

April 26, 1917.—A clear, cold day, with an icy wind from the sea and a coldly glittering sun. Will one never in this life be warm again?

Climbed the two hundred steps of the cliff to see Berryer this morning about going to La Panne—that dreadful journey that confronts us!—but there was some misunderstanding. He had gone to a meeting of the Cabinet. Climbed up again this afternoon; he will write to La Panne to know when the King can receive us. Asked me to thank my Government for the allotment of \$80,000,000 for feeding Belgium. I telegraphed.

Telegraphed also suggesting that this is an appropriate time to recognize Belgian sovereignty in the Congo. It is an idea I have long had in mind. The United States followed England's lead in refusing recognition in old Leopold's time; England and America both having had one of those moral shocks to which the moral Anglo-Saxon race is subject over the late Sir Roger Casement's exposure of the atrocities in the Congo. But whatever abuses there were—and there were some no doubt—were corrected by the reforms King Albert wrought, and England has long since recognized the Belgian sovereignty. The Belgium Government always claimed that by demanding exequaturs for consuls we had recognized it, but I suggest to the Department that this would be a gracious act on our part at this time. I have never mentioned the matter to a Belgian....

The new régime—evening without meat—is in force, as I said; it touches nobody, however, save us poor devils doomed to live in hotels, and we are already sufficiently put upon as it is—what with the ferocious rapacity of landlords who bleed us white. With this latest excuse they serve a light supper in the evening—for the price of a grand dinner in the old days—and send us cheerless to bed.

The owner of this hotel, who owns a furniture shop as well, said with a great flourish of generosity, that if the furniture in our rooms was not sufficient—it consists of chairs covered with bright yellow plush, miles on miles of which was bought when the hotel was opened—if the furniture was not sufficient we might buy some at his shop and *ourselves select* the hour when we would go to examine it!

Today I received my invitation from the City of Paris to attend the ceremonies at l'Hôtel de Ville last Saturday in honour of the

Franco-American alliance. Too late—alas—to go and hear Sharp's speech.

He is clever—in a way. He has the volubility of an Ohio country lawyer, can talk on and on and on indefinitely, never tiring any one but his hearers, and saying nothing. He can not speak a word of French, stands up, and solemnly delivers long harangues in English to French audiences, who do not understand a word but sit with French politeness and pretend to listen. Then, some one—Sharp must have a clever secretary somewhere—translates or prepares a long address in French, which is published in all the Paris newspapers next day. All Paris reads them, thinks that Sharp pours them out spontaneously, and has for them that relish the French always have for fluent, flowing, unending tides of speech! Sharp has absolutely no sense of humour; if he had he couldn't stand up and talk by the hour as though he were haranguing a crowd, or pleading to a jury, in a language no one understands. It must be a sight for Gods and men! That bold, bony, solemn, expressionless face, that high knob of a bald crown, that long frock coat, those enormous hands—and that unceasing flow of words!