

BELGIUM

"*Ik zal niemand beminnen duuring de oorlog!*" she said.

She was as indomitable as the rest of the Belgians.

We had our dinner and then a bugle in the street announced the retreat; everybody must be indoors a little after ten—that is, ten, German time.

We left the hotel and walked through the dark and silent streets, Villalobar with von der Lancken going on ahead, Harrach and I following, talking in low tones in the intimacy the darkness somehow makes natural. He told me of his experiences at the outbreak of the war; he had been in Florence studying art. He spoke of his family, of his wife and children, of his ambitions, of art, of the war, of all his interrupted plans. And we strolled on in the soft grateful darkness, weary after our long day of excitement.

Suddenly in the darkness a cry:

"*Halte-là!*"

We halted.

"*Ces vieux bonshommes de Landsturm tirent si à la légère parfois, vous savez,*" said Harrach.

Lancken and Villalobar had halted; they were on the other side of the street. Then Lancken's voice rang out; he was shouting something in German. Finally he was ordered to draw near. We approached then and under the light of a lamp post—the only one, I think, in the town that was lighted—the sentinel, a bearded old fellow, read our papers, became suddenly obsequious, and showed us the way to the station. When we got there it was half-past eleven and we had an hour and a half to wait. Lancken grumbled at the lateness of our return.