

BELGIUM UNDER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION.

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE 1

Chapter XXII. The grey hordes.

VERY early on Thursday morning, August 20, a date that I am not likely to forget, I was awakened by loud knocks, and, slipping into my dressing-gown, I opened the door, and there stood poor Gustave, weary, haggard, frightened, intensely *négligé*, looking as though he had not been to bed at all — as, indeed, he had not ; he had brought his whole family and had given them Omer's room in the garage, sitting up all night, unknown to me, faithful soul that he was, with the *agent de police*, to keep watch. The Gardes Civiques had vanished from the courtyard.

Gustave came to announce the Count Bottaro-Costa, the Italian Minister, whom I found waiting in my *cabinet*, himself wearing a haggard air. He came at that early hour for consultation, and to bring the news that it had been decided by the authorities, on orders from the King at Antwerp, and as a result of the advice that Villalobar and I had ventured to give Burgomaster Max, not, after all, to offer any resistance. The Gardes Civiques had accordingly been withdrawn and disbanded, and the German army was to enter the city during that day.

The news was a relief, of course, for which we could thank the King, who has a very level head on those broad shoulders.

Bottaro-Costa, however, was uncertain of our diplomatic status — thought that we were merely distinguished residents of the capital. I was not so much concerned-about that technical point and advised him to go over and take counsel of Villalobar, who is expert in all such delicate matters, but Bottaro-Costa would not ; Villalobar's Legation was in the Rue Archimède, and Bottaro-Costa said that if he went there he might never get back to his own Legation on the Boulevard Bischoffsheim

When he had gone I went upstairs, and when Colette brought my tea I told her not to be frightened, that the entry of the Germans would be peaceful. The poor soul was relieved, but shook her head and said, in the French she translated out of her Flemish mentality :

" Mais c'est tout de même triste. "

I told the honest Gustave too, and he shook another hard Flemish head, and summed up, I think, in a phrase the common thought of all Brussels that morning when he said ruefully :

" Je pensais que les Anglais et les Français allaient venir nous aider. "

All morning in ever-increasing crowds the poor peasants tramped into the city, bearing their pitiable possessions in bags, bundles, some of them in Belgian carts drawn by dogs. And from my window I saw one lone, dispirited, footsore Belgian soldier trudging in the hot sun that beat clown into the Rue Belliard, sweltering in his heavy overcoat, his knapsack on his back, a tin cup and an extra pair of boots dangling from it, trailing his gun, and powdered grey with dust, trudging wearily along, the symbol of defeat and despair.

M. Max, wearing the red *écharpe* of the Burgomaster, with M. Jacquemain the *échevin*, his faithful friend, had gone outside the city toward Tervueren the night before, and there, with the German general, had arranged the details of the entry of the troops, and for their unmolested passage through the city. And now they were to enter at eleven o'clock. All morning long we waited. Villalobar was restlessly in and out with such news as he had.

We had been told that the troops would come in under the arch of the Cinquantenaire — from the window of my chamber I could just see the quadriga that Léopold had placed there — and march down the Rue de la Loi, the long avenue that stretched away from the triumphal arch in the crude glaze of the sun, stark, empty, unreal.

At luncheon we discussed the propriety of my going out to see the army pass through ; I did not like to miss the spectacle, but, on the other hand, I had a feeling that it might be indelicate in me to witness the humiliation of the proud city. I asked the ladies not to leave the Legation ; one could never know what might happen. After luncheon we went out on the balcony ; one by one the bright Belgian flags were coming down from the white façades along the Rue Belliard, where they had flamed in the sun for the last fortnight, and only on the Brazilian, the Chilian, and the American Legations were flags left flying. The *persiennes* were drawn at all the windows ; the old Quartier Léopold looked like a city of the dead.

Then of a sudden I saw Villalobar's car coming down the Rue de Trèves, his chauffeur in his red-and-green livery, his red-and-yellow flag flying, and I ran down to meet him, seizing my hat and stick as I went. The Marquis was as excited as a boy.

" Come on ! " he cried, and I went, Gibson and de Leval following in our car. We drove over to the Italian Legation in the Boulevard Bischoffsheim. The boulevard was lined with crowds, waiting under the elm-trees, out of the sun. The *police bourgeoise*, composed of citizens who had been sworn in to aid in keeping order, were sauntering about, wearing their white brassards.

Bottaro-Costa a day or so before, much to our regret, had been superseded at that post by another Minister, who had not yet arrived, and was about to leave Brussels. His Legation was dismantled and the halls filled with packing-cases, but the Countess had retained one *salon*, and she received us there.

There, then, in the bow-windows overlooking the boulevard, chatting the while, we waited until Villalobar and Bottaro-Costa grew weary and impatient and went out with Carton de Wiart, the Spanish Consul, a cousin of the Belgian Minister of Justice ; I remained with the Countess.

And then, standing by the window, suddenly we had our first view of the German troops. Without music or fife or drums or flag, a company of infantry came clown the boulevard ; they were all in grey — a sinister, lurid greenish-grey — eyes to the helmet-covers they wore, and they were in heavy marching order. They swung along somewhat wearily close to the *allée des piétons*, at the corner where they were to turn down into the Boulevard du Jardin-Botanique. Two of the men fell out of line, took their post at the corner, and lowered their rifles. One of them rested his foot in the sling of his rifle ; the other drew a box of cigarettes from his tunic, proffered it to his comrade, fumbled for a match, then asked a light from a Belgian standing near. The Belgian gave it to him with Belgian kindness. A little knot of men stared at them. And that was all. It did not seem so bad.

" *Poor fellows !*" sighed the Countess.

I assumed that the poor fellows had fallen out to mark the way for those who were to follow, though the route was already marked by arrows painted on boards that had been fixed to the trees. We waited, but no more came,

Then Bottaro-Costa came running up and said they were going by another route. We bade the Countess good-bye — she refused to accompany us — rushed down, and Bottaro-Costa, Villalobar, and I entered Villalobar's car and whirled away to the Rue Royale, where the chauffeur said the troops were passing. But no troops were there, and finding ourselves in the Rue de Ligne, we heard the steady drumming of

horses' hoofs. Excited crowds were swaying this way and that, rushing uncertainly hither and thither ; finally they took a more stable course, in the direction of the hoof-beats. We drove then to Sainte-Gudule, and, at Villalobar's insistence, out on to the terrace of the old church itself, overlooking the little Place du Parvis. And there, between the hedges of the silent crowds packed along the sidewalks, slowly descending the Rue Ste.-Gudule from the Treurenberg and turning into the Rue de la Montagne, which twisted away to our left, riding in column of twos, in the same grey uniforms, their black-and-white pennants fluttering from their lances, was a squadron of German hussars. And as they rode they chanted in rude chorus : "*Heil dir im Siegeskranz*".

It was very still ; the crowds sullen and silent, there in the glitter of the sunlight — the horses' hoofs clattering on the stones of the uneven pavement, the lances swaying, the pennants fluttering, and that deep-throated chant, to the tune that we know as " America " and the British as " God Save the King " — and over us the grey façades of the stately old church. The scene had the aspect of mediaevalism ; something terrible too, that almost savage chant and those grey horsemen pouring down out of the Middle Ages into modern civilization.

Villalobar turned and looked at me:

" We'll remember this scene," he said.

" And think where we are ! " said Bottaro-Costa, glancing up at the two lofty towers of Sainte-Gudule behind us, looking down, as calmly as they had looked for seven centuries, on a scene that was not, after all, new to them. They had seen Frenchmen and Austrians and Spaniards riding thus, singing their songs of conquest.

The column halted, the chanting ceased ; the last two troopers promptly turned their horses round. No rear attacks ! Then after a moment they moved again, taking up their savage hymn, and, still singing in those hoarse gutturals, wound down and away and out of sight behind the walls, the tiles and the chimneypots, where the Rue Sainte-Gudule turns into the Rue de la Montagne, and so to the Grand' Place. We thought we had seen it all, and turned away and drove back to the Italian Legation.

And as we turned into the Boulevard Bischoffsheim there was the German army. All that we had seen was but an advance guard, mere vedettes, for there, up and down the boulevard under the spreading branches of the trees, as far as we could see, were undulating, glinting fields of bayonets and a mighty grey, grim horde, a thing of steel, that came thundering on with shrill fifes and throbbing drums and clanging cymbals, nervous horses and lumbering guns and wild songs.

And this was Germany ! Not the stolid, good-natured, smiling German of the glass of beer and tasselled pipe, whiling away a Sunday afternoon in his peaceful beer-garden, while a band plays Strauss waltzes, not the sentimentality of the blue flowers and moonlight on the castled Rhine, not the poetry of Goethe and Schiller, not the insipid sweet strains of Mendelssohn nor the profound harmonies of Wagner ; nor the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant ; but this dread thing, this monstrous anachronism, modern science yoked to the chariot of autocracy and driven by cruel Will of the pagan world.

We sat there in the motor and stared at it. No one spoke for a long time. Then, as under scrutiny masses disintegrate into their component elements, we began to note individual details : the heavy guns that lurched by, their vicious mouths of steel lowered toward the ground ; officers erect on their superb horses, some of them thin, of the Prussîan type, with cruel faces scarred by duelling, wearing monocles and carrying English riding-crops ; some of the heavier type, with rolls of

fat, the mark of the beast, as Emerson says, at the back of the neck, and red, heavy, brutal faces, smoking cigarettes, looking about over the heads of the silent, awed, saddened crowd with arrogant, insolent, contemptuous glances. Their equipment, of course, was perfect ; sabres, revolvers in holsters, field-glasses, maps in a leather case with isinglass to protect them, small electric lamps slung about their necks—not a detail had been overlooked in those previsions of forty-four years,

The infantry marched in column of fours with heavy, methodical, German precision — squat Germans for the most part, their trousers untidily thrust in their heavy boots that drummed with iron-shod heels heavily on the pavement ; an extra pair of boots dangled from each knapsack.

There were Germans of all the familiar German types : thick necks and flattened occiputs, low foreheads and yellow hair shaved closely, like convicts ; stolid, indifferent faces, with no ray of mirth or humour, but now and then eyes of the pale blue of porcelain gazing through spectacles — students, no doubt. Their low spiked helmets were covered with cloth of that same greenish-grey of the uniform ; every bit of metal on the uniform, indeed, was covered, and in most instances the numbers on their shoulders were similarly concealed. They were all young men, strong, with long backs and short stout legs, hard thews and sinews, and ail individuality, ail initiative, had been drilled out of them ; they plodded on with the dumb docility of fatalism, and their officers, across the vast gulf that militarism places between officers and men, were as contemptuous of them as they were of the awed crowds along the sidewalks.

Cavalry, infantry, and artillery went by ; each regiment of infantry was supported by a troop of cavalry and followed by a battery, forming integrally a unit. The infantry, trudging Along, suddenly whistled to a tune that brought back instantly the memory of happy summers at home — " Every Little Movement has a Meaning of its Own " — though to them, of course, it was " *Madame Sherry* " heard in Germany ; others sang the Austrian national hymn, and there was one company that sang something from *Lohengrin* : And how they sang ! Efficiency, drill, discipline here but too apparent, for they sang all the parts like a *Männerchor*, as though they had been trained — as no doubt they had.

The field-pieces rumbled by until we were weary of it all ; then a long line of inverted steel pontoons, the mud of the Meuse still clinging to their bottoms ; then the commissariat — cookstoves with fires burning and smoke coming from the short stacks, and soup simmering in the great kettles ; then regiments of hussars with black-and-white pennants, and ammunition-wagons innumerable.

And now and then, suddenly, far down the boulevard, we would hear the crash and blare of a military band, high, shrill, with fierce screaming notes, the horrid clang of mammoth brass cymbals — not music, but noise of a calculated savagery, to strike terror.

It became terrible, oppressive, unendurable, monstrous — those black guns on grey carnages and grey *caissons* ; those field-grey uniforms ; the insolent faces of those supercilious young officers, scarred in their silly duels, wearing monocles ; those dull plodding soldiers, those backs, those thews and sinews, the heels of those clumsy boots drumming on the pavement. It was impressive as a spectacle, but with none of the inspiring effect of martial array ; it was grim without any sublimity, business-like but without the agreeable effect of harmony ; a very parade of savagery, in every one of its implications horrible, appalling, dreadful. That organization of steel, however disciplined and efficient, was heavy and sodden ; it was perhaps the chief victim of its own remorseless cruelty ; seeking to gain

the whole world it had lost its own soul.

Bottaro-Costa grew weary and went into his Legation. The Countess had been looking at the awful spectacle from the window of her *salon*.

Then Villalobar went away, and I thought of my wife and the mothers and Miss Lamer, and said to myself that if I were to hurry they might yet have a glimpse of this colossal and evil thing. Luckily, I found my own motor down the boulevard, abandoned by Gibson and de Leval, and in it I whirled to the Legation and got the excited ladies.

"Hurry," I said, "there may yet be time !"

We returned to the boulevard. It was, perhaps, five o'clock. The German hosts were still filing by, and we sat in the motor and watched, spellbound, for two hours while the grey-green hordes rolled by in undiminished, seemingly infinite numbers.

There was a commotion in the lines ; a horse harnessed to a gun had fallen with the sickening effect of that spectacle. An artilleryman leaped from the *caisson* ; an officer shouted a sharp order ; the grey line debouched and went on. The dust beaten up by those thousands of heavy feet rose and obscured the sunlight, sifted into the trees, turning the green leaves into grey ; it settled into the grey uniforms, gave a grey aspect to the atmosphere, and as evening fell the grey hordes were filing by like grey ghosts in a grey twilight.

I had agreed to go with Villalobar at half-past six to the Hôtel de Ville; it was then nearly seven. I found him waiting for me at my Legation, and we rolled away around by the Park and the Palace, through the Place Royale. As we turned to descend by the Rue de la Madeleine into the lower town our progress was stayed by the crowds. The chauffeur kept his horn honking. And then suddenly there was a scream, the crowd swayed right and left and scattered ; and, looking up, I saw an aeroplane hovering directly overhead, and from it there fell a stream of lire that broke out now and then in sparks. We said nothing, but each knew, of course, what the other was thinking — bombs ! And then suddenly the long thin shaft of tire broke out into a pretty burst of coloured bans, like a sky-rocket on the Fourth of July, and there was a long, deep sigh of relief from the crowd. What was it ? I never knew. Some said that it was a signal to the army in the field.

We drove on to the Grand' Place, that square of golden beauty, and there already the artillery was parked and cook-stoves were steaming in preparation for supper ; the soldiers were comfortably settling themselves, the horses munching their provender. The mounted sentinels at the entrances saluted as we entered.

We drove into the courtyard of the old Hôtel de Ville and then mounted the grand staircase and went down the familiar, halls to the Burgomaster's rooms. Tables were already set out covered with papers, and at them German officers in those pale bluish-grey coats one used to see all over Germany were busily writing. Four officers clicked their spurs together and made the stiff, punctilious German military bow, and thus received us. We explained our mission, and were shown into another room, with more clicking of spurs and more of those stiff bows. Here two men seated at tables spread with documents turned to receive us, but a short, stout and very dusty, rather bristling little man, giving orders right and left, turned and spoke. He wore riding-breeches, but had taken off his leather puttees and wore only his tan shoes. He spoke French with a German accent, and when I told him who I was he immediately said :

"*Oh yes, I know ; you were in charge of the German interests.*"

With this he made another stiff little bow, his heels clicking again and again ; he kept whirling about, indeed, clicking his heels as though bowing to everybody.

We were shown then into the Burgomaster's room. M. Max was

sitting there at his great table, where we had seen him only the evening before ; how long ago it seemed !

He received us with a weary smile. Poor man, what he had gone through !

" *Jamais*," he said, " *je ne l'oublierai . . . jusqu'à la fin de ma vie.*"

We expressed our sympathy and then our appreciation of his good sense in withdrawing resistance ; after seeing the army we had beheld that afternoon — in sheer efficiency the most remarkable, I suppose, the world has ever known — we shuddered to think of what would have happened if the poor little Gardes Civiques had stood against it.

M. Max sent a *huissier* to inform the General of our presence, and the messenger came back to say that the General was taking a bath. We sat down to wait, and while we waited M. Max told us of what he had gone through ; and first that his relations with the General were difficult and embarrassing.

" *J'ai refusé de lui serrer la main*," he explained.

He would stay, he said, in his Hôtel de Ville until the end. He told us then what he had not told us the evening before — that all the preceding day he had been in communication with the German army to the east of the city and with the King in Antwerp. The Germans had demanded hostages, the Burgomaster, the members of the Conseil Municipal, twenty notables, and a war contribution of fifty million francs, to say nothing of enormous quantities of food and forage. M. Max refused the hostages — the word had such a mediaeval sound that my hair almost stood on end ! — held out, and gained his point. But the levy must be paid. We renewed our compliments.

" *J'ai fait mon devoir*," he said simply.

Then he told us the news. The General Staff had fallen back from Malines on Antwerp, and there the remnants of the Belgian army were to be gathered, for "we must save what remains of our army, there is no way to get another." And for three days the Germans were to pass through Brussels.

M. Max had just finished these statements when there was announced General Thaddeus von Jarotsky, Major-General and Commandant of the 16th Infantry Brigade.

He proved to be the same important little man who had received us outside, now transformed by a bath and toilet, bald head shining, short grey moustache bristling, blue eyes alert, wearing the same blue-grey coat, on the breast of which was the bar of the coloured ribbons of his many decorations. Instead of the riding-breeches he wore now long dark blue trousers with wide red stripes, held by straps under his military boots. Refreshed by his bath, he was very hearty and well satisfied with himself ; there was more crisp bowing and clicking of spurs and exchange of amenities, *mon Général* rubbing his hands briskly.

" Call him Excellency," Villalobar hurriedly whispered to me, "the Germans like that." And then he went on, speaking to the General :

" Excellency, we ask the right to communicate with our Governments ; as to cipher the .right is, of course, disputable, but not in clear."

Seiner Excellenz, in his French, said :

" Yes, of course, and in cipher too, if you desire."

" The telephone communication will be restored ? "

Seiner Excellenz reflected for a moment and asked about telephone communication with towns outside, not wishing us to have that.

" In Berlin," he said, " there is a special interior telephone service."

" But not here," said M. Max, " or at least very little."

The point was amiably conceded by *Seiner Excellenz*.

Then Villalobar asked that his secretary, the Marquis de Faura, be granted a safe conduct from Antwerp ; his son was dying in Brussels. And this too was conceded.

In fact *Seiner Excellenz* promised everything, and then rose, saying that his dinner was waiting and that he was very hungry. There were more compliments, and more bowing and more clicking of spurred heels, and we left.

The twilight seemed to have gathered earlier that evening. In the Grand Place the field-kitchens steamed, and at each entrance there were the dark silhouettes of the Uhlans on guard. Under the spreading trees along the boulevards the dust hung like fog, and each of the street lamps glowed at the centre of a luminous ball. In the shadows were small groups of men in spiritless discussion ; their faces, when one could see them, were sad, and there were those who went weeping through the gloom. The houses were all closed and dark. And the grey hordes continued to shuffle down the Chaussée de Louvain and along the boulevards. Only in the Palace Hotel was there light and brilliancy, for there the officers of the German army were dining.

The city was strangely still, overwhelmed in its sorrow ; and weary to the very bones, and sick at heart, I went home with the sensations of one who had been compelled to witness a shameful deed in the humiliation of the proud, beautiful, sensitive living creature that had been Brussels.

We had expected McCutcheon, Cobb, Irwin, and Arno Dorch to dine with us that night. Eight o'clock came and they did not appear, nor had we any news of them. In their stead, and in their places at the table, there was another guest, always punctual, come to stay a long time — old haggard Care. I felt the load of a great responsibility that settled down familiarly on shoulders that had borne through so many years the burdens of another city, and I worried now about these old, these somewhat too reckless and adventurous friends.

Then in the evening came Monseigneur Sarzana, the auditor of the Papal Nonciature, to inform me that the Pope had died that afternoon at half-past one o'clock. He sat there in his long black soutane, distress in his Italian countenance, as though the world had come to an end and the heavens were about to be rolled together like a scroll. And it might well have seemed, indeed, that they were !

There was, of course, the note of irony inevitable in all human catastrophe. The latest edition of *Le Soir* was lying on my table, with whole columns staring blank and white — the mark of the censor. But its leading article said that the situation was excellent, that the French and English armies were on the way, and that the future could be viewed with confidence ! *

Brand WITHLOCK

London ; William HEINEMANN ; 1919.

* *Le Soir*, August 20, 1914

APRÈS QUINZE JOURS DE GUERRE

Nous avons résumé dernièrement la situation après huit jours de guerre. Huit jours de plus se sont passés. Nous sommes au quinzième jour.

Quinze jours après le premier combat, les Allemands sont à peine plus avancés qu'au premier jour. Ils restent accrochés à Liège dont les forts résistent magnifiquement. Leur mouvement sur le centre du pays est arrêté. Ni en Belgique, ni en France, ils n'ont remporté aucun succès. Ils devraient être à mi-chemin de Paris. Ils ont à peine dépassé Liège et n'ont pas encore atteint la barrière de la Meuse où les attendent les Français.

Sur le front lorrain aucun résultat. Au contraire, ils reculent et l'offensive française avance avec une sûreté remarquable. Bref, *ce* n'est pas huit jours qui sont perdus pour leur fameuse marche en avant, c'est quinze jours. Ce retard équivaut à la perte d'une grande bataille. Cette bataille c'est notre honneur de pouvoir dire qu'ils l'ont perdue en Belgique et par nos armes. Vingt jours maintenant se sont passés depuis le début de la mobilisation russe. C'est dire que la concentration de l'armée s'achève. Deux millions de soldats russes marchent sur la Vistule, défendue seulement par six corps d'armée, par quelques forts et par le Landsturm. Les clairons de l'armée russe sonnent le glas de l'Empire allemand.

Pour nous enfin quelle amélioration nous a apportée *ce* retard de huit jours ! Mais nous ne sommes plus seuls au centre du pays. Nos alliés français nous ont rejoints et une armée française égale à la nôtre, complètement équipée,

prête à combattre, s'avance en colonnes de route vers nous. En vérité c'est un beau et grand spectacle. Anglais et Belges intimement unis vont combattre à côté des grandes armées françaises. Pour notre petit pays si fier devant l'invasion : une grande oeuvre de secours et de protection a été réalisée. Cette oeuvre est la contrepartie de l'héroïque résistance de notre armée et de nos forts, qui étaient comme le disait le roi Albert, à l'avant-garde des armées alliées et qui sont maintenant au milieu d'elles.

Désormais pour nous, la période la plus critique semble passée. Et avec une confiance renouvelée et une inébranlable fermeté, nous pouvons considérer l'avenir.

Le Soir also published a proclamation from Burgomaster Max, dated the 12th, calling on the civil population to turn in their arms.

Affiche de M. Max, Bourgmestre de Bruxelles

ARMES À FEU

Les lois de la guerre interdisant à la population civile de prendre part aux hostilités et toutes les dérogations à cette règle pouvant entraîner des représailles, beaucoup de mes concitoyens m'ont exprimé le désir de se débarrasser des armes à feu qu'ils possèdent.

Ces armes peuvent être déposées dans les commissariats de police, où il en sera délivré récépissé.

Elles seront mises en sûreté à l'arsenal central d'Anvers, et seront restituées à leurs propriétaires après la fin des hostilités.

BRUXELLES, le 12 août 1914.

Translation

Placard of M. Max, Burgomaster of Brussels

FIREARMS

The laws of war forbidding the civil population to take part in hostilities, and all infringements of this rule being considered cause for reprisals, many of my fellow-citizens have expressed the desire to relieve themselves of the firearms that they have in their possession.

These firearms may be deposited in the central police stations, where receipts will be given for them.

They will be placed in safety in the central arsenal of Antwerp and will be returned to their owners at the end of hostilities.

BRUXELLES, August 12, 1914.

The following proclamation was placarded on the walls of Brussels on August 20 :

AUX HABITANTS DES PROVINCES OCCUPÉES

Les pouvoirs exécutif et administratif dans les provinces occupées passent aujourd'hui entre les mains des chefs supérieurs des troupes allemandes.

J'avertis la population de se tenir tranquille et de continuer à ses occupations civiles. Nous ne faisons pas la guerre aux habitants paisibles, mais seulement à l'armée. Si la population obéit, on ne lui fera pas de mal.

La propriété des communes et des particuliers sera respectée et les vivres et matériaux nécessaires à l'armée d'occupation seront exigés avec égard et seront payés.

D'autre part, la résistance et la désobéissance seront punies avec extrême sévérité.

Toutes les armes, toutes les munitions, tous les explosifs doivent être remis aux troupes allemandes au moment de leur arrivée.

Les habitants des maisons où l'on trouverait des armes, des munitions, des explosifs, auront à craindre d'être fusillés et de voir leurs maisons brûlées. Quiconque résistera à main armée sera fusillé.

Quiconque s'opposera aux troupes allemandes,

Quiconque attentera à leurs blessés,

Quiconque sera trouvé l'arme à la main, sera fusillé de même.

Le Général Commandant le III^e Corps d'Armée,

VON Locrow, Général d'infanterie.

PROCLAMATION

Des troupes allemandes traverseront Bruxelles aujourd'hui et les jours suivants, et sont forcées par les circonstances de réclamer à la ville la prestation de logements, de nourriture et de fournitures. Toutes ces prestations seront réglées régulièrement par l'intermédiaire des autorités communales.

Je m'attends à ce que la population se conforme sans résistance à ces nécessités de guerre et, spécialement, à ce qu'aucune agression n'ait lieu contre la sûreté des troupes, et à ce que les prestations exigées soient promptement fournies.

En pareil cas, je donne toute garantie pour la conservation de la ville et pour la sécurité des habitants.

Si cependant, ainsi qu'il est malheureusement arrivé ailleurs, il se produisait des agressions contre les troupes, des tirs contre les soldats, des incendies ou des explosions de tout genre, je me verrais contraint de prendre les mesures les plus sévères.

Le Général Commandant le Corps d'Armée,

SIXT VON ARNIM. BRUXELLES, le 20 août 1914.

Certaines affiches des autorités allemandes peuvent être notamment consultées en suivant le lien INTERNET :

<http://www.14-18.bruxelles.be/index.php/fr/affiches>

C'est le fruit d'une collaboration entre les Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles et le Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles.

Brüssel, le 20 août 1914.

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Je m'attends à ce que la population se conforme sans résistance à ces nécessités de guerre, et, spécialement, à ce qu'aucune agression n'ait lieu contre la sûreté des troupes, et à ce que les prestations exigées soient promptement fournies.

En pareil cas, je donne toute garantie pour la conservation de la ville et pour la sécurité des habitants.

Si cependant, ainsi qu'il est malheureusement arrivé ailleurs, il se produisait des agressions contre les troupes, des tirs contre les soldats, des incendies ou des explosions de tout genre, je me verrais contraint de prendre les mesures les plus sévères.

Le Général commandant le corps d'armée,

Sixt von ARMIN.

Brüssel, den 20^{ten} August 1914.

Proklamation!

Deutsche Truppen werden heute und in den nächsten Tagen durch Brüssel marchieren und sind durch die Verhältnisse gezwungen, von der Stadt Leistungen von Quartier, Verpflegung und Lieferungen in Anspruch zu nehmen.

Alle diese Leistungen werden in geordneter Weise durch Vermittelung der Städtischen Behörden geregelt werden.

Es wird erwartet, dass die Einwohnerschaft sich dieser kriegsrischen Notwendigkeit ohne Widerstand fügt, insbesondere, dass keinerlei Anschläge gegen die Sicherheit der Truppen vorkommen und die geforderten Leistungen schnell erfüllt werden.

In diesem Falle biete ich volle Gewähr für die Erhaltung der Stadt und die Sicherheit der Einwohner.

Sollten jedoch, wie es anderwärts leider geschehen ist, Angriffe auf die Truppen, Schiessen auf Soldaten, Brandstiftungen oder Sprengungen irgendwelcher Art erfolgen, so würde ich gezwungen sein, die allerschärfsten Massnahmen zu ergreifen.

Der Kommandierende General,

Sixt von ARMIN.