

June 29, 1917.—Twenty-five years ago tonight! Susie! ¹ *Ay di mi, ay di mi!*

Lunched with Nicholson, Nell and I. Colonel Garrett said the American troops had arrived, he had seen the statement in a London paper. It is not in the French. We drove to the base camps at Harfleur, saw the soldiers in training—bomb throwing, bayonet

¹ Brand Whitlock's first wife.

charges, trench building and so on and so on. Tea with Colonel Harrison, a fine typical old English gentleman—at his headquarters—officers of the Guard there, Duke, Stair, and so forth. An interesting time.

Wrote to Maeterlinck.

Can't finish my speech¹ to my satisfaction. I'm losing my grip, or something—and I can't make speeches to stir up hate. What I have written has a cheap, rhetorical sound. This war has so confused my ideas that I don't know any more—don't know. I know that democracy ought to win, must win, but—I don't like the stupendous folly of war. And yet what argument would prevail with that lunatic whom the silly Germans adore and prostrate themselves before? If you aren't patient enough to argue with a man, and convince him, and if your arguments don't come to mind rapidly enough—since thinking is hard work!—knock him down. That's war. But what if he knocks you down first? Nature is always with war. Different microbes have been warring in my arm for two weeks!²

Note from the Queen the other day thanking me for the medal.

Too lazy to write out the details of our visit to the base camps, and yet it might be worth while. Impressions remain with me—the company waiting to go forward, resting for a moment, on the ground, in their low, flat steel helmets (which save many a life) all of one colour, that of the ground, and therefore of a “low visibility”—yellow, drab, brown. Then the snub-nosed, enthusiastic director of athletics, working hard, shouting at his men as they went through the setting up exercises; the horses trotting about in rings, as at a circus—very much like a circus, the whole splendid organization; the camp of the “immatures”; then the gardens, lawns, flower-beds the men have made, one with the “red hand of Ulster” set out in red flowers, at the headquarters of the Ulster division; others for the Horse Guards, Life Guards, Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, and so on.

Off in the distance across the valley, where the original huts were, the church at Harfleur, built by the English during the English occupation. The French every autumn have a celebration to commemorate the *departure* of the English, who were driven out when the garrison was low, by the French. They still have the celebration, and always invite the English officers, who attend. “They do it so

¹ Whitlock had been invited to speak on the Fourth of July at the grave of Lafayette in Paris.

² Whitlock had taken injections of serum against typhoid.

nicely, the French," said Nicholson, "so politely. We could never do it—we couldn't carry it off; we would be awkward and ashamed and self-conscious."