

June 27, 1921.—Off to Louvain about 12:15. Was received by Monseigneur Debecker² and his vice-rector, Carron, and taken to that room overlooking the pleasant garden where we had luncheon on that memorable day in 1914, in September—was it the 26th? The room is unchanged, but its atmosphere is different, for now the college is alive with the presence of students; then it was empty, and dead, and sad. The Rector mustered the students in that drawing-room, forty of them perhaps, young Americans—Irish every one—all in long black cassocks. . . .

From there to the dining-room for luncheon, at which there were present, besides Mgr. Debecker and myself, Mgr. Ladeuze, rector of the university of Louvain, Baron de Xivry, Mgr. Debecker, brother

² Mgr. Debecker was Principal of the American College at Louvain.

of the rector. The luncheon was typically Belgian, long and heavy, but the talk was lively and interesting, consisting for the greater part of reminiscences of the occupation, and the horror of the sack of Louvain. I asked them to give me their opinion of the visit made to Louvain by Gibson, Poussette, and Bulle, that August day in 1914, when they saw firing from upper windows in the rue de la Station. They all declared that it was without doubt a comedy prepared expressly to impress the secretaries with the truth of the German claims that Louvainists had fired on the German troops. The Germans knew that they were coming, of course; and Baron de Xivry said, since Poussette and Bulle were both pro-German, they swallowed it, and Gibson was duped. He left no doubt in my mind that this was the truth; the Louvainists were all unarmed. The German soldiers had been disguised in clothes taken from one of the hospitals, I think they said; they all knew that and identified the clothes. Besides this, de Stryker, who was imprisoned at that moment in the station, said that one of the German soldiers there had told him that the soldiers came to fire.