain quietly in Brussels. On Friday, however, the Germans changed their minds and did not let a little thing like their word of honour stand in the way.

The Minister was asked to bring Grant-Watson to headquarters to talk things over---nothing more. When they got there, it was smilingly announced that Grant-Watson

was to leave for Berlin on the seven o'clock train, which put us in the position of having lured him to prison. The Minister protested vigorously, and finally Grant-Watson was put on parole and allowed to return to the Legation, to remain there until eleven o'clock yesterday morning. I went over the first thing in the morning to help him get ready for his stay in jail. At eleven Conrad arrived in a motor with Monsieur de Leval. We went out and got in, and drove in state to the École Militaire, and, although I was boiling with rage at the entire performance, I could not help seeing some fun in it.

Grant-Watson's butler was ordered to be ready to go at the same time. At the last minute the butler came down and said perfectly seriously that he would not be able to go until afternoon, as he had broken the key to his portmanteau and would have to have another made. The Germans did not see anything funny in that, and left him behind.

When we got to the École Militaire, we were refused admittance, and had to wrangle with the sentries at the door. After arguing with several officers and pleading that we had a man with us who wanted to be put in prison, we were reluctantly admitted to the outer gate of the building, where British subjects are kept. When the keeper of the dungeon came out, I explained to him that the butler had been detained, but would be along in the course of the afternoon, whereupon the solemn jailer earnestly replied, "Please tell him that he must be here not later than three o'clock, or he can't get in!" And nobody cracked a smile until I let my feelings get the better of me.

I was prepared for an affecting parting with Grant-Watson in consigning him to the depths of a German jail, but he took it as calmly as though he were going into a country house for a week-end party. I suppose there is some chance that they may

exchange him for a few wounded German officers and thus get him back to England.

Since our snow-storm the other day, the weather has turned terribly cold and we have suffered even with all the comforts that we have. And the cheerful weather prophets are telling us that without doubt this will be one of the coldest winters ever known. A pleasant prospect for the boys at the front! Mrs. Whitlock and everybody else is busy getting warm clothing for the poor and for the refugees from all parts of Belgium who were unable to save anything from their ruined homes. It is bad enough now, but what is coming.



Photographs of Dinant

Gustave has just come in with the cheering news that Ashley, our crack stenographer, has been arrested by the Germans. They are making themselves altogether charming and agreeable to us.

Max is spread out before the fire, snoring like a sawmill---the only Englishman in Brussels who is easy in his mind and need not worry.

### Footnotes.

1. Second Secretary of the British Legation in Brussels.

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/19141119%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141119%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%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)