left for Dover, where we stayed over night, and took the steamer next morning for Ostend, Belgium. We had a very smooth passage none of us being at all sick.
Arriving at Ostend we separated, I going to Brussels and they going straight to Ems.
Well I got to Brussels without much difficulty but when there I found, to my dismay that not a man spoke anything but French, and although I could read French with some difficulty, I could understand previous little when spoken to in that language, and worst of all, I could not speak a word myself. Cousin Theo directed me to go to Hotel "Bellevue" where I would find English speakers so I accosted a man in English who had "Hotel Bellevue" printed on his cap. He spoke broken English, and took me to a "Hotel Bellevue" not the one I had been told to go to, however.
I stumbled around Brussels for a day and a half without finding another soul in the whole infernal place who could speak anything but French and Flemish. But on the second day I found the right Hotel, and also an Englishman whom I clung to in desperation. Notwithstanding the disadvantageous position in which I was placed I enjoyed my stay very much. I arrived there at a very good time, that is, when the National Exposition, and the fêtes were going on.
I stayed in beautiful Brussels, the most beautiful city I have ever seen, three days, and by the time I left I had picked up quite a number of French phrases. I believe that anybody staying in France six months would be able to speak the language quite well at the end of that time, you soon get accustomed to it.
After leaving Brussels I went on