



Everything went the wrong way. Yesterday, May 14th, Holland had to surrender to the Germans. The Germans were now invading Belgium from the North. In our own country over a third of Belgium was invaded. Later I found out that while we were in Brussels, the Germans were about 30 miles away. Liege, Namur and other important cities have already been taken. The Allies found it impossible to stop the Germans, who had five times as many airplanes. In other words the Allies were in full retreat.

We were one of the thousands of families escaping. If we would have left Antwerp just a few days later I am sure we would never have gotten away alive, because on May 17th Antwerp was taken, and today was the 15th of May. I do not think we returned to the South Station; but we did board a train going toward the French Frontier.

We were on our way again, going farther away from our home. We left Brussels. The trains were very slow. We did manage to have enough food but water was what we needed, but did not have enough of.

I was sitting next to a window of course. I always was interested to see what was going on. Many times I did not go to sleep until 2 AM, but after I did sleep, I was always woken up by either airplanes or by noise as we always entered a station.

There was of course no room to lie down and sleep, so I either sat on the hard seats, or sat on my mother's lap, and fell asleep. We did not know where we were heading, but we hoped it was far away from the Germans. I do not remember very well what happened on this evening, but I can remember that we arrived at a town, near a railroad junction. Everyone left the train, and sat down on chairs, and on the ground. The place looked to me like a field. Very near the field was a railroad track. There were probably close to 500 persons. Some people ate, others rested and talked about the war. As we sat there it was getting darker every minute. I remember I watched the automobiles across the field. We were all waiting for another train. Later in the evening we heard a train whistle. In a few minutes I saw the train arriving. As I looked closer I saw that it was a long freight train. Sometimes it was very difficult to find my family, because of the crowd.

Many people started to get on the train. My father also decided to leave as fast as possible, so we boarded into one of the boxcars. There was straw in them. This made it more comfortable for us. I cannot remember at all what happened after we were on the freight train, but I know that we changed our trains.





I remembered that when we were still at the "field" before getting on the freight train, there were men who warned us (all the people) not to smoke cigarettes during the night, nor were we supposed to point at any object.

Although we were some distance from the Germans, we often had German airplanes near us. Many times I forgot myself and pointed with my finger out of the window when I would see a British or French soldier. My sister would slap my hand, and tell me not to do it again. My sister was about 11 years old, while I was 9.

Whenever I saw a English soldier, I would look at him until he was too far to be seen. Besides looking out of the train window, there was nothing else to do. I heard my father say that we were going toward "Ypres", a historical, and old town near the French frontier.

When we passed by a road we could see people on carriages, and on foot probably escaping. We were supposed to meet our brothers and sisters who are married, at the town of Ypres.

King Leopold III of Belgium took charge over all the armed forces. There were British and French soldiers who fought the Germans together with the Belgians. Holland was totally occupied by the Germans. In the West the Germans were pushing the Allies back, but fighting continued. The King encouraged the Belgian soldiers to fight bravely against Hitler, telling them that we will not give up any Belgian soil without a struggle for it. Even the words in the Belgian National Anthem say that: "Never shall anyone take away a piece of soil from us, without a fight for it".

King Leopold III was troubled by a great many things. First of all in 1934 his father, King Albert I was killed while climbing a steep hill near Namur. It was one of his favorite sports. Then on February 1935, the Swedish Princess- Queen Astrid, wife of King Leopold, was killed, when they were driving their car in Switzerland. The door was not very tightly shut, and as the auto was speeding along rapidly, the door, near which the queen was, flung open, and she fell out of it, hitting a tree, and then falling in the nearby Lake of Lucerne. It was naturally a sad time for the King. Today Belgium was being bombed, and people were being killed by the thousands. Therefore King Leopold was a troubled leader.