

## 220 FIGHTING IN FLANDERS

mildly, to find the consulate closed and to learn from the *concierge*, who, with his wife, had remained in the building throughout the bombardment, that Consul-General Diederich and his entire staff had left the city on Thursday morning. I was particularly surprised because I knew that, upon the departure of the British Consul-General, Sir Cecil Hertslet, some days before, the enormous British interests in Antwerp had been confided to American protection. The *concierge*, who knew me and seemed decidedly relieved to see me made no objection to opening the consulate and letting me in. While deliberating as to the best method of transmitting the keys which had been entrusted to me to the German military governor without informing him of the embarrassing fact that the American and British interests in the city were without official representation, those Americans and British who had remained in the city during the bombardment began to drop in. Some of them were frightened and all of them were plainly worried, the women in particular, among whom were several British Red Cross nurses, seeming fearful that the soldiers might