

Across the Busy Years

By Nicholas

ON Sunday, June 28, 1914, my wife and I, then in Paris, drove out with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Henry Olin of New York, to the charming hotel in the Forêt de Compiègne for luncheon. We went out by Senlis, Pierrefonds, and Soissons, all of which were destined to become names very familiar to the whole world within a few weeks. In the quiet of the Forest on a beautiful summer's day, there could be no possible hint that within seven weeks from that moment the general staff of the invading German army would have made its headquarters at that very hotel. When we returned to Paris late in the afternoon, extra copies of the newspapers were being sold on the boulevards with loud shoutings. These extra editions of the newspapers announced the killing of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo a few hours earlier. Olin and I looked at each other inquiringly and the same thought passed through the mind of each of us: "What does this mean? What is going to happen now?"

A few days afterwards we started on a delightful automobile trip to the south of France, and after refreshing our memories of the old Roman remains in the valley of the Rhone, of Carcassonne, of the charming university town of Montpellier and of the Riviera, went on to that most delightful of all resting places, the Villa d'Este on Lake Como. From there, after a few days, we crossed Italy in leisurely fashion, stopping at Bergamo, at Brescia, and at Verona, to Venice, from which point we were to go to Cortina in the Dolomites for a stay of some length. During these days the happenings, even as imperfectly reported in the public press, were by no means reassuring. Austria was openly threatening Serbia and that there was restlessness in Russia and in Germany was quite obvious. Nevertheless, a general European war, to say nothing of a world war, seemed so grotesque an outcome of even the tragic happenings in

the Danubian country that it did not occur to any of us as in any wise probable. Each morning while in Venice, I spent some little time with the manager of the bank and with the postmaster, discussing the latest news that came to us. We were all of opinion that war was most unlikely. However, on Friday, July 31, even the printed news which, as we well understood, was only a fraction of the real news, took on so serious an aspect that we decided to return in the quickest possible manner to Paris, since from there a retreat to America, were that necessary, could probably be managed without difficulty. Our automobile was over on the mainland at Mestre, and between six and seven o'clock on Saturday morning, August 1, we were there with our hand luggage, having shipped our trunks by rail to Milan. We started quickly across Italy, going this time via Padua, Mantua, and Lodi. At Este we stopped for an early *déjeuner* and there found a crowd about the little inn, straining their eyes to read the headlines of an extra edition of the local newspaper. It contained the announcement of the murder on the previous evening of M. Jaurès at a café on Montmartre. This was serious news indeed, for it revealed a state of opinion in Paris which was, of itself, grave. The death of M. Jaurès saddened me inexpressibly, for only six weeks earlier he and I had taken luncheon together. He seemed in excellent health, though greatly disturbed over the European outlook. As we walked in the garden after luncheon on a quiet Sunday afternoon, he praised in un-

*In this second article from his
ler relates his adventures in a
War. Among them he tells how
frontier by a simple procedure
on one of the strangest*



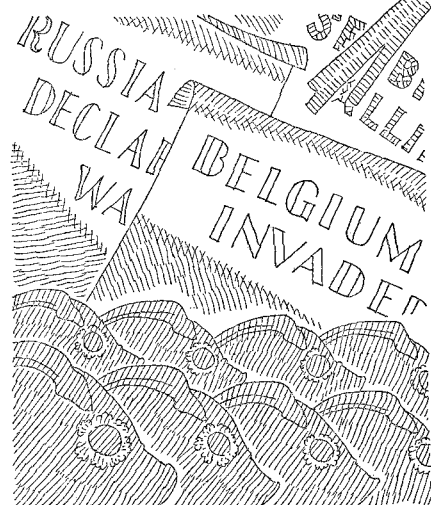
measured terms the ideals and activities of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and said in the last words that I ever heard fall from his lips: "Do not let anything discourage you. Keep at it. You are bound to win one of these days." It was with these solemn words ringing in my ears that we sped on our way across Italy to Milan.

Coming to Milan in the early evening, we went to the Hotel Cavour where we had always been in the habit of stopping, and found it almost empty, as would naturally be the case in mid-summer. No one seemed particularly disturbed except ourselves. On the following morning, Sunday, August 2, we started to cross the Simplon hoping to get at least as far as Lausanne before nightfall. As we drove out of Milan, to our great surprise we found the road blocked by enormous numbers of cavalry and artillery moving north. It was this which opened our eyes to what was

• When War Came

Murray Butler

*autobiography, President But-
Europe rushing into the World
he got past the closed Italian
and how he got back to America
voyages of modern times*



really going on just below the horizon of public information. So delayed were we that we did not reach Stresa on the way to the foot of the Pass, where we should have been by nine o'clock, until nearly noon. After a quick luncheon, we were re-entering our motor when the concierge asked with great unconcern where we were going. We replied, "Over the Simplon and, if possible, as far as Lausanne." "Oh," he said, "the Simplon is closed. You cannot go over it." That was impossible, we replied, because at the moment there were scores of automobiles in plain sight coming down by the road that led to the Pass. "Oh, yes," was the answer, "you can come into Italy by the Simplon, but you cannot go out." There was nothing to do but to turn right about face and dash back to the Milan station. It was after four o'clock when we reached it. We spent almost our last ready money in purchasing tickets to Paris by the Sim-

plon Express, which we were assured would leave at 5:20 P.M. as usual. Our trunks were registered to Paris and our places were taken for the night trip. Our chauffeur, who was a Frenchman, was instructed to take the car back to Paris by the Mont Cenis route and to meet us there in two days' time. This faithful and skilful man was called to the colors and within thirty days was killed in battle near the Alsatian border.

Promptly, at the hour fixed, the Simplon Express started for Paris. All went well through the great tunnel and we were proceeding quietly down the Rhone Valley in Switzerland on a superb moonlight night. We went to bed expecting to be awakened within an hour of Paris and to be back at our hotel for breakfast. At about eleven-thirty, however, there came a knock on the door and the conductor of the train said to us, in perfectly quiet and passionless words, that the French frontier was closed at Pontarlier and that this train would not go beyond that point. My reply was that I had been at Pontarlier and did not desire to go there again. What time would the train reach Lausanne? "At about one o'clock," was the answer. So we dressed and, when the train rolled into the perfectly quiet and deserted Lausanne station, got out upon the perron. Not a human being of any sort or kind was in sight, save those who, like ourselves, were alighting from the Simplon Express. The moonlight was superb, but everything save the moonlight was death itself. With my own hands I unloaded our trunks

from the luggage car and then went in search of some sort of conveyance to take my wife and daughter and the rest of our company to the Hotel Cecil—where we were known as previous visitors. No taxicab was visible in any direction. Finally, however, several hundred yards distant from the station and around a sharp corner, I found a taxicab and its driver sound asleep in his place. He was wakened and brought back to the station and shortly our party, with our small hand luggage, was at the hotel. On the steps stood the manager, wringing his hands. "I am very sorry, Mr. Butler, but there is no possibility of my taking any of you in. Not only is every room filled, but I have had to give places to sleep on the sofas in the sitting-rooms and drawing-room, and have even had to put mattresses in the bathtubs! All our men-servants have left in response to the Government's call and I do not know what we can do for food in the morning." I urged that something must be done for the ladies at least, and finally he consented to telephone to another hotel in the hope that we might get in there. He was successful to a limited degree, and the five members of our party were distributed around between sofas in sitting-rooms and bathtubs. At that hotel, also, they were informed that there would probably be no food in the morning and, as a matter of fact, my wife herself made the coffee in the hotel kitchen for our company when early morning came. There was no sleep for me and in an hour or two I went back to the station to see what the situation really was. There I found a solitary human being. He was a German Swiss who held an official position in the railway service and was perhaps something over seventy years of age. He looked me over very carefully to make sure that I was not an enemy or a spy, and then we entered into a most interesting conversation. He told me that the reason why nobody was in sight was that the men had all been called to the colors,

since an invasion of Switzerland was expected on the part of the Austrian Army and that his own three sons had been taken. He said that he himself would not have to go since he was too old, and that he had been in the War of 1870-71. Then he added this never to be forgotten bit of wisdom: "Sir," he said, "this is not a people's war. This is a kings' war. When it is over, there may not be so many kings." Words of truer prophecy were never uttered by human being. I then asked where I should find my trunks.

"What trunks?"

"Those that came in last night on the Simplon Express."

"Were they taken off?"

"Yes, I took them off myself."

"Then they are precisely where you left them, since there is no one here to touch them."

Together, the old man and I got a luggage truck and went down the peron for my trunks and brought them back to the platform from which trains departed to the south. How could I get to Paris, I asked.

"You cannot get to Paris. The French frontier is absolutely closed."

"Why can I not take a boat across the Lake to Evian?"

"Because the French Government will not permit you to land," was the reply.

"Then, there is nothing for it," I said, "but to go back to Milan."

"You cannot do that either," he said, "since the only passengers allowed are returning Italians who have been summoned home."

The alternative, apparently, was to stay at Lausanne and starve, since what possible adjustments could be made in such a situation were not, at the moment, in any wise evident. Then, an idea occurred to me. I said to the old fellow, "What is that first-class railway carriage up there, with the sign on it marked 'Reserved'?"

"Oh," he said, "that is the carriage that the public officials use when they go about."

"Who is using it now?"

"Nobody."

"Very well," I said, "let's loosen the brake and bring it down the track."

"What for?" he said.

"I shall show you," was my reply.

So we brought it down the track and he helped me put our trunks into the

luggage compartment at its rear end.

"That will not help you any," he said.

My reply was to inquire when the next train with returning Italians was expected to leave.

He said, "According to my information, it is going at eight-twenty this morning."

With this information in hand, I went back to the hotel, got my party together and returned to the station in order to put them into this first-class carriage which was standing on the side-track. At about eight-fifteen the train pulled in southbound and I stepped up to the conductor, saluted and said in my most official French, "This is the special reserved car that you had instructions to take back with you to Milan." He touched his hat politely, backed his train up to the reserved car and in five minutes we were headed toward Montreux and then south up the Rhone Valley, through the Simplon tunnel and back to Milan. It was a long, hot and tiresome journey, with crowds of Italians mounting the train at every stop and a tremendous fuss when the frontier was reached at Domo d'Ossola. By six o'clock on that evening, which was Monday, August 3, we were back at the Hotel Cavour in Milan. What a change there was! The hotel which had been empty on Saturday night was crowded on Monday night, chiefly with Americans who had come down from points in Switzerland and the Italian mountains, as the news grew steadily worse. We can never be grateful enough to the manager of that hotel for his generous kindness and helpfulness. When our party reached Milan, I was the proud possessor of the equivalent of twenty-seven cents in Italian currency. I had only that twenty-seven cents until August 24, when I reached New York, and yet lived in the lap of luxury all the intervening days, took part in chartering a trans-Atlantic steamer and in bringing home four hundred of my fellow Americans. One member of our party was able to draw ten dollars each day on his letter of credit and that helped us greatly in the matter of small incidental payments. The manager of the Hotel Cavour simply said, "You do not need any money." And he not only postponed payment of our hotel bill, but furnished the funds with which to buy tickets for the trip to Genoa on Wednesday, August 5, and

telephoned to the manager of the Hotel Eden in Genoa, to have him make the same financial arrangement there that he himself had made in Milan. Moreover, both the manager of the Hotel Cavour in Milan and the manager of the Hotel Eden in Genoa said that if I knew any of the Americans who were in those cities and would introduce them, they would extend credit to them in the same fashion. Of course, all this was possible only because some of our group were well known and that it included Mr. Frederick W. Vanderbilt, whose name was itself a tower of strength to us. Nevertheless, it was a very fine thing to do and these men were repaid not only in money, but what is still much more important, in grateful appreciation and thankfulness.

Having reached Genoa, the next step was to find out where to go from there. The American Consul was beside himself with excitement and worry. He had several hundred Americans on his hands, rapidly increasing in number and all asking for money or for help to get home. There was nothing that he could do and he told us that his cables to the State Department remained unanswered, which is quite in accordance with the precedents long set by that branch of our governmental organization. Therefore, those of us who were private citizens had to do something. By great good fortune, there turned up at the hotel in Genoa, R. A. C. Smith of New York, one of the best and most experienced of our American shipping men; Frederick W. Vanderbilt, who came down from Switzerland; Gano Dunn, the distinguished engineer; and a few other men of prominence who drifted in during the days that we were at work in trying to find a way to get home. In conference, Mr. Smith, Mr. Vanderbilt, Mr. Dunn, and myself quickly came to the conclusion that there was no way to get home save to charter a ship, and that required money. None of us had any money and none of us could get any money. Nevertheless, we went out in the harbor in a row-boat and inspected the vessels at anchor there. Mr. Smith quickly selected the one which he said was the best for our purpose. It was the *Principe di Udine* of the Lloyd Sabaudo Line, a ship of about 8000 tons, which ran regularly on the service to Buenos Aires and, having just returned, was about to

be laid up for a few weeks of overhauling and cleaning. Smith and I went at once to the office of the Lloyd Sabaudo, asked for a meeting with the Director and his Executive Committee, and inquired whether we could charter the *Principe di Udine* for a voyage to New York, leaving at the earliest possible date and at what cost. After conference among themselves and some discussion during which it was intimated that they did not think the ship should go to sea again until she had been overhauled and cleaned, they agreed to let us have it for the trip to America for 400,000 lire. We promptly signed the contract on these terms, the amount being payable on Monday, August 10, at noon. Not having any money and not being able to get any, the charter price was largely a matter of indifference. I think, as a matter of fact, we would have signed the contract just the same if 4,000,000 lire had been asked. Within an hour or two we found that there was a misunderstanding between ourselves and the Lloyd Sabaudo Executive Committee. They had supposed that we were only chartering the first-cabin accommodations and that we would comply with the regulations under which their Atlantic service was conducted and would call both at Naples and at Palermo for steerage passengers. We told them that this was absolutely impossible, that we intended to sail straight from Genoa to New York by the shortest route and that we wished none on board but American citizens, save the officers and crew of the vessel itself. We did not propose, if we could help it, to get into any new complications growing out of the war conditions which had now come to prevail. There was farther consideration of the whole matter and, finally, the charter price on these terms was raised to 500,000 lire, to which we promptly agreed.

Two important matters remained to be settled—first, how were we to get the money to make the payment which became due on the following Monday at noon and, second, how were we to choose from the hundreds of clamoring Americans those whom we should take with us on this ship? In order to answer the first question, R. A. C. Smith and I proceeded on independent but parallel lines. I went to the office of the Banca Commerciale Italiana and asked the manager what American banks or

trading companies had an account there and what their balances were. These questions led to a long and angry dispute, during which the manager informed me that the information I desired was necessarily confidential, that he could not and would not give it to me and that I should not have asked for it. My response was that this was war, that I had to ascertain these facts and that I would not leave the Bank until I had learned them. He went off and was gone about an hour. When he came back, he very crossly told me what large American concerns had a credit at the Bank and in round numbers what those credits amounted to. I thanked him and replied that that was all I wanted to know. He answered with a sneer, "That information will do you no good. Our banks are all under restriction by the Government and you will not be permitted to draw out anything approaching that sum." To this, my answer was that I did not want to draw it out. It could stay in the Bank, but what I proposed to do was to get it transferred temporarily to the credit of the Lloyd Sabaudo Company, so that the terms of our contract would be met. Meanwhile, Smith was cabling the Guaranty Trust Company and was on tenter-hooks because his earliest cable was not delivered and it took forty-eight hours to get an answer. Finally, however, as the result of our joint and several efforts, we were in possession in Genoa, despite war conditions, of sufficient credit to meet the terms of the contract with the Lloyd Sabaudo Company without the transfer of any cash whatsoever. Here too, we were placed under the deepest obligations to the managers of the Lloyd Sabaudo Company, for Smith's cable from the Guaranty Trust Company stated that the credit would be given in Genoa, through London. Immediately, the Genoa bank demanded confirmation from London which was quite as impossible as confirmation from the North Pole. After conference, the managers of the Lloyd Sabaudo stated that since they were building a vessel on the Tyne and would have considerable payments to make in England in the near future, they would accept the Guaranty Trust Company's cable as satisfactory evidence that the credit had been established in London. Under all the circumstances that prevailed, this was a very

fine and large-minded thing to do. Had it not been done we could not have gone forward with our sailing.

The next step was to select those whom we could take with us on the ship. This was no easy matter. We found that by crowding the dining-saloon we could seat two hundred persons and, therefore, we proposed to take four hundred and have two services of luncheon and dinner. Since, of course, we had no office or bureau of any kind in Genoa, we persuaded a contractor who was putting up a new building to let us use the second floor of his uncompleted structure for a few days as our headquarters. There we assembled and spent hour after hour in choosing the four hundred who were to go by the *Principe di Udine*. We gave preference to those who were alone, to those who were older and to those who, for some good reason, were entitled to special consideration. It was a difficult job but was well managed by R. A. C. Smith, Gano Dunn, and Henry S. Haskell of the Carnegie Endowment staff, who had come down from Switzerland to join us. We arbitrarily fixed the rates for passage at \$250, first cabin, \$150, second cabin, and \$75 between decks. As a matter of fact the accommodations between decks were in many ways the most satisfactory, apart from their lack of privacy. Since the ship was fifty-five feet wide and both portholes and hatches were all kept open throughout the voyage, there was plenty of air for that group of passengers. The men between decks were all placed forward and the women aft. In order that we might carry as many passengers as possible, often putting three in a room, we assigned all the men to the starboard side of the ship and all the women to the port side. There were only four exceptions where man and wife were placed in two-berth rooms, because of special circumstances arising from their health or their age. In this way we were able to care, with reasonable comfort, for the largest possible number of passengers.

Moreover, we accepted in payment of passage money any form of financial credential which our fellow passengers happened to offer. Letters of credit, American Express Company notes (which at the moment could only be cashed in very limited amounts), personal checks on American banks, and in

one case a simple I.O.U., were taken in payment of passage money. It is of some interest to record the fact that of the 399 passengers, not more than twenty or twenty-five were known to any of us personally, and that they came from thirty-seven states. Nevertheless, thirty days after all this miscellaneous collection of checks and drafts had been placed in the hands of the Guaranty Trust Company for collection, we were notified that every single piece had been redeemed at its face value. The passage money fell far short of meeting the cost of chartering and equipping the vessel, but that is another matter.

The health of the passengers was, of course, a primary consideration. By great good fortune, there were in Genoa, seeking opportunity for return to the United States, four outstanding physicians, one of whom had been of high rank in the United States Navy. On learning this, we told the Lloyd Sabaudo people that if their surgeon would look after the staff of the ship, we would look after the passengers. We made an infirmary out of three or four well-placed rooms and Doctor John C. Boyd, who had been many years in the Navy, saw that it was properly equipped and that adequate instruments and medicines were provided—all this again on credit. As luck would have it, we found in Genoa a young woman who had been trained as a nurse in one of the best New York hospitals and, since she had her nurse's uniform with her, offered her free transportation if she would be our ship's nurse. Similarly, we came upon a young woman from Indiana who was alone, desperately anxious to return home, and who served in the same way as our stenographer and clerk.

All sorts and kinds of obstacles were put in our way before we sailed. We were told that the Italian Emigration Officer thought we were violating the statutes of Italy. We were told that the Italian Health Officer would not give us a certificate to sail. Finally, we were told that the British had blockaded the Straits of Gibraltar and that we should have to come back, not being allowed to go out into the Atlantic. Fortunately, one of our number who had a close friend highly placed in the British admiralty sent him a message describing our plans and hopes, and intimating

that any advice as to how to meet unforeseen emergencies would be most helpful. Within forty-eight hours there were received by us in Genoa, through a personal visit of some one who was attached either to the British Embassy at Rome or to the British Consulate at Genoa, some helpful advice and a password which we might use if challenged by any British naval vessel. This brought us great comfort.

We received all these admonitions and prophecies with stolid unconcern and went forward with our plans to sail on Wednesday, August 12, precisely at noon. At that very moment, the ship's whistle blew and we put out to sea on the voyage of a refugee ship. We did not draw a long breath until we were outside the three-mile limit, because we did not know what fresh obstacles might be found and put in our way, but, once outside the three-mile-limit, we bade farewell to all our woes and after a week of sleeplessness and nervous strain, settled down to comparative quiet and rest.

All went well without incident until early on Saturday evening, the 15th, when we approached Gibraltar. Daylight was fading and as we came up to the Rock, our ship answered promptly the electric signals which were made from shore. Suddenly, and without a word of warning, a bright flashlight fell upon the bridge where I was standing with the captain and below us on the port side, quite close at hand, was a British destroyer. A young officer in pea-jacket called to us through a megaphone, "And who are you?" Since our captain spoke no English, it was my duty to reply. "The Italian ship *Principe di Udine*," I said, "chartered by a company of returning Americans and entitled to use the password"—which I gave him.

"Follow me through the straits," was his reply.

For more than an hour we wound in and out of the heavily mined straits of Gibraltar, following our destroyer guide. The mines appeared to cover a distance of several miles. Finally, when we had passed out into the Atlantic, the young British officer, again throwing his light on our bridge, said, "Bon voyage," and vanished into darkness.

Our captain, who had never made the voyage to New York, then offered a very helpful suggestion. It was that

instead of taking us west by the ordinary route, he should follow parallel thirty-seven. He remarked that our passengers were nervous and excited and many of them unwell and that on thirty-seven we would find the sea quieter and smoother and meet with fewer vessels than by taking the ordinary route, which would carry us up as high as forty-one. Of course, his advice was taken, with excellent results.

An exciting incident occurred on Thursday afternoon, August 20. Some time after luncheon I was summoned to the bridge, where the captain was looking out through his glass over the stern on the starboard side. He said to me with some concern, "We are being followed. There is a vessel overtaking us."

My reply was, "That seems impossible. We are going at seventeen or eighteen knots and you have been of opinion that there was no faster vessel than that in these particular waters."

"Nevertheless," he replied, "she is faster than we are and she is catching us."

In a short time this fact became evident to the naked eye and we were not a little concerned. Soon our passengers on the main deck discovered what was happening and not a few of them became hysterical, since their first thought was of capture by a German naval vessel with the prospect of spending some time in a German prison. In a few moments the second officer, who was on the upper bridge in charge of the ship during that watch, came down bringing with him a code signal which had just been received from the vessel that was following us. When we looked up its meaning in the code book, we discovered it meant *Fermate immediatamente*. There was nothing to do but stop at once, which we did, and rapidly the following vessel came nearer. She would answer none of our inquiries and we were completely at a loss to know what sort of ship it might be. The second officer was convinced that it was a Cunarder, but the rest of us scoffed at this notion, since it seemed quite impossible that a Cunarder could be down in those waters at such a time. In a few moments, however, when she had come within two miles of us she broke out the British admiralty flag and we saw in a moment that it was the Cunard S.S. *Caronia*, armed and crowded with British naval reserve

men. The second officer was right. It was new evidence of the tremendous efficiency of the British navy, that this merchant vessel had been so speedily adapted and equipped for patrol work and was already down in that section of the Atlantic in little more than two weeks after war had broken out. The moment that we told our story, the *Caronia* turned on her course and left us in peace.

On the following day we sighted what appeared to be another British patrol vessel, and in our eagerness to avoid either examination or detention we promptly sent to her by radio a statement of the circumstances under which we were making the voyage, of course giving the name of our vessel. We were rather amused to receive back the curt reply, "We know who you are. Bon voyage."

The next incident was the very heartening one of sighting Fire Island Light about nine o'clock on Sunday night, the 23rd. At Quarantine the following morning we were all eagerness

to know the news and whether the world was still in existence or not. During the voyage we had received only the barest information by radio and all this had been carefully scanned by Gano Dunn before being posted for the information of passengers, to the end that nothing might be done to increase their alarm and disquiet. One intercepted message which reached us was from Cardinal Merry del Val in Rome to his family in Spain, announcing the death of Pope Pius X.

We soon reached the pier which had been arranged for us by R. A. C. Smith and it may well be believed that a sigh of relief was heaved when the gang-plank went down and we found ourselves safely on a New York dock. It was nearly noon, August 24, just twelve days after the sailing of the ship from Genoa.

The company that came with us contained some very interesting and important Americans. We had among our fellow passengers, former Mayor George B. McClellan of New York, and his

wife; General S. E. Tillman, formerly Commandant at West Point, and his wife; our American Minister to China, Mr. Paul S. Reinsch of Wisconsin, and his wife; Jacob G. Schmidlapp of Cincinnati; Mr. and Mrs. John S. Shepard of New York; Professor and Mrs. Henry S. Munroe of Columbia University; Professor and Mrs. William R. Newbold of the University of Pennsylvania; Doctor and Mrs. Stewart Paton, then of Princeton, N. J.; Mr. and Mrs. Theodore W. Noyes of Washington, D. C.; Mr. and Mrs. Horace E. Andrews of New York; Doctor W. O. Bartlett of Boston; Park Benjamin of New York; Professor and Mrs. Eugene Byrne, then of the University of Wisconsin; and numerous others almost as well known.

When we landed on the dock in New York on Monday, August 24, that capital sum of twenty-seven cents, established on Monday, August 3, was unimpaired. Nevertheless, we had learned something of what war does to the processes of an orderly and peaceful civilization.



THE DARK HOUSE

By W. Ellery Sedgwick

STANDS in the darkness
on the stairs
of the dark house
a life so young—he stands there
tiptoe to question;
stands in the darkness on a stair
makes tentative the silence there.

and near him there
(nowhere)
chipped by a clock
bright moments fly
upward;
are only there dark hours
and he waits for me.

across the obscure accumulation of my days
and undecided ways
he waits.

and I'll not come.

out of the emptiness I'd bring
I should not answer anything.

where I have been, he is;
where I shall be, he is before
and where he asks no more.

