

February 1, 1917.—Drove down with Nell this morning, and she left me at the Political Department before ten. I couldn't get little Conrad to tell me what von der Lancken wished to see me about. He pretended not to know, but I know he was dutifully keeping a secret. He was very grave. Waited there in that yellow salon, the scene of so many anxious hours these last two years. I stared in the window looking out into the Park, watching the white sea gulls, driven in from the North Sea by the rigors of the winter, to seek their port, concerned about their revictualing too, poor pretty things, wheeling with consummate grace on wings of silver and of pearl, there in the cold winter sunlight, over the snow. Villalobar came.

"It's the submarine war," he said. Von Moltke had told him. Urgent indeed! Van Vollenhoven joined us, in Dutch calm.

And presently von der Lancken entered, in his grey uniform, with well-worn puttees. He was pale, with those black circles under his eyes that always appear there when he is troubled or concerned. He apologized for this delay, waving us to our familiar seats at the centre table. Bucher comes in, with his blue coat, and heavy boots, as big as Bismarck's, then Reith; Rohn, in a long morning coat, and a brilliant cravat. Seated, von der Lancken begins formally:

"Gentlemen, I have an important communication to make to you, one concerning the submarine war. I address you in your capacity as protecting Ministers. The question concerns the revictualing."

He asked Reith to read, and opening a paper, Reith read us the note addressed by Zimmerman to Gerard, declaring Germany's intention to blockade the coasts of England, France, and Italy.¹ Afterwards he read us a statement declaring that the German Government did not wish the C.R.B. to cease to function, and asking us to consider what could be done to insure its continuance. Much discussion. Francqui and Gregory had been summoned, and at eleven o'clock were admitted. I suggested that we telegraph to

the heads of our respective states to ask them to arrange with England to permit the C.R.B. boats to land at Rotterdam, without waiting to stop at an English port to be examined there, or at New York. Van Vollenhoven was going to Holland for the weekend; Gregory had intended to go out tomorrow to Rotterdam; he decided to go today, and Francqui decided he must go to telegraph to King Albert, to the Belgian Government, and to see the French minister at The Hague to ask them all to influence England to permit the work of the C.R.B. to go on. Von der Lancken promised the passports, and so on. We drew up a form of telegram to be sent to Washington and Madrid. Then we separated—I rushing off, Villalobar remaining as he always does, for his secret talk afterwards. I made a tracing of von der Lancken's map of the submarine zone.

All afternoon at work on the telegram to the President. And now,—what? Only to wait and see and hope, without much ground for hope.

What madness, what stupidity, this war! I am too tired, too worried to think, or to write.

Young Swift¹ has arrived. He is, as I had supposed, the son of my old friend Eben Swift, now brigadier-general in our Army. We had the boy out to luncheon. He is a nice, upstanding chap. Herter returns to Berlin Monday.

Heineman in to see me. He goes within a week to Rome. Italy!

"What will the President say?" said Bucher to me this morning. "That is the important thing!" Quite!

¹ The famous German submarine decree of January 31, 1917, announced that a war zone had been drawn around Great Britain, France, and Italy; that neutral as well as belligerent ships within the zone would be sunk; and that a single American ship a week, properly striped, would be allowed to arrive at Falmouth, England, and depart therefrom.