

November 22, 1918.—At 10 A.M. Nell and I drove for Sir Francis, and thence to the Parliament Houses; vast crowds in the streets, and lines of Belgian soldiers, everywhere flags, Belgian and Allied, and the most brilliant sun—a miracle of weather for the homecoming of the King who slept the night, they say, at Laeken.

We went up the stairs and into the gallery of the President, reserved for the diplomatic corps. Villalobar was there in the loge reserved for us.... Nell got a front seat and Villalobar had the other, leaving Villiers and me to take back seats. Much greeting of friends, and colleagues; the Swedish Minister, pro boche, not seen here since 1914, very much in evidence, and a large corps of Chilean diplomatists emerged from their hole, with others long since hidden, in the light of this new day. On the stair below the deputies gathered, greeting one another; hum of voices, laughter, and so on, and crowds drifting behind us in the galleries.

After an hour or more, all ordered out into the balcony to witness the coming of the King¹ and the review.

More crowds and crowding near me. The square below, place de la Nation, empty—waiting, across the street along the Parc great crowds—waiting. After a long time, Max arrives, much cheering. Max in uniform, *chapeau-bras* with white plume, gets out of his motor, poses, strikes attitudes, very cinematographic. Max gives orders, waving white gloved hands, picturesque, graceful, theatrical, the idol of the populace.

Waiting; then flourish of trumpets, a stir, and—the King. He is in khaki, just as I saw him last; mounted on a white horse, with him the Queen, and their three children, mounted too, and on his right, a pretty boy in English uniform, Prince Albert, second son of King George. Many Belgian generals, Leman among them on his horse; and English generals, and French; one American and one Italian officer. They range themselves behind the royal family. There is cheering, but not such frantic cheering as I expected. All about us on the balcony, deep throated cries of "*Vive le Roi! Vive le Roi!*"

Then the review begins. From behind the corner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the head of a column—a band in khaki—American troops, the band playing Sousa's "Washington Post." Then a regiment of American infantry marching like guards, straight, big and fine and they created in me the one emotion I have felt today. Strange! This day toward which I have looked and longed for more than four years, this day that I have so long imagined, dramatising its scenes, has left me somehow unmoved; not indifferent to be sure, not uninterested, but untouched. It is the invariable rule of this our ironic life, with its eternally contrary spirit; perhaps it is because I have had too many emotions, and am tired, tired, tired, to the bone, and to the marrow of the bone.

The flag goes by; we all uncover. They are Ohio troops, I fancy—learned indeed later in the day that they were Ohio troops, from Cincinnati and my own town of Toledo. American artillery follows.

Then Scotch Kilties and a band of pipers follow; the drummers twirling their drum sticks high above their heads. The kilts make

¹ King Albert had made his state entry into Antwerp on November 20th, and now was coming to Brussels, where he was to address Parliament. In his notable speech on this occasion he declared that Belgium must thereafter enjoy full sovereignty, without a guarantee of neutrality by other nations; pledged full suffrage rights to all males; and guaranteed language rights to his Flemish subjects.

a tremendous hit—nothing excites the continental populace like the kilt.

Afterwards, English troops and then French, each *poilu* having a little Belgian flag in the muzzle of his gun—always French humbug!

Then Belgian troops, and the people wild over them, naturally and properly.

After the review we go in and return to the gallery, more and more crowded. Daisy O'Neal comes up, begs me not to get up, says that under no circumstance would she dream of taking my chair—and this worn-out woman's trick having thus been worked once more in human history, I of course give her my chair—and am lost in the crowd of interlopers who have no right in that gallery.

The deputies are there; on the right of the throne, a President's high dais, is the scarlet figure of the Cardinal....

There are shouts of "*La Reine!*" and the Queen comes in; pale, evidently weary, all in grey, with a long grey coat that has a collar of grey fur; she curtsies and ascends the dais raised to the left of the tribune and takes the chair placed for her under the crimson canopy. With her are Prince Albert of England, the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Flanders—in the uniforms of a British naval cadet or midshipman—and the Princess Marie, now a tall thin girl, with hair no longer curled, but worn like any other flapper. The Grande Maîtresse and the Countess Elizabeth d'Oultremont are there too.

The King comes—there are many shouts of "*Vive le Roi!*" He looks older, more careworn now than when he stood last in that place; in his face the lines of a character that has been purged and hammered during these four years. He pauses to smile and shake hands first with the Cardinal, then with Max, and then ascends the steps to the throne. He stands there; tall, strong; on his left and a step or two to the rear, the young Prince Leopold, Duke of Brabant, takes his place; he is in the khaki uniform of a private in the Belgian army. At the foot of the stairs on the King's right stands the Count de Mérode, Grand Maréchal of the Court, in Court uniform....

The King made his address, with its brief review of the war and the campaigns of his army, the promises for democratic reform, universal suffrage, and so on; there was much applause, and every one of the deputies stood and joined in the demonstration

save one Socialist, and he seemed to have palsy. There were demonstrations too in favour of each of the Allied nations as the King referred to them; a great demonstration when he especially referred to American generosity and the feeding of Belgium.

He finishes and goes out—and we go out—long after one o'clock. . . .

At four there was a reception for the King at the Hôtel de Ville. Nell and I went for Sir Francis. The Grande Place in the early twilight was beautiful, all the great silken banners of the corporations were floating there, and the Grande Place was densely crowded with people—there was no room for motors, so we had to make infinitesimally slow progress, nosing our way along it at a snail's pace. The people recognized me, and began crying "*Vive l'Amérique! Vive l'Amérique!*" "*Vive Brand Whitlock*" (they pronounce it Brond Weetlock).

Inside, the familiar scene of a reception in the Salle Gothique—the last time I was there had been to see Jarotsky! What memories!—the Salle crowded; greeting old friends. Jacquemain among them, who took me in to see Max; and when Max saw me, he was for a moment silent, seemed unable to speak. He looked well, seemed quite unchanged. There was that odd sensation, seeing him then there, that it was again the spring of 1914, that nothing had happened, that it was all a dream. We waited long for the King, he came finally—with the children, but the Queen was not present; too weary, I suppose, poor thing. There were allocutions by Max and by Solvay—the latter like those he used to read at those meetings of the Comité National—and a response by the King. Then the customary tour of the Hôtel de Ville, and so on, and a collation. There I met a number of American officers from Ohio, some from Toledo, and they told me that they had participated in the review of the morning.