

February 14, 1917.—St. Valentine's Day, and Hoover remembered the Germans. I was not dressed when Gregory arrived—never having cultivated the great American virtue of early rising—so that he came later at eleven o'clock. (Von der Lancken had sent for Villalobar and me at 11:30.) When Gregory arrived he read me a long telegram from Hoover; the courier had smuggled it in from Rotterdam. It said, in short, that in view of von der Lancken's statement that the privileges of the C.R.B. men would be abridged, the Americans would be withdrawn at once from Belgium. Then followed detailed instruction to close the books of the C.R.B. at midnight on February 15th. Gregory was quite pleased with the dispatch, since it gave him suddenly the opportunity to leave Belgium, and I could confess to something of the same feeling. However, he was not yet permitted to make use of the telegram, since it had been brought in by the courier unknown to the Germans; hence, we were to say nothing about it. . . .

Villalobar came in while Gregory was still here, and Gregory told him, not of the telegram, but of the possibility of the Americans going out. Villalobar had much to say, in his Spanish way, about his devotion to the Americans, and his will to serve them, but could not treat Gregory otherwise than in the grand style from beginning to end.

Villalobar and I drove then to von der Lancken's, and on the way Villalobar asked me what was in the wind, but I did not tell him.

At the Political Department, von der Lancken, von Moltke, Villalobar, and I sat around the table in the yellow salon, and discussed the transfer of interests. Von der Lancken formally repeated all that he had said about my going, all the assurances, and so on, and we agreed that I was to have prepared and give to Villalobar a list of those who would go out with me when I go. We discussed the consuls, the German making notes of the four—Diederich, Johung, Heingartner, and Nasmith; von der Lancken especially anxious to be kind and courteous to old Diederich, because of his kindness to Germans in Antwerp in 1914; von der Jagow had gone to Antwerp to thank him for that. I said to him:

"But there is Heingartner, at Liége, he is just as Germanophile as Diederich."

"Ah?" said von der Lancken, rapidly making a note, "then we shall have to show special favor to him."

In Villalobar's pouch there came the telegram.

Then, at four, a telephone message to come to von der Lancken's in half an hour—five minutes later a telephone message to come at once. I went; then, von der Lancken, Gregory, Villalobar, Brohn, Reith. They had the telegram; it had come in, *en clair*, in German.

Reith had translated it into French, and read it, Gregory and I sitting there gravely listening. When Reith had finished, von der Lancken said he could not understand it. He did not like the reference to him; it was plain that they did not wish to be held responsible for the retirement of the Americans. Gregory said that he could explain, and did so, telling of his having sent word out by Gray, and that this was evidently Hoover's response. Von der Lancken announced then a complete change of position; in a word, he gave in; he said that the delegates could do as before. Then Gregory said that under those circumstances he would recommend to Hoover to continue. Thus it was arranged. Francqui came in just as we had finished.

Outside, Francqui leaned against the wall and laughed, and Villalobar said, "Hoover is the best diplomat of all of us!"

It is sure that his bluff—if it was a bluff, and it wasn't altogether—wrought a great effect on the Germans. Von der Lancken explained to Gregory, blushing like a girl as he did so, and speaking English with difficulty: he said that, while it was very delicate, when he spoke to Gregory—and to us—he was under the impression that war was inevitable; now it seemed less likely. He did not say why.

The day's events, the strain of it all, leave me utterly exhausted.

Villalobar is full of some project about the deportations; has had interviews with the Cardinal. There is some question of a letter from the Cardinal to the Emperor, and Villalobar has said in salons that the deported are all coming back.

The excessively cold weather continues.