

Copy of letter written in 1919, to recount the events at Oudenburg, Belgium during the War. The correspondent tells of the Superior's decision to have all notes and diaries burned in 1918, before the War's end to prevent the Germans from finding them. This account is the Sister's attempt to recall the events through 1915.

J.M.J.J.

My very dear Sisters,

You are all anxious to hear some details of our experiences during the war. I see by the little news we have already received that you know as much, perhaps more, about our present situation, than we do. Then, too, I have no notes to help me for those characteristic incidents which will not have reached you and would have interested you so much. I had mimeographed every three months the story of those three months. It was well done, long and exact, because I had much time at my disposal. From time to time, there was an alarm given, the enemy had suddenly appeared here or there and found a diary, notes of passing events, etc. The result was as you will see, in some cases death, in others cruel sufferings in prison or a heavy fine. Then our dear Mother would order us to destroy all we had that would compromise the house or to hide it in a walled hiding place. We did not know where our treasures were. My "story" went with the rest, at intervals, and I was happy in the thought that you would have so much satisfaction, for I cannot say pleasure, in hearing all one day. It was such a relief, too, to have all that work done, for I felt there would be little time for "retrospect," once the letters would begin. All my stencil paper was used when it was announced that there would be no more opening of the hiding-place, as it was too risky. Once here, the dear Sisters were walling up butter, etc., when the enemy were announced. It was the cellar nearest to them. Our dear Mother flew to give the alarm and the workers had time to disappear, but mortar and all remained. There was no escape from detection and conviction, humanly speaking. As the enemy approached the entrance and our dear Mother prayed calm exteriorly, but oh! So white, a workman appeared on the scene, but coming from another direction. The soldiers immediately closed around him, questioned him, examined his pockets, etc. They exclaim; they have found a dangerous weapon. No, it is only his lead-pencil!!! In the meantime, they had advanced a little in the court and forgot that cellar. But it was almost as delicate a situation in the kitchen cellar. The Sisters were packing their reserves of every description in trunks, intending to hide these in various parts of the house with the hope that if some were found, others would escape. It was at the beginning; there was much on hand for the Retreat and the return of the children. The soldiers entered the meal-room, where there was nothing extraordinary; the door between it and the depot of reserves was open and yet the officer called—"Meat! It is well! Upstairs!" That first year we kept our dear Mother's feast with a certain solemnity, too. The cakes were exposed in the store-room where the alarm was given. We laugh now when we recall the scene. Each Sister seized two dishes and ran, some down, some

up, in fact not knowing where it was best to go. Again, Divine Providence helped us in a visible manner.

But to resume the story of my "History of the War." I was making my Retreat in August last year (1918) when one evening just before supper, Sister Superior sent for me. I saw that her room was in great disorder. There were boxes and packages and among them, some I had confided to the "cachette," she said the enemy had found such things walled up at the Convent of Sisters of Charity and that they were probing the walls everywhere with great, long lances, so we must not run any risk. She was about to burn all. We would be excused if our copper, brass, mattresses, sheets and linen were discovered, because all true Belgians would see an act of patriotism in our effort to save such things from going to help to kill those who were defending us but they would say we were imprudent to keep forbidden writings. I was tempted to be disloyal for once and as Sister Superior left me alone in the room, I could have extracted one copy, but it was bulky and the fear that I should cause the Superiors to go to prison decided me. I made my sacrifice and burned even the notes! How much and how often I had regretted it! especially since we had no visit and the war ended so soon after.

These cachettes had been made at various times, as the needs increased. No man or servant ever worked at them nor carried anything to put in them, for fear they would betray us innocently, if not deliberately. Dear Sister Alberta of Congo fame—you will find her name in the Congo letters which appeared in the "Among the Reapers,"—aided by others worked at them during the night, so that the hammering would not be heard. I dare not write more even now; our dear Mother will tell you more about them if you ask her, when she will be in your midst, my very dear Sisters.

Many things are confused in my mind now; I am sure of the facts, but there was so much in every day that it is difficult to repeat without notes. I shall do my best. You have all read the book of the Duchess, I am sure, so I shall not mention the first bombardment. The young Sisters will have told their experiences when they return to America, also. Let us begin, then, with 1915, in "diary fashion." Jan. 21. Our dear Mother learned that at our Convent in Oudenburg, the desks and other furniture of the Sisters had been burned, the chapel only was spared. The Sisters finally were obliged to evacuate after having suffered much from bombardments, while the enemy occupied the greater part of their buildings. Impossible to have a pass-port for Namur. They boarded in two groups with Sisters of Charity and St. Joseph at Bruges. After repeated efforts to find them on our dear Mother's part and equally earnest efforts on their part to make known their situation, a German Religious, Sacred Heart Father, brought a letter at the peril of his life. He indicated what must be done to have permission for their coming to Namur. He insisted so that our dear Mother should not show the letter to anyone, that she burned it in his presence. He was so grateful, she said. He asked permission to say Mass the next day. At that moment, it would have been most imprudent to permit this here; it could be and was done in small houses. Our dear Mother replied, "It would be a little difficult; we have so many Masses already. (and this was true.) He was very delicate and understood immediately. He was much touched that our dear Mother confided money to him for our Sisters, and he gave or sent her a receipt. He lamented the

war, but again our dear Mother dared not say much, for we knew so many examples of persons betrayed by these chaplains. The poor Belgians thought a Priest could always be trusted, but many of these said, "We are soldiers first or Germans first and priests afterwards." In one of our convents, one who said Mass there daily, took the vases off the parlor mantelpiece. Here at Namur, one took the chalice he had used to say Mass. When the proprietor of the chateau remonstrated, he said, "It is butin de guerre," [booty for the war] and he went off with it. In another case, while the Belgian Curé and one of these was breakfasting, the servant knocked and said, "The sheets and pillow-cases are gone from the bed occupied by the chaplain last night." The Curé claimed them; they were already in his bag! I might fill books with such cases. And when they were here for their ambulance and came to our chapel to take the Blessed Sacrament to the dying, it would make one cry to see their manner of doing it. On the battle-field, we understand there cannot be much ceremony but in an ambulance where all is quiet and they have the time. An auto passed through the streets. On it were several coffins: one fell off and broke open. It was filled with Sacred Vessels stolen from the churches! The Sacred Heart Father was not of this kind, however. He called several times afterwards, said his Holy Mass here each time, for public opinion inside and outside our walls was calmer and was offered his breakfast. He delicately drank the coffee, but would not diminish our too small ration of bread. We do not know what became of him, but think of him kindly. After endless efforts, the dear Sisters of Oudenburg reached Namur. Our dear Mother gave them a much needed rest and then distributed them among several Communities. This is one of the houses our dear Mother has suppressed, from lack of subjects. Then, it was far away and there were Religious of the vicinity who were without a home, six of their houses in Flanders being destroyed. Rousbrugge, the only S.N.D. convent which remained on Belgian territory all through the war, was also offered to these Sisters by our dear Mother, with the consent of the Bishops. Did you know, my very dear Sisters that Monseigneur named the Superior of Rousbrugge when he went to Rome? He was amused over his usurpation of our dear Mother's power. The dear Superior died. Impossible to communicate, both sides doing what they could without success, as in our case, you and us! When Monseigneur went to Rome, they read it in newspaper. The Ecclesiastical Visitor the Diocese and the Sisters as well as their Pastor wrote to him, begging him to name the sister of the Superior deceased; she had been acting as Superior and was much loved and esteemed by all. Our dear Mother was very happy about the matter. They were only five Sisters; she would have been obliged to send three immediately and three with diplomas. She could not find three, so decided to finish the house. It is a pity, but there is consolation in the fact that the children are not abandoned and the Sisters who replace us needed work and a home. The American soldiers were at Rousbrugge, I think, at least for a moment. They erected movable barracks in the courts, instead of putting the Sisters out of their classes and convent. But how far away I have gone from January 1915. To come back-----

January 26, 1915. Visit of our classes by the enemy. Impossible to save a portion of our buildings. They know the Duchess had had the Poor School and Boarding School at her disposition. We were caught, then, and were obliged to show them the same. But an objection

was made that if they took all they visited, we had no place to store desks, etc. "There is plenty of room in the street for the furniture" was the reply.

Jan. 30, 1916. First efforts were made to obtain pass-ports for English novices.

Feb. 7. Day of "Exposition for the Peace" as ordered by our Holy Father.

Feb. 10. King of Bavaria visited Namur. He asked to be received at the Cathedral. Monseigneur replied: "The Cathedral is open to all, but only the King of Belgium will be received with ceremony there." This reply repeated to our King at his recent visit to Namur and reception at the Cathedral moved him very much.

Feb. 11. A barrel stood in the kitchen court as I passed. It was marked "Smith & Co., Grantham, Cumberland County, U.S.A." and it contained macaroni. The Sisters said, "America, America!" It was considered quite an event by the little group around it.

Feb. 12. The pupils of our work-room received Mr. C. S. Bourden, an American Delegate of the "Relief for Belgium" and other gentlemen of the Committee. About one hundred and twenty five girls were engaged there all during the war, thus gaining an honest living and being kept out of temptation. Some of them were the only support of an old Parent because their brothers were at the front. A Sister is in charge. The girls come from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. Some remain for dinner. Several have worked there twenty and more years. Every day while they sew, Sisters gives a religious instruction, a spiritual reading is made, the Rosary and other prayers said, hymns sung and good fiction is also read. They have a few minutes in the court at nine and four o'clock to eat a little lunch they bring from home, if they desire to do so. The Parents must conduct and call for the younger girls. Their conduct on the street and at home must be irreproachable or they are discharged. They earn according to their ability and years of service. Very beautiful work is done there. I described the lace they made for Communion cloth, consisting of pictures taken from the Life of our Blessed Foundress. During the war they made a beautiful piece for the Queen, consisting of the coat of arms of the different Belgian Provinces. I think that this was the only work-room that continued during all the war. It is self-supporting as a rule, but our dear Mother furnished the resources for a period, until the Committee for Relief supplied work and means. Our dear Mother's disinterestness [sic] in this case and her generosity brought many a word of esteem, appreciation, praise and edification to the SNDs. The work-room had a large part of the upper story of the Poor School building. A certain portion was reserved for dormitory for the Sisters, however so that the building would not be abandoned during the night. The misery was so great during the war that more girls were accepted and the dormitory ceded. The servants sleep sufficiently near to give an alarm if necessary. When the ambulance of the Duchess was there at the beginning of the war, our dear Mother gave the Sodality Hall to these needy girls and when the Germans took our buildings, Sister went to a large hall in the city, where several other classes had been given an attic or shop. Our dear Mother said and wrote continually, "Remember that we must do all in our power to continue our

classes for the poor everywhere. Sacrifice the children who pay if necessary; they have homes and parents to protect them, our mission is first the poor. I shall try to supply the money needed in secondary houses in the absence of paying pupils, but let us keep our poor!" This was done everywhere and our dear Lord showed that He was pleased. How many times when our dear Mother could not communicate with many of the houses and worried lest the Sisters should be without money and so suffering for the bare necessities, a Priest or other trustworthy messenger appeared almost under miraculous circumstances at Namur and so brought help to the truly needy Community. Of course there was always a risk. The messenger might be arrested and searched, Killed or imprisoned, but again our dear Lord helped those who tried to care for the poor, and messenger and money always arrived safely and in time. Deo Gratias for all! – But – the American delegates and Belgian members of the Committee were in the Antelier! It was tastefully decorated with flags and scrolls. I had copied the inscriptions and reproduce them in my "history," but I do not remember them now. These girls are real Notre Dame pupils, they are polite, even refine in appearance, at that moment, their clothing was still respectable and they had put on their best, so they made an excellent impression. One read and address of welcome expressing gratitude and I translated it in substance. A Belgian gentlemen expressed in French the sentiments of the Americans in reply. The gentleman then passed up and down among the girls, appreciating the variety and excellence of the work. At that moment, other workrooms were still in existence, but Mr. Bowden said our establishment was preferred because the work was so well finished and so clean, when it left the hands of the workers. The gentlemen were particularly interested in the "comforters" which were being prepared for the poor. There was no more cotton for "wadding", but someone had said that a paper filling was warm and durable. How many whose houses had been burnt to the ground with all in them when the enemy had first entered the city went away happy with one of these is a gift from the house. The delegates expressed a desire to have one as a souvenir for the National Committee of the ingenuity of the Belgians so Sister sent one suitably inscribed, the inscription being embroidered on the calico covering. Unfortunately paper fails before half the needy had been supplied. February 14. A formal border visited the convent and she told sad stories of the first days of the war in her town. The soldiers had broken open the Tabernacle used the Sacred Hosts to clean their armor and scattered them in the woods. She, with other young people, collected the Sacred Hosts on leaves of trees and brought them to the Rev. pastor. When he asked for volunteers to consume them, three hundred pious persons immediately presented themselves.

About this time, at Anderlecht the enemy threatened to cut down a beautiful, large poultry in the Sisters' garden. They had already destroyed many forests and were beginning their unjust confiscations and private property. All along the railroad one saw the trunks of thousands of trees waiting to be transported into Germany. The superior at Anderlecht put a miraculous medal in the tree and sent for an American delegate. She had been a pupil in the house a mistress and had returned they are for the third time, I believe, as superior. The tree was saved. When the soldiers came to cut it, they were told the American delegate must be sent for, as the tree was under his

this special protection. They bowed politely and retired! War had not been declared then; it was different afterwards!

Many revolting incidents came to our knowledge about this time. For example, the Christian Brothers had a large college near Namur. They were to open after Easter and had ordered their potatoes in advance. The potatoes were taken by the enemy when they were “en route” and the boys were warned not to return, of course. A little paper went from hand to hand those days—naturally was passed only when the enemy was not in sight. It was a prayer a witty Frenchman had put on the lips of a German: “dear Lord”, it ran, “please give us peace, so that we may returned to see our homes may beautiful buy furniture we stole in Belgium; our wives adorned with tools we took from the Belgian women; our daughters playing on the pious we sent them from Belgian car; our sisters stitching on the machines we robbed from Belgian factories, etc.” this stealing continued all during the war and even after the armistice. In November of the same year five auto trucks stopped before the door of our dear mother’s nephew, here at Namur. He is a young married man, so had a newly and prettily furnished home. He had taken his wife, who was not well at the time, to Paris, but his mother visited his house daily to safeguard his possessions. Useless precautions! The enemy broke open the door, filled their trucks and departed! These are not “hearsays,” but fax my very dear sisters, as you see from the authority quoted in each instance. In the pages I was obliged to burn, I told the experiences of our dear mother’s brother, the Doyen of Herve. Briefly, whole streets were burned; several hundred shot; coffin set on fire purposely without any reason except cruelty, with their dead in them and this at a moment when the people hardly new war had been declared, so quickly did the enemy arrived! Mr. LeDoyen pass the night preparing those imprisoned with him for death and said his mass as early as possible in the morning. He was liberated at the last moment, but what souvenirs he has of those terrible August days!

February 22, 1915. “Occupants” busy and angry. Why? The “Stars & Stripes” are in all the shop windows, not only as a flag, but by combinations of materials, objects etc. Women and children wear costumes formed unmistakably of the American colors. Fifty boys, headed by one carrying the flag, go in procession through the streets, shouting, “Why do we hold to America? Because America tiens a nous!”

Meantime we had been doing everything possible to communicate with the dear provincial superiors. We had written to addresses in Holland, and Switzerland, but all to no avail. At last I wrote to our minister, Mr. Whitlock, asking if he could not transmit business letters at least. He sent a secretary to Namur for various messages, one of which was to call here to explain that our minister had been obliged to give his word of honor to the enemy that he would not transmit letters, his telegrams or messages to anyone or for anyone in Belgium. On this condition team he might remain here and help for the “ravitaillement” of the Belgian people. He added that Americans were free to leave the country if they wished, but if they remained they must submit to this humiliation and injustice. In England at the same moment, a German Sister was receiving

all her mail by the intervention of the American consul! There is the difference between the conduct of the two nations!

About this time to our dear Mother learned the sad story of our Flobecq community. Eight hundred soldiers arrived there at midnight. They broke in the doors and appeared all over the house at once. The Sisters tried to dress quickly, but the Superior, a young, strong person was obliged to go in her nightdress to the seller and to remain there between two soldiers with fixed bayonets. All the papers in her room were examined carefully in the food in the house was eaten. The Superior became sick from the nervous shock and our dear Mother was obliged to replace her.

March 15, 1915. Received 32 American letters of August 1914. Why? We do not know. They had been opened and found inoffensive, I suppose being mostly feast day greetings to our dear mother.

March 15. Notre Chere Mere went to Dinant. What desolation! She told us a sad, sad story at her return. I went for a day with our dear Sister Superior later and saw the ruins, but much of the "debris" had been removed in the meantime. Our massive stone pillar was all that remained of a large, uniform, solid old church. I saw the little wooden cabins built in streets by the American fund and the Stonewall with all the holes made by the bullets, which had shot down some 600 men lined up against this wall. What a tale our dear Sisters had to tell of their experiences, sufferings and journeys! If you do not know the story already, please tell me and I shall make it the subject of a special letter later. I am sure you have heard it, however, from England. Our corner of one of their buildings remained in our dear mother added a wing, so that they could resume their classes for the poor children. The children told sad stories; almost all had lost father or brother and many of them had been obliged to March before the Army, so that the French soldiers on the other side of the river could not fire through fear of killing the Belgian women and children. Some were obliged to stand for hours at a time with their hands raised in the air and when they sank down from exhaustion, they were beaten by the soldiers until they rose again. The homes of all were burned to the ground; the "fire settling brigade" passing up and down the streets squirting a liquid in on the curtains and on the roofs, so that all the house blaze at placed at once at once and there was no time to take one's valuables.

March 23. Monseigneur was called to answer why he presided at a meeting or service at Jambes, where patriotic songs were sung! You may imagine the reply, my very dear Sisters. But the next day "posters" on the walls and a notice in the newspaper for bait the singing and playing of national songs under pain of so much prison and a fine!

March 25. Our dear Mother received a letter from the American legation, dated March 15 and stamped Namur March 18, therefore it had been kept back at the post office for a week and deliberately! It stated that the English Sisters could at least be for their country by special train at 7 o'clock March 25 from Brussels to Holland! An official document with all the stamps and

signs and of a country with which they were not yet at war!! Dear Sister Marie des Ste. Anges went immediately to the legation at Brussels to explain. She enjoyed the rage and impolite expressions of the official who received her and his threats against perpetrators of such a trick. The young Sisters return to you later so you know that he kept his promises to her that they would go one was never sure of what one would pay for a passport either. They asked six francs from a sister who finally obtained it for one franc there were so many other things of which one was never sure,-the train for example. Dear Sister Marie des Ste. Anges went once to the station. When there were at least 20 persons yet to be served, the ticket window was closed. She returned for the next train; it had been suppressed that day. A third time, the same day, she presented herself. This time she was placed in a train by one of the enemy. By accident, she learned before it started that it was not but her destination and she got out, quietly following a Belgian to the right train.

Holy week and Easter were as usual, Eighteen dear Sisters making their Vows, April 11.

April 16. Thirtieth anniversary of our dear Mother's Vows. We had holy mass at Blessed Mere Julie's Chapel and our big family rejoiced a little at dinner, in spite of the gloom which was settling over us. We had almost died when Monseigneur had said in August "if we are rid of them at Easter, it will be well." Easter had come and gone but not the enemy. England was claiming its citizens; parents were demanding their novice daughters. I would dear mother felt that England needed dear Sister Marie des Sts. Anges. Passports were demanded, but what difficulties! At length, Mrs. Dickson came from the American legation and she consented to arrange for the departure of English and American Sisters and a French border, a pupil of our sisters at Dinant.

April 19, 1915. A sad day! 34 left the houses. Holy mass had been followed by the prayers for travelers. It was very impressive. Only a few English Sisters remained.

April 23. We kept the feast of St. George in spirit with the dear English Sisters, whose departure we regretted so much. That night about 11:30 we were awakened by a formidable explosion. The sound of falling glass week was heard on all sides. Our room windows were open, so they escaped, but the window in the corridor just outside of our door lost some of its panes and great iron spikes fell out, so that the whole, heavy, window frame balanced. It was evident that avions were in the vicinity. I was sleeping alone, because the sister who had slept with me was one of the German Sisters obliged by the government to leave for Holland at the beginning of the war. I was too afraid to leave our room to see what it happened. A series of explosions followed, varying in intensity; the Red Cross autos left the theatre, after the glass had been swept away not to endanger their tyres. I expected the avions to come back and throw bombs on the theatre, which was dangerously near our building. Such a night! I dear not sleep. Nothing more happened, however. We learned in the morning that our allies had profited by the beautiful moonlight to blow up the small powder magazine of the Citadel. Happily, it was not the large one for the city would have been destroyed. About 100 of the enemy soldiers were killed. Parts

of human bodies were found on roofs and in gardens at a great distance. The novices had seen the flames from the dormitory window and the next day we could see the soldiers clearing away the ruins from our attic windows. I asked for a companion for the night and we all prayed fervently they would be rain every night.

May 1. Telegrams may be sent if eleven conditions are observed, cost one franc; no redress if they do not arrive and usually they did not.

May 4. After many difficulties and this long delay April 19 to May 4, we heard that Mrs. Dickson's party had left for Holland. Think of what it meant a community at Brussels to not rush in so many Sisters for so long a time, even though our dear Mother sent money and food with them!

Dear sister Marie des Sainte Ignace went to Antwerp on business. She was "searched" by the "occupants." In her pocket was a notebook in which he kept the "Journal" items. "No 6 o'clock: folding". "Recreation dinner: vows of our dear Mother." Such were the phrases considered "very compromising" and torn up by the searcher, when she could have made trouble for sister, she said!

May 7. We learned that our dear Sisters had reached Rotterdam.

May 9. Rumors of "Lusitania" horror reached us and the truth is known by degrees.

May 10. Learned that Italy had declare war, but are censured newspaper never told us so. Only after a few days there was an Italian Communiqué among those of our allies.

May 25. Our dear Sisters of Visé arrived from England, at their quest of our dear Mother. You know their story, I believe from our dear English Sisters letters to you. I had begged our dear Mother one day for English conversation to profit of the war by sending some Belgian Sisters to visit England and America when it was yet possible to travel. That very day on learning our room, our dear Mother had the first news of our Visé Sisters; they were in England! How little we had thought they when speaking. It almost reconciled me to the war.

June 14. We had our first "scare" about for bidden writings and papers. Our dear Mother came to recreation looking very preoccupied. "What is it what has happened?" Everybody said in a whisper. I would dear Mother told us that a Jesuit, perhaps two, -I forget the exact story now, -and several other persons had been shot without trial just because one kept a diary of events; another had written "barbarians," etc., etc. Our dear Mother ordered the surrender of all our notes, poems, papers, etc. she, herself, had bought me the three copies of everything we had procured here, so that I could send them to the dear American Provincials later. There was a great collection; the sermons and other publications of our great Cardinal Mercier. The answer of Msgr. to the "livre blanc" of the enemy and the "Libre Belgique" a little paper the double of this sheet, in which "Fidelis," "Belga," "Ego", "Helbe" and others wrote delightfully. Most of these

men ended in prison, though the paper and signatures continued, so that the enemy were never sure if they had the right personages under their control. The story has been published since the armistice. I am sure that if it were read at your "six o'clocks," nobody would work, so great would be the interest. Then there was another little magazine with extracts from foreign papers; this was published by the nephew of our dear Sr. Superior, but even she did not know he did it until after the armistice. He could tell of many narrow escapes during visits at his home, etc. Another nephew merited several decorations for his bravery at the front, but was wounded and lost a leg in consequence. These gentlemen also wrote against the "activists," certain hotheaded Flemish, supposed to be under salary from Germany and even Holland, to cause a division among the Belgians. You know, I am sure, from the papers the story of the Ghent University. Only this week a bomb was thrown into the home of sister superior's Brother in Law at Louvain where he is professor at the University, as also the son-in-law. Happily, no one was injured, but the house and neighboring ones also were damaged considerably. Well I began by the "scare" all these affairs were surrendered and burned later, as I wrote at the beginning, I think.

June 21. With great regret on both sides, our last dear English sister left us, dear Sisters Marie des Ste. Anges, Bernard and nine novices. The horizon was dark indeed! And it was to become blacker!!

June 24. Our dear Mother went to Gembloux for her visitation and as I had not seen the house, took me with her. There is in the refectory there, a portrait of our blessed Mere Julie which spoke to two sisters who murmured against a superior. When we were going to bed, there was much excitement and screaming in the street below. At last I heard in French, "put out that light." I remembered having a poster on the wall regulating lights, but naturally had not had time to read it, so quickly had we passed. I had not lighted the candle, but the cries continued in German. Just as I left the room to knock at our dear Mother's door, her light disappeared all became quiet. She, alone, was unconscious of the interest taken in her light; the sister said next day, that they had been very nervous for a moment.

June 29, 30 and July 1. Truly one of sermons and benedictions before our annual Adoration Day. The subjects chosen were inspired by the circumstances under which we were living. "It is beautiful to hear of the king in the trenches, but think of what it is for God to be there!" Then, "Jesus for us in the Mass: in us holy Communion and with us always in the Blessed Sacrament." Again, "how many souls are falling by the war; the souls of many go to purgatory daily; we could deliver many of these souls, if we heard Mass as we should. We feed soldiers here saluting their officers. What precision for the regulations! And we before God!" Such were the thoughts suggested to us, my dear Sisters!

July 4. Recreation for dinner in union with our dear sisters of the USA. A German soldier came with a letter from our dear Sister Marie of the infant Jesus of Court Street community. I confided the answer to him but do not know if it reached America.

July 13. American delegates took class pictures of our poor schools pupils. At the station there was another evidence of the fact that the enemy were good at organization and knew how to save their time. "No money given back. Must have exact change for tickets or lose surplus."

Great indignation among the teachers. The examination questions all changed by occupants. The subjects for the compositions were

(a) to patriotic!! Here is a translation of the dictation rejected: "a people's most beautiful virtue is the love of peace. The desire of war and a vain love of military glory are disgraceful, what ever fame they may appear to procure for a nation. A people which uses these means will never be happy, however great conquests they may make, for the ambitions of such a nation will always be greater than its conquests".

Heaven has not given us power to kill our brethren. It has not given us music to sing the death of wars victims, even if these victims be heroes.

A people which directs its arms against the nation which has not attacked it becomes barbaric. Any nation would do wrong not to defend itself, but no nation has the right to attack another. Pieces necessary, if a country is to grow and prosper."

(b) you have assisted at a religious service celebrated in your parish in memory of the Belgian soldiers who died for their country. Write your impressions of this service in a letter addressed to a friend.

(c) write a letter of condolence to a friend, whose brother a volunteer soldier has met a glorious death on the battlefield.

(d) your brother, a volunteer, informs you that he is in good health and that he has been decorated by the King for an act of exceptional courage and bravery. Announces news in a letter to your friend, telling her the impressions of the various members of your family when they had heard of your brothers decoration.

August 6. Torchlight procession and salute by Canon. Victory of Warsaw. How sad we were! How discouraged! Fear to sleep.

Our dear Mother went to Anderlecht, kindly taking me with her. Such lamentations in the train: soap two francs a kilo, etc. the Chapel is in pure Gothic of the 13th century: the Windows represent the mysteries of the Rosary. It is a pretty house with a good garden and possesses many old paintings.

August 15. Feast of our dear Mother, but quietly kept. Four Postulant's took the Habit.

August 21. Churches draped. Solemn services for victims of last year. "Tragic death" is wording of newspaper. Monseigneur could not use his own terms and arranging the "words" even, but he printed a list of more than 20 of his priests killed in those first days. R. I. P.

It was difficult to arrange for the retreat. The letters did not reach the Rev. fathers invited to give it in a passport was recorded only after great difficulties. However, 12 dear Sisters had the happiness of making their Vows August 31. A card received from our dear Sr. Marie des Ste. Anges announced that there were 18 novices professed at Mount Pleasant. D. G.

Our dear Mother made many changes of Superiors. But what trouble to have passports!! One asked for a Sister to accompany her. "You are old enough to travel by yourself," was the reply at length the Belgians discovered the right thing to say "to arrange financial matters" they wished the money to remain in the country. Or "for vacation." Vacations are sacred institutions in Germany! Death in the family, sickness or insignificant reasons!

September 8. Seven Postulant's entered. D. G.

September 9. Our dear Sister Mary of St. George was buried. The enemy obliged all to be buried after 24 hours after the day of the death. But this did not give time for the family to arrive. Consequently, during the war, the bell was not tolled of the death of the Sisters and the death was announced when convenient for us.

Even for papers to go to Germany, a Sister, German by birth, had to wait 10 days. Several Sisters have gone to see "cousins" as they call themselves in Germany; four were already with the "cousins" in Holland. The German Sisters themselves say that the religious spirit is more marked in Holland than in Germany both branches claim blessed Mere Julie as founders and both rules are based on our Constitutions, but the spirit is very different. The Holland branch formed the German.

September 9. Alarm caused by a communication from the "Komandantur". Such for the translator. How many beds have you? How many not occupied? Etc. Our dear mother reflected about her answer. What means can she invent just save our extra beds? In a few hours all is arranged. The Sisters go to work quickly, but quietly. Men and sermons must not know these things, they might innocently betray us. The novices leave the beds in the novitiate building and these are taken down in hidden in holes and corners and attics. All the large beds of the borders are occupied by the novices and do some extra beds must be declared, a certain number are inscribed as "small children's beds." We escape thus, D. G.

A dear Sister was sent to Antwerp to announce changes of superiors and assist at installation. After trying for three weeks to obtain a passport at Brussels she returned here in the superiors install themselves. Yet the occupants boasted of the liberty they gave the Belgians!

September 28. After the profession and the missions, only 13 novices are left in the novitiate. It is so empty on their side at the church and so sad!

October 16 for professed Sisters, the German Sisters expelled by the Belgian government at the beginning of the war, came back from Holland. Two novices remained; they will not return until

the war finishes, fearing to be annoying here and to suffer themselves, if a little word were set against their nation. The Holland Sisters were most kind and delicate for our Sisters, but the latter say "there is no place like home" and "home" is a convent of blessed Mere Julie in Belgium. The Superior General accompanied our Sisters to Rosendale; cried when she said "goodbye," and begged them to come back if again obliged to leave Belgium. She had tried to learn how things were done at Namur, so as to imitate the "Motherhouse" as much as possible. I could write many interesting and amusing incidents, but it is best to keep to the war. A characteristic fact, however: Mother Cecilia, the German Superior general has opened seven houses in Holland, which hardly seems fair to the Holland cousins, who does lose their vocations.

You all know the story of Miss Cavell, English lady shot as a spy, I am sure they suggested to her to ask that her life be spared, at least. "I am not a spy," she answered, "and shall not ask grace from one I despise."

It was often difficult for our dear Mother to understand the cards she received. One Superior wrote: "I fear not to be able to write soon again, because Rosalie costs much; they think the end is near." Meaning: "the cannon approached; shall become zone de guerre."

A Superior and the cook of a convent go to prison for having given a meal to a relative of the latter, a French soldier, and passing great care was necessary at our door. Persons come with such innocent stories, such sincerity of manner, to leave a letter, to sell an object, to give us pleasure by presenting as a forbidden paper, to entrust us a letter for England or America, a French soldier, seemingly, speaking excellent French to ask help, etc. etc.

November 2. Three holy Masses said by each priest left at Xmas. It is the same for you, I suppose, my dear sisters.

November 9. Sr. Maria du S. C. who was at Visé when the enemy entered and set fire to the city, died here, a victim of the war, certainly. Sister had been to England with her community and was much touched by a gift of money the pupils of our American sister center while she was there. She was acting as Mistress of postulant at the time of her death but had after remarked that she had never fully recovered from the sad impressions of the flight from Visé.

November 21 and 22nd. We forget the sadness of the war for a moment in listening to the Benedictine monk who was sent to Caldey as master of novices to form the converts to the real spirit and life of the Catholic Benedictines. He was there 14 months. The story of the conversion of the monks and nuns was most interesting and we thank God as the event, as well as for the consoling distraction the recital gave us.

December 11. The misery of a real flood is added to that caused by the war. At 4 ½ water appeared in poor school cellar. All went to work to remove fruit, etc. Sunday fires put out by water filling furnaces. No gas for for supper or recreation. Blessed Sacrament removed from

church. Electricity put in small holy family because oil and candles very rare and dear enemy had taken brass of pumping machines; replaced by wood, but work slow and difficult. Men weak also from privations.

Xmas. Sad day. Water rose rapidly again, putting out fires. Heard also of illness of dear sister Marie des Ste. Anges. The year ended as it had begun--with the cross!