

receive the lowest price in provisions for the merchandise they have to exchange.

From the city of Orekhov-Zuyev alone, no less than nine parties, containing in all 13,500 workers, have gone

forth in search of food. They will lose, at a moderate calculation, 567,000 working-days, while at best they are not likely to bring back provisions to support them more than three months, and that most inadequately.

ON THE EVE OF THE TRAGEDY. III

BY BARON GAIFFIER D'HESTROY

[The following article by a distinguished Belgian diplomat, who was political director of the Belgian Foreign Office in 1914, continues the descriptions of incidents in European capitals attending the outbreak of the war, of which we published installments in our issues of August 6 and August 13.]

From *La Revue de France*, September 1
(PARIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL SEMI-MONTHLY)

LIKE my colleagues of the diplomatic corps, I was away on vacation during the last week of July, 1914. That is sufficient to show the extent to which Germany and Austria had succeeded in lulling our suspicions. I was sojourning in the Engadine with my family, at a quiet remote point, where we were practically cut off from news. The Swiss hotel proprietors, anxious to keep their guests as long as possible, bulletined scarcely a telegram. Three days after Austria delivered its ultimatum to Serbia, I telegraphed to Brussels for instructions. I received a reply on Tuesday evening, the 28th of July, from our Minister of Foreign Affairs, instructing me to return at once, and I left on the morning of Wednesday, the 29th.

At Pontresina, homeward-bound Germans and Austrians fairly stormed the train. By the merest accident I met M. Solvay, our great manufacturer, who was returning to Belgium and

courteously offered me accommodations in his private car. At Basel he asked me to dine with him at the Hotel Euler, where he had invited several German manufacturers to meet him. The latter affected to scoff at the possibility of war, and did their best to convince us of Germany's peaceable intentions.

That night, when we passed through Strassburg, I observed several trains packed with soldiers in the railway yards. All bridges and tunnels in the vicinity of Metz were under military guard. At Arlon we found the first Belgian reservists hastening to join their regiments. In fact my government had decided the previous evening to put the country in a state of defense.

Immediately upon arriving at Brussels, on the morning of July 30, I hastened to the Foreign Office for news. The dispatches from Berlin from our Minister, my old friend Baron Beyens,

left no doubt as to the gravity of the crisis. Germany's desire for war was obvious in all her replies, denials, and silences. That country was resisting passively every effort of England, France, and Russia to prevent a conflict. That was evident. I telegraphed my wife, who had remained in Switzerland, to rejoin me at once with the children.

We instructed all our foreign representatives as to the military precautions we had taken, and also as to England's measures at Paris and Berlin to make sure that our neutrality would be respected. Germany's evasive replies were already causing us concern. Our disquietude was increased by alarming rumors which reached us through Holland. Up to Thursday, July 30, the Dutch government fancied that Germany might attack through Limburg and Northern Brabant, and was disposed to confer with us upon joint measures of defense. On July 31, the Dutch Minister at Berlin received formal assurance from Germany that Holland's territories would not be violated. Thereupon, her government suddenly reversed its attitude, and we made no further progress in that direction.

That day, M. Klobukovski, Minister of France to Belgium, brought us the following formal declaration: —

I assure you that French troops will not invade Belgium, even though we may mass heavy forces along the frontier of your country. France will not incur responsibility for the first hostile act against Belgium. Instructions to this effect have been issued by the French Government.

A few hours later the British Minister delivered an equally important declaration to us: 'England assumes that Belgium will do everything possible to enforce her neutrality.'

The Minister of Foreign Affairs replied: 'We shall make every effort to do

that, and our army, which has been strengthened considerably as a consequence of its recent reorganization, is prepared to repel with vigor any violation of our territory.'

On the following day, August 1, another communication was received from the French Government: —

I am authorized to inform you that in case of war, the Government of the Republic will respect the neutrality of Belgium, as it has consistently promised. In case that neutrality should not be respected by another Power, the French Government may be compelled to modify its attitude in order to guarantee its own safety.

We at once transmitted this important declaration to our representatives abroad. The Minister of Foreign Affairs communicated it to the German Minister at Brussels. The latter thanked him, saying: 'Up to the present I have not been instructed to make an official communication to you. But you know my personal opinion: that Belgium need have no fear from its neighbors on the east.'

Thereupon, our Minister of Foreign Affairs observed: 'What we know of the intentions of our eastern neighbors, based on many previous conversations, does not permit us to doubt their attitude toward Belgium. But it would be most gratifying to us to receive a formal declaration to that effect, which our nation would welcome with joy.'

During the 30th and 31st of July, provincial governors and local and municipal officials received full instructions to guide them in case of a general mobilization. Proclamations were drafted informing the people of the rights and duties of belligerents in case of a foreign occupation. The text of the existing treaties and the rules of international law were quoted. A few weeks later the Germans were teaching our people a new version of the law of nations.

On the evening of July 31 a general mobilization was ordered.

Sunday, August 2, I learned, while on my way to the office, that the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg had been violated. I was deeply disturbed. The likelihood that German troops would attempt to march through Belgium was thereby increased. At nine o'clock that morning, the British Minister came to inquire whether the Germans had not already violated Belgian territory. He said to me: 'They know at London that the territory of Luxemburg has been violated; but though Great Britain is one of the guarantors of that neutrality, the incident is not important enough to obligate our government to intervene by force of arms. It would be very different were the Germans to violate the neutrality of Belgium.'

Late that morning I entered the office of my chief, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss the situation, which seemed to both of us very gloomy. He remarked: 'Let us go to church and pray for our unhappy country. It has never needed our prayers more.'

At one o'clock P.M., the German Minister called. He was far from being the fierce personage that some have painted him. He was merely a Prussian functionary, absolutely obedient to his superiors, devoid of initiative, doing nothing on his own responsibility. I know that he regretted having to deliver the humiliating orders of his government. He came to have a friendly conversation with me, he said, concerning the situation of German residents in Belgium, who had been hastily ordered back to their country by the mobilization. He wanted to facilitate their return by our overcrowded railways. Could we not receive German reservists on board our third-class cars in excess of the legal limit?

I replied that I should be obliged to

refer him to our railway authorities. But, of course, if we granted that favor to Germans, we should have to extend it also to French reservists.

I had known M. von Below, the German Minister, for many years. We had formerly been stationed in Peking at the same time. I noted that he was very nervous and excited, and could not avoid referring to it. He attributed his nervousness to the heat, which was excessive that day, and also to his having walked up a staircase of some forty steps. That explanation did not satisfy me, and I tried to push my inquiries further. I might have discovered something, had not one of my colleagues just then entered the office and terminated our conversation.

Belgium had no spy service. We knew absolutely nothing of what was occurring across the German boundary. In fact, up to the morning of August 2 nothing unusual was observed along the frontier. In order to prevent our taking alarm, the Germans completed their concentration east of the Rhine. No large bodies of troops had approached our boundary.

At three P.M., on August 2, our vice-consul at Cologne entered my office in great agitation. He exclaimed: 'Ever since six o'clock this morning, trains loaded with soldiers have passed through Cologne every three or four minutes; they are not going southwest, toward France, but in the direction of Aix-la-Chapelle, toward Belgium.'

It was no longer possible to doubt what was happening. I took the gentleman at once to our chief of staff, where his information caused a painful impression. However, it did not compel us to modify the measures we had already taken to defend our neutrality. Until Germany made some formal declaration, we could not go further.

All was quiet in the city. The streets and parks and cafés were thronged with

the usual Sunday crowd. I know that there was not a person among them who suspected in the slightest what was about to befall. The people had implicit confidence in our treaties.

When our Belgian soldiers were mobilized, they merely looked forward to a period of easy, ordinary guard duty on the frontier. That day the German Minister gave an interview to *Le Soir*, again assuring the people of Germany's friendship. He summarized his statement in this phrase: 'It may be that the conflagration will extend to your neighbor's house; but your own house will be spared.'

The same evening, Captain Brinkmann, the German military attaché, begged the *XX^e Siècle* to deny categorically the report that his country had declared war against France, and even, he added, against Russia. He denied at the same time that German troops had occupied Luxemburg. As a result of this interview, several of the evening papers published exceedingly reassuring statements.

However, just before seven P.M., the German Minister telephoned, asking an immediate audience with our Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was invited to call at once. By seven o'clock he appeared. He entered the minister's house and delivered to him, by order, his government's ultimatum, which was in the German language. As our Foreign Minister, M. Davignon, did not know that language, he informed him of the general tenor of the note.

My colleague, M. de Bassompierre, and I, waited with extreme anxiety and emotion for M. von Below to leave. We felt instinctively that this was a decisive interview. Scarcely had his tall form disappeared through the door than we hastened to our chief. We found him sitting stunned in his chair. He exclaimed: 'It's horrible, it's frightful. It's the worst thing that could have

happened.' He handed us the paper. I took it at once. At the top were two French words, indelibly engraved on my memory: *Très confidentiel*.

M. Bassompierre sat down at the minister's desk, and I dictated to him phrase by phrase the translation. This translation was not revised prior to its publication in our *Gray Book*, which explains why it contains some slight inaccuracies.

M. de Broqueville, the Premier, whom M. Davignon had at once notified, entered the moment we completed the translation. M. Bassompierre read the note in French, and we comprehended for the first time all the cynicism and the infamy that the document expressed.

It said: 'The German government has received positive information to the effect that the French armies intend to cross the Meuse at Givet and Namur.

The safety of Germany makes it the imperative duty of her government to anticipate this attack of the enemy.' After this short pre-ambule followed the government's declaration and threats. No other reason for Germany's action was stated than this miserable pretext, which would not stand a moment's scrutiny.

What was the source of all this authoritative information of an alleged advance of the French army across Belgium? Upon what circumstantial evidence was it based? It was contradicted by the repeated assurances of France, whose government was vitally interested in not irritating England, and in respecting the neutrality of Belgium.

The German diplomats did not even take the trouble to find a plausible justification. On the morning of August 3 they tried precisely the same thing with France. Their declaration of war was founded upon a pretext as ridiculous as it was false: the fable that French airplanes had bombed Nuremberg.

The truth is that German diplomats were but unhappy instruments in the hands of their General Staff, which issued orders to them and even drafted their notes. If they had been given a free hand they would have managed things more adroitly. But the German General Staff simply did not care. It believed that it was strong enough to do what it willed, and disregarded what it considered trifles. We know from Kautsky's book what actually happened. It is a curious and significant story.

On July 29, that is four days previously, the German Foreign Office received the ultimatum to Belgium in the personal handwriting of von Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff, under date of July 26. All that the Imperial Chancellor and the Foreign Minister did was to make a few immaterial emendations: As Kautsky remarks contemptuously: 'Those gentlemen confined themselves to the noble function of letter-carrying.' Moltke, true to the Prussian military type, ended the note with this clear-cut phrase: 'A definite answer must be given within twenty-four hours; otherwise, hostilities will begin immediately.' That conclusion seemed too blunt to von Jagow. He erased it, and substituted a milder phrase.

That very day von Jagow sent it in a sealed envelope to the German Minister at Brussels, ordering him not to open it until he received telegraphic instructions. Those instructions were dispatched on August 2. When M. von Below called upon me Sunday afternoon, he already knew the contents of the ultimatum, which he was ordered to deliver to us at precisely seven P.M. that night. This was the true explanation of his nervousness and obvious emotion during his prior visit. But he was not to show his hand until seven P.M. In order to leave us as little time as pos-

sible for reflection, the term of the ultimatum was reduced from twenty-four hours to twelve; in other words, our reply was due at seven o'clock Monday morning.

Another change, very important but not sufficiently remarked, was made in the note. The original draft sent to Brussels from Berlin on July 29 contained the following phrase: —

If Belgium will consent to maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality toward Germany in the war which is now imminent, the German Government agrees, on its part, not only to guarantee the Kingdom of Belgium all its present possessions at the conclusion of peace, but to give the most favorable consideration to such claims as Belgium may make for territorial compensation at the cost of France.

So both the civil and military authorities at Berlin originally contemplated suggesting a base bargain to Belgium. If my country would become an accomplice in the hold-up that was being plotted, she was to receive part of the loot obtained from the victim she was to stab in the back.

Doubtless, the gentlemen of the German Foreign Office decided, on maturer reflection, that this was a little too raw; so they telegraphed to their representatives at Brussels to eliminate the phrase in question. They also telegraphed their minister this interesting advice: 'The Government there must be kept under the impression that you have received none of these instructions until to-day.'

It was late Sunday afternoon, following a glorious summer day. The whole population of Brussels was abroad in the streets and parks. Parties of singing men and women were returning, flower-laden, from country excursions. What a contrast between their innocent happiness and unconcern, and the agony which strangled our hearts!

At eight o'clock M. de Broqueville left the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to

notify the King. It was decided to summon a cabinet meeting at the Palace that same evening. Some of our ministers were absent. They were in the country, attending public ceremonies and delivering speeches. Dispatches and telephone messages were sent in every direction. All who were able to reach the city were summoned at once. They arrived by train and automobile in the course of the evening. The cabinet meeting began about nine o'clock P.M. All the regular ministers and the assistant secretaries took part. As you know, there was not a moment's hesitation, not a word of debate, as to the reply to be given Germany. There was instantaneous unanimity. One of the under-secretaries merely recited the effect of a different decision, to emphasize how impossible it was. No one of the members present had the slightest illusion as to the consequence of this reply. They knew it involved war with all of its horror, and probably foreign occupation as well. But let me repeat: they did not waver a moment in their decision.

It was nearly midnight before the cabinet meeting closed. Several ministers came to the Foreign Office to draft the reply to Germany. I was so certain what that answer would be that I had employed the interval making a preliminary draft. This was used as a basis. Not one of us had eaten any dinner. We began to feel hungry, and divided among our party a few of those long loaves of bread which in Belgium we call *pistolets*.

It was easy enough to draft our reply. We merely had to put our feelings into words. We knew that we should thus record the sentiment of the entire nation, which was fully awake to the rights and duties which neutrality imposed upon it.

While we were drafting the document a significant incident occurred. The

German Minister called twice at the Foreign Office. The first time was about half-past one in the morning. He asked to see the Secretary-General, Baron Van den Helst, and reported to him:—

'I am instructed by my government to inform you that French dirigibles have dropped bombs in Germany, and that a French cavalry patrol has crossed our frontier, thus violating the laws of nations, since war has not yet been declared.'

'But where did these incidents occur?' asked the Secretary-General.

'In Germany,' replied M. von Below.

'In this case, I cannot understand why you make this communication to us. It is a matter between yourselves and the French, which does not concern the Belgians.'

M. von Below, obviously much confused, began a confused explanation. He said that these acts, in defiance of the law of nations, created the supposition that France would commit other acts of the same kind. In reality, all this was mere pretense and lies. The German Minister's real purpose was to fish for some indication from the expression of our countenances, or from some chance remark, of the nature of our reply.

The latter was ready about two A.M. It was taken to the Palace and ratified by the full cabinet, the King presiding.

A little later, M. Klobukovski, the French Minister, telephoned us. He informed us that a German dirigible had been discovered on its way to Brussels. The presence of that dirigible was subsequently confirmed by a large number of witnesses. Probably it was in communication with the German Legation, which had its own wireless apparatus. I was commissioned by the cabinet to deliver the reply of the Belgian government at the hour set, seven o'clock A.M. I returned home, and since there were no cabs abroad, I

had to walk; it was quite a distance. When I arrived, I took a bath and dressed for the occasion.

Seven A.M. was striking when I presented myself at the Germany Embassy. The Minister received me in his office. He was very pale and could scarcely control his emotion. I entered, bowed slightly, without shaking hands. I handed him our note, merely saying: 'Here is the reply of the Belgian Government.'

He read it rapidly; his face contracted. Then he asked: 'Have you any comment to add?' I shook my head and left. The interview did not last more than three minutes.

Captain Brinkmann, the military attaché, was waiting in the courtyard in a high-powered automobile; the motor was going. I had hardly taken a dozen steps before it shot away in the direction of Aix-la-Chapelle. We learned later that the German General Staff, which was managing the whole affair, had ordered the Minister to send it direct information by automobile the moment he telegraphed our reply to Berlin. The messenger was to report to General von Emmich, at the Union Hotel in Aix-la-Chapelle. This general commanded the forces ordered to capture Liège by a surprise attack. The moment he received this message, a few hours later, he put his troops in motion. Captain Brinkmann was also the first man to cross our frontier the next morning — Wednesday — carrying a white flag. He presented himself to the Governor of Liège, demanding that the place be surrendered.

I went directly from Belliard Street, where the German Legation was situated, to the Foreign Office on *Rue de la Loi*. Newsboys were already calling an extra edition of *L'Étoile Belge*, reporting the ultimatum. Few people were abroad at this early hour. Most of our citizens did not learn the terrible news

until later, between eight and nine o'clock.

I hastened next to the French Legation, believing it my duty to inform M. Klobukovski, the Minister, of what had occurred. He had not retired during the whole night. I found him in the company of his military attaché and a correspondent of the Havas Agency, and communicated to him the text of the ultimatum and of our reply. The Havas correspondent wrote out on the spot, under my own eyes, an accurate and complete summary of both documents. His telegram was sent from Paris to London, where it arrived about ten o'clock in the morning. It produced, as we know from abundant testimony, a tremendous sensation. It rallied the whole British nation, which had hitherto been passive, to the support of Belgium.

The Premier lived only a few steps from the French Legation. I informed him of my visit to M. Klobukovski, and said that I was preparing to notify similarly the ministers of England and of Russia. Although he had been up all night, M. de Broqueville was perfectly composed and calm. He tranquilly dictated orders to his subordinates while waiting for the cabinet to meet. It had been summoned to assemble at ten o'clock. The perfect tranquillity of this gentleman, on whose shoulders rested such a crushing burden, seemed to me of splendid augury, and gave me much comfort. By the time I left his office, the *Rue de la Loi* was already black with people excitedly discussing what had happened. But there was not a discordant voice. The first flags began to appear at the windows.

Germany's ultimatum had been a conditional declaration of war. We had rejected the condition, and therefore were really at war with Germany after three o'clock A.M., on August 3. We had the right to intern every German

reservist still remaining in our country, and there were many of them. Unhappily we did not act. They all were given time to get across the border — a mistake which France likewise committed. This assault upon the plain rights of Belgium seemed so unjust, so brutally impossible, that many of our people still insisted that it was only bluff. They said: 'Those people will not dare to use force. It will set the whole world against them.'

But such men did not know the Ger-

mans. What folly to imagine that they would not carry the thing through after the attitude they had already taken!

At six o'clock A.M., on Tuesday, August 4, the Minister of Germany delivered the following message from his government: 'Since Belgium has rejected Germany's proposal, the latter country will use force to cross your territory.'

Four hours later the German troops, under General von Emmich, invaded our country. War had begun.

DR. JOHNSON'S REPUTATION

From *The London Times, Literary Supplement, September 1*
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THE history of Johnson's reputation is accurately reflected in his bibliography. In his lifetime, when once the Dictionary had secured his fame, his books were in steady though never in great demand. Of the *Rambler* some eleven editions were printed between 1752 and 1784. There were seven lifetime editions of *Rasselas*. The *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, completed in 1781, were reprinted in the same year, and again in 1783. When Johnson died, the booksellers combined to produce a collected edition, and this was published in eleven volumes in 1787. The editor was Sir John Hawkins, who prefixed to the collection a lengthy *Life* of his friend, which is now seldom read, though it has been used as a quarry by later builders.

Hawkins's edition was incomplete; and two booksellers, not members of the original group, made haste to supplement it by printing the *Parliamentary Debates*, the translation of Lobo,

and a number of miscellaneous pieces: in all, four volumes, which were offered to 'those Gentlemen who intend to complete Dr. Johnson's Works.' About the same time George Strahan published *Prayers and Meditations composed by Samuel Johnson*; the Rev. Samuel Hayes, Usher of Westminster School, published *Sermons on Different Subjects, left for publication by John Taylor, LL.D. . . . to which is added a Sermon written by Samuel Johnson, LL.D., for the Funeral of his Wife* — a juxtaposition intended to point the ambiguity of *left for publication*. Mrs. Piozzi published *Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, and other letters appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The *Poems* also were separately collected.

The demand of which these publications are proof was not quickly satisfied. The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., continued to be printed at frequent intervals for nearly forty years. Haw-