

Brussels, Sunday, December 20, 1914.---Jack got off to London yesterday after a visit of six weeks. Had it not been for the nearness of Christmas and the knowledge that he was needed at home, he would have been prepared to stay on indefinitely. His grief at leaving was genuine. He invested heavily in flowers and chocolates for the people who had been nice to him, endowed all the servants, and left amid the cheers and sobs of the populace. He is a good sort, and I was sorry to see him go. By this time he is probably sitting up in London, telling them all about it.

To-day I went up to Antwerp to bring back our old motor. Left a little before noon, after tidying up my desk, and took my two Spanish colleagues, San Esteban and Molina, along for company. I had the passes and away we went by way of Malines, arriving in time for a late lunch.

Antwerp is completely Germanised already. We heard hardly a word of French anywhere---even the hotel waiters speaking only hotel French. The crowd in the restaurant of the Webber was exclusively German, and there was not a word of French on the menu.

The Germans took over the garage where our car was left the day they came in, and there I discovered what was left of the old machine. The sentries on guard at the door reluctantly let us in, and the poor proprietor of the garage led us to the place where our car has stood since the fall of Antwerp. The soldiers have removed two of the tires, the lamps, cushions, extra wheels, speedometer, tail lights, tool box, and had smashed most of the other fixings they could not take off. In view of the fact that my return trip to Brussels at the time of the bombardment was for the purpose of bringing the plans of the city to the Germans, so that they would have knowledge of the location of the public monuments and could spare them, it seems rather rough that they should repay us by smashing our motor. I think we shall make some

remarks to them to this effect to-morrow, and intimate that it is up to them to have the car repaired and returned to us in good shape.

The first group of Americans to work on the relief came into Belgium this month. They are, for the most part, Rhodes Scholars who were at Oxford, and responded instantly to Hoover's appeal. They are a picked crew, and have gone into the work with enthusiasm. And it takes a lot of enthusiasm to get through the sort of pioneer work they have to do. They have none of the thrill of the fellows who have gone into the flying corps or the ambulance service. They have ahead of them a long winter of motoring about the country in all sorts of weather, wrangling with millers and stevedores, checking cargoes and costs, keeping the peace between the Belgians and the German authorities, observing the rules of the game toward everybody concerned, and above all, keeping neutral. It is no small undertaking for a lot of youngsters hardly out of college, but so far they have done splendidly.

The one I see the most of is Edward Curtis, who sails back and forth to Holland as courier of the Commission. He was at Cambridge when the war broke out, and after working on Hoover's London Committee to help stranded Americans get home, he came on over here and fell to. He exudes silence and discretion., but does not miss any fun or any chance to advance the general cause. Of course it is taking the Germans some time to learn his system. He is absolutely square with them, and gets a certain amount of fun out of their determined efforts to find some sort of contraband on him. They can hardly conceive of his being honest, and think his seeming frankness is merely an unusually clever dodge to cover up his transgressions.



Julius Van Hee, American
Vice-Consul at Ghent



Lewis Richards



A Brussels soup-kitchen
run by volunteers



Meals served to the
children in the schools

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 :

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<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/191412G%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf> (Lieja / Liège)

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/191412H%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf> (Amberes / Antwerp)

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French version :

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<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/191412%20PAYRO%20NEUTRALIDAD%20BELGICA%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