

September 9, 1918.—After luncheon, in the middle of the afternoon, who should telephone from the Consulate but Clarence Darrow! He came out at once, accompanied by Dr. White, an independent preacher of Chicago who, by the way, is a friend of my old friend John Eastman of the *Chicago Journal*. I should have preferred to have Darrow alone. I was delighted to see this old friend, whom I have known since early in the 90's—a matter now of a quarter of a century, *Mon Dieu!* How old one grows! He was indeed one of the idols of my youth. In those days he was the tribune of the people, the eloquent defender of the downtrodden and the oppressed, the man of literary tastes and culture, the dauntless leader of humanity's forlorn hope! He was a wonderful speaker, very great and strong before a jury. I used to wish I could be like him. He had a superb mind, was humorous and witty, was growing rapidly famous, one of those men of whom everybody expects confidently the greatest things. There was, indeed, in all the Middle West and West no more fascinating, sympathetic, popular figure. Every one liked him, admired him; he could be radical and retain the respect of the conservatives. There was a certain pungency, I know not what, in his eloquence, his wit, his humour, his truth and honesty and sincerity. I have told in *Forty Years of It* how he first impressed me.

Then, I don't know precisely how... I discovered that my idol had feet of clay. However, I was rapidly growing accustomed to that experience, disillusionments were crowding on me everywhere and on all sides; I began to ask and to expect very little of men, and so took them as I found them, and as they came. In the early years of our acquaintance I saw much of Darrow. He used to come to us at Toledo for week-ends, and they were always pleasant visits, his wit and humour, his perfect taste in literature, his aims, liberal and radical, quite in accord with my own of the period. He was excellent company, not always a comfortable guest, for he disdained or condemned conventionalities, but he had what I may call a sparkling mind; it never failed to respond. He once wished me to go into law partnership with him, but I declined, some instinct telling me not to.

Then, after I was mayor, I saw less of him. We were both busy with our personal affairs. Then came his trouble in Los Angeles. I saw him only once after that, and then but for a minute at New York, at some club or other.

And now today there he sat before me, hardly changed, looking at first no older until one examined closely, when one saw that the skin was inclined to be flabby at the neck—he was somehow softly fatter—and the great plume of hair, that once hung over his right eye and shook so dramatically when he was in the heat and passion of forensic effort—he was strangely handsome in such moments, a sort of beautiful ugliness, as the French say—was now thinned, not greyed, and combed over the baldness of his head.

He was as of old—delightful in his witty and agreeable pessimism, full of humorous and true observations, and on the war, wholly right. Much disillusionment of course; as to labour unions, for instance, down on the leaders. . . .

He was enthusiastic, so far as he can be enthusiastic, about the English: considers them, and rightly, the greatest nation in the world; says they have carried on this war and defeated Germany, and that he would like to live in England and become a British citizen.

Dr. White wished to know if our troops got the credit for what they did, and Nell answered "No" (though I think they do). Darrow said in his droll way, in his sympathetic, low voice:

"Well, our papers make up for any lack over here. To read some, you'd think there were no soldiers but American soldiers in Europe, and to read the Chicago papers you'd think they all came from Chicago. I suppose that if the First Ward had newspapers, they'd say they all came from the First Ward."

Another time, "Yes, a man must be respectable, unless he lives in a tough ward."

He said that to get along one must be cold, cruel, unsympathetic.

We talked mostly of books. He is very enthusiastic over Eden Phillpotts. Said too that he owed me apologies and gratitude. Five years ago I had given him *A Shropshire Lad*, but he had not read it at the time; took it up later; now knows it by heart. He advised me to read a Dutch writer, Couperus, who has written *Small Souls*.

On the whole, the happiest two hours I have spent in a year, an

oasis in the midst of the wide and arid desert of dullness in which I live. Darrow has all of his old charm, and with all his faults I love him still.