

September 28, 1916.—What impressions these days have! The soft warm days of early autumn, like the days when we used to start to school. The Zeppelin swimming in the silver haze of September, the ugly symbol of the cult of force, the terrible whining as it passes low over the house at night; the deep resonance of the bombardment at dawn; in the park at Allard's, the great lawn having been turned into a potato patch, the peasants digging there, turning up the soft brown earth, burning the dead vines, the white smoke floating off over the château. The whole land is wearing the white scarfs of these potato fires, the children roasting a potato now and then in them! Van Holder squinting at me from behind his easel; in the bois long shafts of sunlight. . . .

To the reunion of the Comité National at the Société Générale. Francqui read a long report, justifying his conduct, defending himself against the insinuations that are aimed at his tyranny, arbitrariness, and so on, and appealing for unity among Belgians. Then Solvay *read* a prepared response, felicitating Francqui, assuring him of their confidence, quoting phrases from Francqui's speech. Then Levie, Minister of Finance, a Catholic, and in a way the political representative of the Government here, *read* a speech in which he began by saying that he had intended to remain a silent spectator but now could no longer keep still. He too quoted lines from Francqui's speech and from Solvay's speech, and then eloquently defended Francqui's policies, called for unity, and so the comedy finished, the meeting ended.

Francqui evidently had forgotten that this was the day for the bi-weekly meeting of the Legation, so we went there, nearly every one except Kellogg being present. Francqui nervous and like nearly every one else these days alarmed; the bombardment the other morning had shattered his nerves. He brought to our attention the fact that Tournai had been placed in the *Etappen* and we agreed to protest to the authorities. . . .

The Germans are moving every available man to the front. There are no more sentinels, for the moment, anywhere, even at Quatre Bras. The employés of the railways, for the first time since the war, have been militarized; poor Rosenschweig, the nice little Bavarian at the Political Department, has been sent to the front and others expect to be. The Governor-General has ordered all the wives of officers and soldiers to leave Belgium and return to Germany by the 1st of October. Those who have homes here may remain longer. And in all the civil departments there is tremendous activity and much energy displayed, each functionary wishing to justify his position and appear necessary so as not to have to go to the front.