



The Rape of Belgium

A Journal of the American Legation in Belgium

By Hugh Gibson, Witness

The secretary of the American Legation in Belgium, seeing everything, kept a personal diary of Germany's immortal sin. The seal of neutrality is broken, and here is one of the great documents of the war.

In this instalment you read of Germany's amazing attempt again to buy a way through Belgium. American officials, careful to avoid being compromised, nevertheless find out Belgium's attitude and do not present the offer. Other agents are found to do so, and Belgium sticks to her colors.

Wild rumors fly thick and Burgomaster Max is pursued by an amateur spy catcher.

Fourth Instalment To-morrow

BRUSSELS, Aug. 8, 1914.—Today our new organization is working like clockwork. In Cruger's formerly calm chancery there are five typewriters pounding away, and at the committee rooms there are swarms of people working to take care of odds and ends. M. de Leval has a table at one side of my room, and the committee relieves us of the people who want information and those who want to talk.

Sunday, Aug. 9.—I got this far when the roof fell in last night. During the afternoon yesterday I got out to attend to a few odds and ends of errands—and, as always happens when I go out, things began to happen. I came back to find the minister and de Leval wrestling with a big one.

Germans Try Again to Buy Way through

A curious telegram had come from The Hague, quoting the text of a message which the German government desired us to present to the Belgian government. Here it is in translation, a truly German message:

The fortress of Liege has been taken by assault after a brave defence. The German government most deeply regret that bloody encounters should have resulted from the attitude of the Belgian government toward Germany. Germany is not coming as an enemy into Belgium; it is only through the force of circumstances that she has had to resort to the military measures of entering Belgium and occupying Liege as a base for her further military operations. Now that the Belgian army has upheld the honor of its arms by its heroic resistance to a very superior force, the German government beg the King of the Belgians and the Belgian government to spare Belgium further horrors of war. The German government are ready to be reconciled with their conflicts with France. Germany once more gives her solemn assurance that it is not her intention to appropriate Belgian territory to herself and that such an intention is far from her thoughts. Germany is still ready to evacuate Belgium as soon as the state of war will allow her to do so.

Belgian Minister Could Not Receive It

Of course we were loath to present anything of the sort, but the thing had to be handled carefully. After some pow-wowing I went over to the Foreign Office with the message and saw Baron Van der Elst. I told him seriously that we had received a very remarkable telegram which purported to contain a message from the German government; that it bore no marks of authenticity, and that we were not sure as to its source, but that we felt that we should be lacking in frankness if we did not show him what we had received. He seized the message and read it through, his amazement and anger growing with each line.

When he had finished, he gasped for a minute or two and then led me into the next room to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Davignon, to

"but the ordinary sort of man won't do"

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The Tribune is edited for intelligent men and women. That's the kind who read The Tribune, and that's the kind of "Help" you want. Try it this time. Phone

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whom he translated the telegram aloud.

When they had finished discussing the message and I had a pretty clear idea as to the Belgian attitude toward the proposal—not that I had had any real doubt—I asked him: "If the American Minister had delivered this message what would have been its reception?" Without an instant's hesitation, M. Davignon replied: "We should have resented his action and should have declined to receive the communication."

Guards Serious in Their Business

That was all I wanted to know and I was ready to go back to the legation.

I took Baron Van der Elst home in the car and had the pleasure of seeing him explain who he was to several Gardes Civiques, who held up the car from time to time. He was very good-natured about it, and only resented the interruptions to what he was trying to say. His son is in the army and he has no news of him. As he got out of the car he remarked that if it were not so horrible the mere interests of events would be enough to make these days wonderful.

When I got back to the legation and reported the result of my visit we went to work and framed a telegram to Washington, giving the text of the German message, explaining that we had nothing to prove its authenticity and adding that we had reason to believe that the Belgian government would not accept it. The same message was sent to The Hague.

This pleasant exercise with the code kept us going until four in the morning. Eugene, the wonder chauffeur, had no orders, but curled up on the front seat of his car and waited to take me home. He was also on hand when I got up a couple of hours later to take me back to the legation. Chauffeurs like that are worth having.

Frightened Germans Besiege Consulate

When I came in this morning the place was packed with Germans. Some cheerful idiot had inserted a notice in the papers that all Germans were to be run out of the country, and that they should immediately apply to the American Legation. As the flood poured in Leval got on the telephone to the Surete Publique and found out the true facts.

Then we posted a notice in the hall. But that was not enough. As is always the case with humans, they all knew better than to pay any attention to what the notice said, and each one of the hundred or more callers had some reason to insist on talking it over with somebody. When they once got hold of one of us it was next to impossible to get away without listening to the whole story of their lives. All they had to do was to go down to the German Consulate-General, where we had people waiting to tell them all there was to know. It was hard to make them realize that by taking up all our time in this way they were preventing us from doing things that were really necessary to serve them in more important matters. I said as much to several of them, who were unusually long-winded, but every last one replied that his case was different and that he must be heard out at length.

800 More Sent Across Border

Our refugee train left this morning and took eight hundred more of the poor people. Where they all turn up from I don't know, but each day brings us a fresh and unexpected batch. Many of the cases are very sad, but if we stop to give sympathy in every deserving case we should never get anything practical done for them.

To-day's budget of news is that the French have got to Mulhouse and have inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Germans. According to reports,

the Alsations went mad when the French troops crossed the frontier for the first time in forty-four years. They tore up and burned the frontier posts and generally gave way to transports of joy. I would have given a lot to see the crowds in Paris.

A letter came yesterday from Omer, the legation footman, who is at Trellemont with the artillery. He said he had not yet been hit, although he had heard the bullets uncomfortably near. He wound up by saying that he had *beaucoup de courage*—and I believe him.

Kaiser's Men Think They Are in Paris

It seems that some of the German troops did not know what they were attacking and thought they were in France. When brought here as prisoners some of them expressed surprise to find that Paris was so small. They seem to have thought that they were in France and the goal not far away.

The King to-day received through other channels the message from the Emperor of Germany in regard to peace which we declined to transmit. I have not seen its text, but hear it is practically identical with the message sent us, asking the King to name his conditions for the evacuation of Liege and the abandonment of his allies, so that Germany may be entirely free of Belgian opposition in her further operations against France. I have heard among Belgians only the most indignant comments on the proposal and look forward with interest to seeing the answer of the King, which should appear to-morrow.

Belgium Gives Her Final Answer

The proposal made to us by the German government repeats the proposal which was formulated in the ultimatum of August 2. Faithful to her international obligations, Belgium can only reiterate her reply to August 3 her neutrality has been violated, a distressing war has been waged on her territory, and the guarantors of her neutrality have responded loyally and without delay to her appeal.

The town is most warlike in appearance. There is hardly a house in the town that does not display a large Belgian flag. It looks as though it were bedecked for a fiesta.

Here and there are French and British flags, but practically no others. Every motor in town flies a flag or flags at the bow. We fly our own, but none the less the sentries, who are stationed at all the corners dividing the chief quarters of the town and before all the ministries and other public buildings, stop us and demand the papers of the chauffeur and each passenger in the car. We have passports and all sorts of other papers, but that was not enough, and we finally had to be furnished by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a special *laissez-passer*.

This afternoon I slipped out for a breath of air and was held up and told that even that was no good until I had had it vided by the military authorities. It is said that these strict measures are the result of the discovery of a tremendous spy system here. According to the stories which are told, but of which we have little confirmation, spies are being picked up all the time in the strangest disguises.

Burgomaster Max Chased as a Spy

The gossip and "inside news" that is imparted to us is screamingly funny—some of it.

Yesterday, according to one of these yarns, four nuns arriving at the Gare du Midi were followed for some time and finally arrested. When searched, they proved to be young German officers who had adopted that dress in order to conceal carrier pigeons which they were about to deliver in Brussels. Wireless outfits are said to have been discovered in several houses belonging to Germans. I cannot remember all the yarns that are going about, but even if a part of them are true, it should make interesting work for those who are looking for the spies. The regular arrests of proven spies have been numerous enough to turn every Belgian into an amateur spy-catcher. Yesterday afternoon Burgomaster Max was chased for several blocks because somebody raised a cry of "Espion" based on nothing more than his blond beard and chubby face. I am just as glad not to be fat and blond these days.

Yesterday afternoon a Garde Civique came in with the announcement that the chancellor and clerks of the German Legation, who were locked up there, were in dire distress; that a baby had been born the day before to the wife of the concierge, and that all sorts of troubles had come upon them.

Forgets His Hatred To Help a Baby

Leval, who had announced that his heart was infinitely hardened against all Germans, was almost overcome by the news of a suffering baby and ran like a lamp-lighter to get around there and help out. When we arrived, however, we found them all beaming and happy. The baby had been born some days before and the mother was up and about before the legation had been closed. Their meals are sent in from a neighboring restaurant, and they are perfectly contented to bide their time as they are. They had orders from Berlin not to leave the legation, so it made little difference to them whether they were blockaded by the Belgian authorities or not. I shall drop in every day or two and see whether there is anything I can do to lighten their gloom. Of course, their telephone was cut off and they are not allowed to receive mail or papers, so they are consumed with curiosity about developments. It was, of course, necessary to refuse to answer their questions about what was going on, and to make assurance doubly sure. I had the Garde Civ-

Business Brisker As War Spreads

As things shape up now it looks as though we were the only life-sized country that could keep neutral for long, and as a consequence all the representatives of the countries in conflict are keeping us pretty well posted in the belief that they may have to turn their interests over to us. We shall probably soon have to add Austrian interests to the German burdens we now have.

If there is a German advance, some of the Allied ministers will no doubt turn their legations over to us. The consequence is that we may see more of the inside of things than anybody else. Now, at least, we are everybody's friends. This is undoubtedly the most interesting post in Europe for the time being, and I would not be anywhere else for the wealth of the Indies.

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Pacifist Pastor to Quit Pulpit in Savannah

SAVANNAH, Nov. 5.—Because he opposed supporting the government in its war policies and his congregation called for his resignation, the Rev. J. K. Taylor, pastor of the First Baptist Church, leading one of that denomination in Savannah, announced today he would leave his pulpit next Sunday night.

Dr. Taylor at the Southern Baptist convention at New Orleans last summer opposed the adoption of a resolution pledging the support of the Baptists of the South to the government in its war with Germany. He did this because he was opposed to war, and held the convention had no right to pledge its membership in such a way.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Not Imprisoned in Chicago

Announcement was made yesterday by George W. Whiteside, counsel for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, that his client was not imprisoned in Chicago, as had been reported in a Chicago dispatch, which appeared in The Tribune of November 4.

Mr. Whiteside said that Miss Flynn is still in this city under bond, and will journey to Chicago at her own expense and unaccompanied, when the United States Attorney calls her to trial on an indictment charging her and other members of the I. W. W. with conspiracy to obstruct the military policies of the United States.

Even Germans Asked Gerard To End Massacre of Russians

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5.—The fact that German soldiers appealed to Ambassador Gerard as "the representative of a Christian state" to protest against atrocities and butcheries in which their commanders forced them to participate will be disclosed in a forthcoming issue of a pamphlet by the committee on public information entitled "German War Practices."

One German soldier, conscience-stricken with the massacre of Russian prisoners, implored the American Ambassador to protest, and signed his letter "A GERMAN SOLDIER AND A CHRISTIAN."

Another, who through the ambassador, addressed his appeal to the American government against the butchery of prisoners, and signed his letter "A Soldier and Man Who Is No Barbarian."

This was the protest of a German soldier, an eye witness of the slaughter of Russian soldiers in the Masurian lakes and swamps:

"It was frightful, heartrending, as these masses of human beings were driven to destruction. Above the terrible thunder of the cannon could be heard the heartrending cries of the Russians: 'Oh, Prussians, oh, Prussians!'—but there was no mercy. Our captain had ordered: 'The whole lot must die; so rapid fire.' As I have heard, five men and one officer on our side went mad from these heartrending cries."

Joked as They Massacred

"But most of my comrades and the officers joked as the unarmed and helpless Russians shrieked for mercy while they were being suffocated in the swamps and shot down. The order was 'Close up and at it harder.' For days afterward those heartrending yells followed me, and I dare not think of them or I shall go mad. There is no God, there is no morality and no ethics any more. There are no human beings any more, but only beasts. Down with militarism!"

This was the experience of a Prussian soldier at present wounded:

"If you are a truth-loving man, please receive these lines from a common Prussian soldier."

This was the testimony of another German soldier on the East front:

"In the name of Christianity I send you these words: My conscience forces

me as a Christian German soldier to inform you of these lines.

"Wounded Russians are killed with the bayonet, according to orders."

"And Russians who have surrendered are often shot down in masses, according to orders, in spite of their heart-rending prayers."

"In the hope that you, as the representative of a Christian state, will protest against this, I sign myself,

"I would give my name and regiment, but these words could get me court-martialed for divulging military secrets."

Englishmen Shot Down

This letter was from a soldier on the Western front:

"To the American Government, Washington, U. S. A.

"Englishmen who have surrendered are shot down in small groups. With the French one is more considerate. I ask whether men let themselves be taken prisoner in order to be disarmed and shot down afterward? Is that chivalry in battle? It is no longer a secret among the people. One hears everywhere that few prisoners are taken; they are shot down in small groups. They say naively: 'We don't want any unnecessary mouths to feed. Where there is no one to enter complaint, there is no judge.' Is there, then, no power in the world which can put an end to these murders and rescue the victims? Where is Christianity? Where is right? Might is right."

"A SOLDIER AND MAN WHO IS NO BARBARIAN."

Berger's Paper Sues for Mail Right

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5.—The Milwaukee Social Democratic Publishing Company, publisher of "The Milwaukee Leader," of which Victor L. Berger is editor, to-day brought proceedings in the local courts to compel Postmaster General Burleson to restore the paper to the second class mailing privileges. The publishing company challenges the constitutionality of the espionage act and the trading with the enemy act. The Postmaster General was given until November 16 to answer.

It is charged that the provisions of the espionage act and the trading with the enemy act, granting power to the Postmaster General and his assistants to determine when the laws are violated, are unconstitutional. They do not, the publishing company contends,

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Letters to Former Ambassador From Christian Teuton Soldiers, Expressing Horror at Wholesale Shooting of Prisoners, About To Be Made Public

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afford the accused persons trial by court and thus violate the rights of free speech and a free press. "The Leader" says it has been the organ of the Social Democratic party and several labor unions, and although advocating international peace, has at no time published any articles violating any of the provisions of the espionage act or similar enactments.

Denial of the right to use the mails, it is claimed, has caused the paper to lose 15,000 subscribers.

I. W. W. Near Troop Train Cut in Two on Siding

OROVILLE, Cal., Nov. 5.—Two cars of a Western Pacific troop train filled with soldiers were uncoupled as the train stood on a siding in the Feather River Canyon late Saturday night, officers reported to-day. Prior to the discovery that the train had been cut a gang of men singing songs of the Industrial Workers of the World heeded and jeered. A few climbed on to a car, but were scattered by the soldiers, with no injuries resulting.

The train had proceeded several hundred yards when it was discovered two of the cars had been detached.

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Hart Schaffner & Marx Clothes.

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An Important Sale of Women's Winter Coats

for to-morrow (Wednesday) will present four new, distinctive models (all silk-lined throughout)

at prices that represent very remarkable values.

WOOL VELOUR COATS
in two different models; one in green or brown, with beaver collar; the other in black or reindeer, with collar of dyed opossum; either style \$42.50

HABIT CLOTH COATS
(belted model) in taupe or tete-de-negre; with collar of Hudson seal \$58.00

VELVET VELOUR COATS
(in black only), silk-trimmed; with beaver collar \$58.00

Interesting Reductions have been made in the prices of many of the High-cost Coats and Wraps.

(Women's Coats, Third Floor)

175

Misses' Tailored Suits

in smart, desirable styles and materials, will be placed on sale to-morrow at the exceptionally low prices (considering values) of

\$25.00 & \$32.00
(Misses' Department, Second Floor)

175

Fifth Avenue - Madison Avenue, New York

A Sale of Linen Handkerchiefs FOR MEN AND WOMEN

will offer unusual price advantages for to-morrow.

MEN'S LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS
Initialed (all white), per dozen \$2.75 & 3.00
With colored initial, per dozen 3.00

Plain, hemstitched, per dozen \$2.10, 3.50 & 5.00
With tape border, per dozen 3.00

WOMEN'S LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS
Initialed, per dozen \$1.50, 1.80 & 2.50
Plain, hemstitched, per dozen \$1.50, 1.90 & 2.50

With 1/16-inch hem (fine quality) per dozen \$4.50 & 5.70
Hemmed, with tape border, per dozen 2.00

Hemstitched, with embroidered corner, per dozen \$2.10 & 2.75

Also Novelty Handkerchiefs of crepe de Chine, per dozen \$2.10

Men's Handkerchiefs, in all the wanted varieties, are a special feature in the Handkerchief Department. Among them are handkerchiefs of fine linen with hand-hemstitched hems, with tape borders, or with hand-embroidered initials.

SPECIAL NOTICE

It is requested that orders for the initialing or monogramming of handkerchiefs or silverware intended for Christmas gifts be placed as early as possible, inasmuch as the facilities of the Embroidering and Engraving Departments will be taxed to the utmost as the holiday season approaches.