

July 26, 1917.—Walking in town—the dirty, filthy, odorous, dingy town¹—this morning saw numerous groups of American soldiers—a regiment of engineers just arrived. Spent the day in writing letters, and in feeling miserable and good for nothing.

Thoughts: Why is it, that at a period when there is a greater impulse towards democracy than ever before, there is everywhere a contempt, a growing distrust, thoroughly deserved, of parliamentary bodies?² In England parliament is nothing, and England is the mother of parliaments; one man, Lloyd George, is everything. In France, everybody despises the Chamber; women have slapped the faces of deputies on the quai d'Orsay. In America, Senate and House potter and potter, and do nothing, and are generally held in contempt. Indeed, in America there has long been a tendency away from belief, from confidence in legislative bodies. Our city councils were long corrupt, filled with the worst we had, and when they ceased to be corrupt they became stupid—as I learned in Toledo. Our State legislatures have long been unspeakable—an annual calamity with which it was a disgrace or a pain to be associated. The Senate has long been the refuge of privilege, the Congress, of fools. Today, and for nearly five years past, Wilson alone has represented the popular ideas in America. Indeed, for many years it has been the executive—the mayors in cities, the governors in states, the President in Wilson's case, and somewhat in Roosevelt's, who have been the instrument of democracy, betrayed always in its legislative chambers. Russia, in agony, turns to Kerensky, realizing already, if dimly, that it has been her superstitious trust in elected bodies that has led her to the abyss—abstraction fails, of course, of the effects of czarism.

Men distrusted rulers; thought that in elections there was salvation; hence elected chambers and executives—and administrators, even petty functionaires, as in America, where even county surveyors and coroners are elected. All this, instead of aiding democracy, retarded it—and we have the first ballot reform.

Tom Johnson used to say that there should be but one man

¹ Havre was suffering from congestion. In pre-war days the city had about 130,000 people; as a Belgian capital and a British base it gained 100,000 more; building had stopped; and the city suffered in consequence. But in the last months of the war all Europe had become impoverished, dirty, and slovenly.

² Whitlock's faith in democracy, though impaired by the war, was far from dead; but he was catching glimpses of the forces that were to give birth to Pilsudski, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin.

elected in a city; and that was the mayor. Events proved him to have been right—in all jurisdictions.

It is so because democracy is *personality*; and there is no personality in a Congress; it is a medley of mediocrities where the worst show most clearly—as in smeared painting, the dirty, dull tones always killing the brighter, purer colours. If they are representative bodies, they represent the worst. The executives generally, or more often, represent the best.

Will democracy in the future take other forms? A boss for the city—but a boss chosen by the people, a dictator in the nation, but a dictator coming out of plebiscite, not out of a *coup d'état*? Thus, at any rate, personality finds play, and things are done—there is accomplishment. It is a subject that I have not thought out, not expressed at all clearly, but it is worth thinking about.