

# **BELGIUM UNDER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION.**

## **A PERSONAL NARRATIVE 1**

### **Chapter IX. THE SUMMONS.**

IT was on the following day, Sunday, that Herr von Bülow delivered Germany's ultimatum to Belgium ; he handed it to M. Davignon at seven o'clock in the evening. Until the last minute, there had been the repeated assurances that his Government would respect the neutrality of Belgium, and to the Belgian Ministers the summons to let the German troops pass over Belgian soil to attack France came as a blow that was not diminished in its force by the fact that it was not unexpected. It seemed indeed but a detail in the midst of those tremendous events that were tumbled each moment into the horrid chaos of the world, to be telegraphed to Washington, with others, out of that room where we labored — that room which was so hot, so still, throbbing with the excitement that thrilled the nerves of the world. It was Sunday, but with no Sabbath calm ; the only reminder, indeed, of the day was that some one said that prayers for peace had been said in all the churches. We began, too, to hear the first of those rumours in which war is so prolific, but we had little time to pay attention to them because all our time, all our strength, all our patience was absorbed by the crowds of Americans that filled the corridors of the Legation day and night. They were of ail sorts and conditions, and they came pouring into Brussels, and for days continued to pour into Brussels, from all over the Continent. Many of them were in fear, many in a panic, a few almost in frenzy. There were those who wished to go home, and there were those who, still bath to relinquish their European tour — the long-cherished dream that had been so rudely broken.—did not wish to go home. Many of them were without money, their travellers' cheques suddenly worthless ; they were at their wits' ends. I find a note in my journal to the effect that the women were often calmer, braver, more reasonable than the men. It was a strain listening to repeated tales of hardship. What they most needed was some one to think and, above all, to decide for them, for they were too perturbed to think or to decide for themselves. We tried to get as many as would do so to go to Ostend and thence to England — the boats were still running across the Channel.

**Brand WITHLOCK**

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