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Archives Center - NMAH

Leo Baekeland Diary Volume 51, 1932

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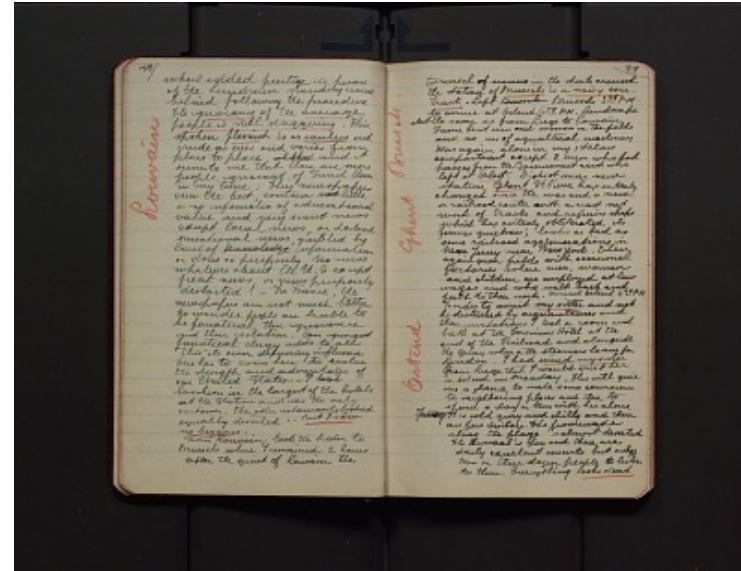
[[left margin in red]] Louvain [[left margin in red]] which added prestige in presence of the humdrum standing crowd behind following the procedure. The ignorance of the average people is still staggering. Their spoken flemish is as careless and crude as ever and varies from place to place, and it seems to me that there are more people ignorant of French than in my time: Their newspapers even the best, contain little or no information of educational value and very scant news except local news, or doctored sensational news, garbled by lack of ~~knowledge~~ information or done so purposely. No news whatever about the U.S except freak news, or news purposely distorted! - In France, the newspapers are not much better. No wonder people are liable to be fanatical thru ignorance and thru isolation. An ignorant fanatical clergy adds to all this its own depressing influence. One has to come here to realise the strength and advantages of our United States. - I took luncheon in the largest of the hotels at the Station and was the only customer, the other restaurants looked equally deserted. - But I saw no beggars. From Louvain took the train to Brussels where I remained 2 hours. After the quiet of Louvain the

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[[left margin in red]] Ostend Ghent Brussels [[left margin in red]] turmoil in the streets around the station of Brussels is a noisy contrast. Left Brussels 3.48 P.M. to arrive at Ostend 6.28 P.M. Landscape about the same as from Liege to Louvain. Same bent men and women in the fields and no use of agricultural machinery. Was again alone in my 1st class compartment except 2 men who had passes from the Government and who left at Alast. District near new station Ghent St Pierre has entirely changed since the war and is now a railroad center with a vast network of tracks and repairs shops which has entirely obliterated its former quietness; looks as bad as some railroad agglomerations in New Jersey near New York. Then again green fields with occasional factories where men, women and children are employed at low wages and who walk back and forth to their work. Arrived Ostend 6.28 P.M. In order to await my sister and not be disturbed by acquaintances and their invitations I took a room and bath at the Terminus Hotel at the end of the Railroad and alongside the Quay whence the steamers leave for London. I had wired my sister from Liege that I would meet her in Ostend on Monday. This will give me a chance to make some excursions to neighboring places and then to spend a day or two with her alone. ~~June 17~~ It is cold gray and chilly and there are few visitors. The promenade along the plage is almost deserted. The Kursaal is open and there are daily excellent concerts but only two or three dozen people to listen to them. Everything looks dead



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