

January 17, 1917.—Francqui here to tea, very cheerful with a long account of his voyage—Frankfort-am-Main, Berne, Paris, Havre, La Panne, London, and return. He says he suggested the separate note that the Belgian Government sent to the President, and that the King wrote most of it with his own hand. He told of his understanding with Hoover, which seems to be genuine, or at least workable, his account being in all respects like that given by Hoover in his letter. He has a theory, not different from that published by the *New Republic* and later amplified by the President, that America should assume the neutrality of Belgium, and thereby complete the work she has done in coming to the aid of Belgium. He had told it to the King at La Panne, who endorsed it and asked him to tell it to me and ask me to send it to the President. I—well, we shall see. It should be thought over a little.

The slave-drive will begin at Brussels the 20th. Men—ah, poor, sad men!—have been coming all day to the Legation showing cards of convocation. They are all unemployed, and in some way the Germans must have secured or made lists; there are no placards no public demands; individuals are notified by these cards, left by soldiers at their homes, to appear at la Gare du Midi on the morning of the 20th, with blankets, shoes and extra heavy clothing—a sinister precaution! There is a penalty for failing to comply; and an offer of work. It is most depressing! *Ay di mi!*

<sup>1</sup> The then-famous Negro prize-fighter.