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Antwerp  
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Subject: Gurney - British Consul General in Antwerp.

When I arrived in Antwerp in early 1919 to assume my duties there, our Consulate General was the largest and, in many ways, the most important in the city. It was very soon after we arrived there that Henry Morgan, who was the Consul General for Belgium with residence in Antwerp, preferred to live in Brussels and he was transferred to Brussels. This left me as Consul General at Antwerp. Although I was far junior to most of the Consuls General of other countries in Antwerp and much younger than most, the Belgian people were very grateful for all that our country had done during the war; the American Consul General therefore, on any public occasion was pushed forward by the local civil and military authorities.

There was one parade after another; parades of military, parades of workers, parades of school children - all a means of expressing the emotion and satisfaction that the war was over and the long German occupation at an end. On these occasions, presided over by the city authorities and the local military, the consular officers of all countries represented in Antwerp were always asked to be present and it was their duty to be there. I always found a place in the front row reserved for me and in order to avoid any feeling of any kind by my colleagues I always carefully took a seat in the second row. The British Consul General in Antwerp, Gurney, was a man much older than I and of long experience. Whether he had a seat in the front row reserved for him or not he was always there, and to my continued annoyance he used to try to pull me into the front row next to him. One day there was a Te Deum in the cathedral. The seats for the civil and military authorities and for the heads of the consular establishments were in the high altar. I took a seat in the second row of those reserved for the consular officers. When Gurney arrived he created a little scene in insisting that I join him in the first row seats reserved for the consular officers. As there were

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so many <sup>important</sup> visiting people there and the whole cathedral was filled, the only thing I could do to avoid any kind of a scene was to sit beside him <sup>first</sup> in the ~~front~~ row.

As we were leaving the cathedral Gurney asked me if I had my car coming to meet me and I said that I did. He said that he would like to ride uptown with me. When we were in the car I told Gurney that I didn't want any more of these scenes. I knew that the British and the French and the American consular officers were the most important in the city but according to precedence we didn't happen to be the first. I was not interested where I sat as long as where I sat was in accord with the dignity of my country. I hoped he wouldn't bother me any more and make these scenes in public places. Gurney began to give me a lesson in protocol and in questions of prestige of great countries. I told Gurney that I thought I knew how to take care of these things; I was not so much interested where I sat in public places and at dinners as I was in being able to see the people whom I had to see when I had to see them and without waiting. I said a few days before I had gone to the City Hall to see the Burgomaster and I'd gone in by the back way and had been immediately received. He had gone in the front way and up the big marble stairway of the City Hall and everybody knew he was there; I had arrived while he was waiting in the big hall and had had my talk with the Burgomaster while he was cooling his heels there. I was much younger than he but there were already a few things that I had learned. He never bothered me again. I noticed, however, that he was always in the first place on every public occasion.