

August 5, 1914.—The German troops are now said to have invaded Belgian soil Tuesday morning at eleven o'clock. They entered near Dolhain. In the afternoon about four o'clock, they had arrived in the region of Fléron, and it is said that the guns of the forts at Liége can be heard booming away.

The Liége deputies have left for the defence of their town.

The Government is making requisition of foodstuffs and measures are being taken for aiding the families of soldiers.

The first page of *Le Petit Bleu* (which, by the way, was proceeded against by the Government for having published the "Shameless Barbarism" article) given over to "Departure of the King for the Army" and his proclamation. Patriotic fever at its height. A credit of two hundred millions for national defence voted by the Chamber.

Lord Kitchener has been appointed Secretary of State for War in England.

Again a day of excitement, tension, and work; all day the Legation crowded with frightened Americans who continue to pour into Brussels and here remain hesitant, undecided, bewildered, loath or afraid to brave the channel to go home, and hoping for some miracle that will arrest the war or at least spare them discomfort; they do not see why they should suffer. Are they not Americans and should they not be protected by their flag?

"I suppose I am to come right over here with my family in case of trouble," said a big Jew to me this morning.

The Germans are crowding into the Legation also, scores and scores of them. The long corridor is filled constantly; one can scarcely move about and every one plucks at me if I dare to leave my office. Gibson, de Leval and I have all we can do to reassure them.

We could laugh at that Jew—he was so badly scared! But I could weep at the plight of the American school teachers, here on their first trip to Europe, after years of pinching and saving and planning, and consulting guide books! It is pathetic. And then the young couple on a bridal tour—with their all invested in a tourist ticket. The young bridegroom drew it out of that manly pocket—the bride looking so confidently at him, as he did so!—and unfolded about four kilometers of coupons, hotels, railroads, steamships, and so on; all useless now. *Lachrymae rerum!*

John Stockwell, my old friend from Cleveland in, his express cheque no good and I give him money to get to London. And James H. Patten of Chicago, in the Chancellery for his passport and just enough to go home steerage. Not long ago he had a corner in wheat in America. When was it?

Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich of Boston, widow of our poet, with son and daughter-in-law; had left baby with nurse in Paris and selected this as a propitious moment to motor to Brussels;

arrived yesterday; have some fears now. Could I provide some sort of safe conduct for their motor?

"I fear, Madam, your troubles with that motor will be over by the time you get back to the hotel. It will be requisitioned, no doubt."

And so it was, but honestly paid for by the Belgian Government. These are sympathetic, even touching types.

But there is another type. This morning, Mrs. ———, who was a ———, sister of J. J. Astor—let the fact never be forgot by mortal man!—sailed in, disdainful of weeping women in corridor, disdainful of all, especially of all Americans, though now, after years of absence from the land she condemns, anxious for a passport to establish her identity.

Found her sitting in Chancellery, Cruger making out her passport; had a French nurse with her. At sight of me began to recount tales of murder and rapine committed by the "barbarians" in eastern Belgium: they were killing women and children on sight.

"That is buncombe," I said.

"Why buncombe?" she demanded.

"You know they are not savages," I replied.

I tried to reassure and calm her; wholly useless. That particular specimen of super-elegant snobbism and cultivated neurasthenia is not to be comforted; was indeed shocked that any one, especially any American, should dare to contradict any statement she might make.

She had left her jewels behind in Paris, and it was my duty and my privilege to get them for her. I shall not forget the impression this tall, distinguished, finely gowned woman made on me. She might once have been beautiful, had she been simple, sincere, and had she cultivated that supreme possession of women, graciousness; but as it was I felt like telling her to go to the devil. Finally, she took her passport, with shame, I felt, perhaps the only shame that had ever visited her discontented, disdainful face, and sailed out, plumes nodding.

Among the Americans was a young doctor from Chicago—whom the war had overtaken in Germany, where he had been studying. He came through from Verviers to Liège last night on a German military train. The trains were labeled "Express to Paris." The train, however, was stopped by broken rails, barbed-wire entanglements, and so on, and the passengers had to get out and walk; some of the women rode part way in a peasant's cart; trees felled

across the road and barbed-wire entanglements stopped that form of progress and they struggled ahead on foot, lugging their dressing cases. The night was clear and warm and they saw the German cavalry along the roadside, resting; horses picketed and the troopers lying on the ground smoking. One of the soldiers waved his hand at the party as it struggled along. They got to Liège and thence came through to Brussels by train. They heard no firing. Nell, who saw the young doctor—he has a German name—insists that he is a German spy.

The Legation halls too are continually crowded with Germans.

There are thousands of them in Brussels—some say as many as 50,000—and many of them are, of course, spies. The system maintained in Belgium has been extensive, worthy of the Russian third section. These Germans are all frightened, for the spy hysteria has developed.

"There is a spy!" some one cries and a crowd gives chase. No one, however, has been hurt. The Brussels police are very tactful, kindly, sensible and efficient.

The Americans are in such numbers that I called a meeting in the afternoon of representative Americans living in Brussels to effect a relief organization. Dannie Heineman, Millard Shaler, William Hulse¹ and others came and organized a committee to raise funds, rent a home that may provide shelter, and so forth. While we deliberated the hall was filled with troubled Americans, Germans, and Jews, women weeping.

The word came that our cipher telegrams had been again refused; so over to the Foreign Office again and after an interview with d'Ursel,² Comte van der Straeten-Ponthos went with me to chief of telegraph bureau, and we went around by the rue de Louvain; in the court yard, with arms stacked, a heavy contingent of soldiers—soldiers everywhere indeed—and then strict and final orders that my ciphers are to be sent.

The Administration, however, is in trouble and confusion—and no wonder!

Then back to the Legation in time to receive two clerks from the French Legation whom Klobukowski had sent over to transfer his funds to me; 450,000 francs to be transferred to my account

¹ Dannie Heineman was an American engineer living in Brussels, interested in several street-railway enterprises in Europe and Latin-America; Millard K. Shaler and William Hulse were likewise American citizens resident in Brussels.

² Count Leo d'Ursel of the Belgian Foreign Office.

in order to protect the funds, but the French treasurer was to be allowed to draw against it. I did not like the look of the thing; what with the spies everywhere employed and the use to which all the money was to be put; evidently a nigger in the woodpile somewhere. And so I went out to the French Legation and explained to Klobukowski that I could not accept such a responsibility and then permit another to discharge it. I told him the money should not be turned over unless the entire Legation was transferred.

Klobukowski sitting there—de Leval was with me—was smiling and cordial as ever.

"You are right. I acknowledge that my request was not proper, and ask your pardon. I have so much to do these days! Perhaps I ought to ask some other colleague to serve?"

I told him I should consider it an honor to represent French interests, but I felt that he should ask some one else.

After I had concluded my business with him we turned to other topics, or to the one topic, and he announced to us the victory at Liège; the Belgian army has fought heroically today and the forts at Liège all hold.

Then de Leval asked, "And the French troops?"

"They are coming..."

It was six o'clock, and later at the Legation we had confirmation of the superb resistance of the Belgians at Liège. The hopes of the town are high; the French and English are expected to come to their support. We had the word just at dinner time, and we were gay in the excitement. Joseph indeed was radiant—as we lifted our glasses to Belgium.

After dinner we drove down into the lower town. A warm and gentle rain was falling, but the streets were brilliant and gay and the throngs drifted through the streets, singing the "Brabançonne" and the "Marseillaise," and everywhere Belgian and French colors. The little tables on the sidewalks before the cafés were all surrounded, and as we drove slowly down the boulevard Anspach we heard now and then the crash of broken glass; the crowds were breaking the "vitrines" of German shops or shops with German names. And as a precautionary measure over the door "Chez Fritz"—a big cafe—was this sign:

"Fritz is a good Luxembourger, but the house is Belgian."

We drove out to Forêt—the night was so warm, the rain so gentle and refreshing... Then home, to find Gibson who had

been over to the British Legation and then come home to telephone to our Embassy at London. He could be heard yelling all over the house. London, he reported, was in turmoil, and there are reports there that the *Iron Duke* has been sunk.

At the British Legation, he was told that the Germans were mowed down today at Liège by the Belgian guns. But a regiment of Belgian lancers, the same boys we saw with their gaily floating pennants as they galloped in review before the two Kings at the Rond Point in the avenue Tervueren that lovely morning in May; the same boys that four days ago rode down the rue Belliard on their way to the front, are said to have been annihilated, and only one officer was saved. Possibility of a big battle tomorrow, for the French, it is said, are coming up in support of the Belgians. Described in those technical terms in which soldiers express themselves, it seems merely like some great game that is being played; but once conceived in human terms it is all horrible.

The other day I wrote a despatch to the Belgian Government about the Hague Conference, but laid it aside intending to polish it up a bit: then, occupied with war, naturally forgot it like the rest of the world. To deliver it now would be an irony too grotesque; something for Hardy's pen.... Ah, the pity of it! And all day the birds have been singing at our little Bois Fleuri and the two magpies are there with the good news they never delivered and the rabbits still nibble at the rose leaves. And over beyond the trees the red roofs of our little Tervueren in the sun; and beyond, Christminster with its spires and the sails of the old windmill turning over and over all day long above the last line of trees; and beyond, Liège, where the Belgian and French and German boys are waiting for the morning to come that they kill each other. They know not why. All they know is that some force has put them in clothes of a certain color, with certain gay trappings and trimmings, and therefore, when they kill each other, the deed is something other than killing! The whole fabric of civilization, so amazing, so delicately adjusted, smashed in a second by a madman at Berlin.

I sent an open telegram to the President today, in an effort to adjust the representation of German interests, and to impress the Belgian Department of Telegraph. But as yet no response to any of our many inquiries, except that we have had telegrams from Mrs. Willard to look after her sacred Sèvres antiques which she bought at the antiquary's the other day, and a cablegram from

her husband, whom the war has caught on the other side of the Atlantic, and tonight a telegram saying that ships will be sent for the transport of Americans in Europe—that \$2,500,000 has been appropriated by Congress and that the money and officers to take charge of the repatriation are to arrive on the *Tennessee*....

The King issued a stirring proclamation to his troops today recalling to the soldiers Cæsar's saying: "*Horum omnium fortissime sunt Belgae.*"¹ It is a noble document.

¹ The bravest of all these are the Belgæ.