

*February 9, 1917.*—All day indoors, nursing my cold—and the weather bitter, with the house cold—these Belgian houses are built for mild winters!—and packing-boxes everywhere, the abomination of desolation! Von der Lancken had sent word asking me to see him at six, German time. Went; he, in grey uniform, received me in upper room. Remained half an hour. He expressed desire for me to remain, also the Governor-General would be grateful to me if I could remain. In what capacity? Oh, evidently, not as Minister, as some sort of honorary chairman of the C.R.B.; they would consent to half a dozen members remaining, say, Gregory, Gray, and so on. Also, would Ruddock and Diederich, Consul-General at Antwerp, remain? Listening to him, watching that face, so false, so insidious, the peculiarly slithery, snaky impression this man always produces in me came over me; he said he would... take responsibility for my treatment on himself! And so, a long futile talk, and I went away sick at heart, telling von der Lancken to get it all in writing. He had said, among other things, that von Moltke was mistaken in saying that the flag should remain up. Von der Lancken said also that the freedom of the C.R.B. men would be restricted, and that they would not have the use of their motor cars longer. I told this to Gregory, who will send word out by Gray to Rotterdam to be wired Hoover....

Came back to the Legation; thought it best not to add complications, and to take down the flag—and Nell wept as the order was given. But I wished to take it down, myself, before he asked me to.