

*February 12, 1915.*—For days I have been under an intolerable depression, and the news of the death of Frank <sup>1</sup> was the last straw. But everybody is depressed in Brussels these days. The strain grows more and more tense, and the sad deserted appearance of the streets, the idle populace, and the still more idle soldiers who infest the town carrying their brutal rifles, the lack of all diversion, all movement, all gaiety, is depressing to the spirit. There is literally nothing one can do but to wander up and down the streets; and the shops, darkened because they economize in light with no renewed stock, somehow add to the depression. I felt sad to see Nock go. One week of this atmosphere almost did the business for him. Villalobar told me the other day that the strain was growing too great for him also. And every one is more or less affected in the same way. I cannot write; I cannot do anything except what literally has to be done each day. I cannot even remember all the interesting things that I might jot down in these notes.

For instance, I forgot the other day to note that the mystery of

<sup>1</sup> Whitlock's younger brother, who had been studying medicine and died suddenly in Philadelphia.

Grant-Watson's secret documents seems to have been explained. At the École Militaire there were, of course, many old papers relating to army matters, left there when the school was deserted by the cadets. These were flung about everywhere. English prisoners had a locker or closet and in the one that was allotted to Grant-Watson there happened to be some papers relating to the Belgian army. So the story goes; I do not know what truth is in it. I forgot too that the affair of the Comtesse de Rouillé did not end as happily as I had supposed. De Leval thought he had arranged it all, the judge had decided to let her go, von Bissing had kissed her hand, and so on and so on, and then the infuriated florist of the boulevard de Waterloo refused to withdraw her charge and so it will have to be pressed....

Hoover was in all morning boiling with rage over his interview with von Bissing last night. He wanted to arrange the question of passes with him and von Bissing would do nothing for him, even threatened still further to restrict the movements of the C.R.B. Hoover spent a long time writing out a letter threatening to withdraw from the whole work and leaving the onus on the Germans. They seem absolutely incapable of appreciating the work we are doing and treat every one connected with it as an interloper or a spy, and it is becoming almost unbearable. For instance, Gibson's pass. They held it up for days and then said he could go into every province of the occupied territory except one. "Which one?" we asked. "Ah! any one he chooses to select will be eliminated!" He eliminated Luxembourg. Hoover was to see von der Lancken this afternoon, but I do not know the result yet of the interview. With the intense feeling in Germany against Americans, the situation is exceedingly delicate and difficult. Hoover says the English Government has loaned six million pounds to Roumania, which is significant, and it is predicted that Roumania and Italy will enter the war.

This afternoon I escaped for a while and rummaged about in an old bookstall in the rue de la Tulipe, but found nothing except an old set of Rabelais and I did not buy that. I did pick up, however, a dictionary of French slang, rather useless I suppose.

Yesterday afternoon Mlle. and I had a pleasant stroll. Went to the old Fish Market and saw the place where the statue of Ferrer stood. It is now leveled even with the ground. Visited the vegetable and fruit markets nearby and the vieux Marché....

Sunday is the anniversary of the day on which I presented my letters of credence to the King, and I understand that some sort of fête is being arranged for it. Lemonnier wanted us to go to the Hôtel de Ville, but I got him to postpone it. The Belgians are all delightful and kind and lovable and anxious to show their appreciation, but I dread anything like a manifestation.

Hoover was talking to a Dr. Marx who is in the passport bureau, and Marx said to him:

“What do you Americans get out of this, I should like to know?”

Hoover looked at him and said:

“It is absolutely impossible for you Germans to understand that one does anything from pure humanitarian, disinterested motives, so I shall not attempt to explain it to you.”

Hoover was furious, but there was nothing to be done. They are another kind, another order of intelligence, and such sentiments are simply beyond the limits of their comprehension, that is all!

As I have said before, they are like a tribe that has wandered down into modern times out of the middle ages.