

*December 7, 1918.*—We were in a torment of apprehension and anxiety this morning. No word from Hoover, and a grand reception in his honour fixed for three o'clock this afternoon, the traditional ceremony of the Hôtel de Ville, the freedom of the city conferred on Hoover, degree of LL.D., and the like, then tonight a grand dinner of four hundred covers by the Comité National, tomorrow evening a dinner at the Palace given by the King. Francqui had said that I would have to make a speech at the

Hôtel de Ville and one at the dinner, and all morning I was trying to dictate some notes for these speeches, and all morning long a stream of callers, on all sorts of errands—Baron Wintergreen, or Spearmint or whatever it is...among the first, and I turned him off; then Sadi Kirschen, to explain his actions in the Cavell case, which I fancy would require a long time, and I bundled him out; and then came Guy d'Oultremont to ask what of Hoover?

And just at that moment Swift came in with a telegram from Gibson, not for me, but for Barbour, saying that Hoover was in London, and could not come.

D'Oultremont threw up both hands, and laughed. Luckily, by some fortunate intuition, he had not sent out the invitations for the King's dinner at the Palace on Sunday night—so that dinner could be countermanded.

He had no sooner gone than Francqui and Lambert came. I told them and there was great commotion. The Grande Place is hung with the banners of the old guilds, and festooned with shields, all bright with American colours, the Hôtel de Ville is decorated with our flags in Hoover's honour, one thousand, four hundred and fifty persons are invited to the dinner for this evening—and Hoover not here and not coming! Francqui and Lambert decided at once that I must make a speech at the reception at the Hôtel de Ville and at the dinner explaining Hoover's absence, and so on, and they prepared a telegram of regret from Hoover which I was to present.

I began to prepare the speeches, but decided not to have anything to do with any manufactured telegram, and sent Swift to the Hôtel de Ville to see what was to be done there. And in the midst of all this came Captain Nickerson of our army from Spa, with the secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce at Berlin, an American who came to see Hoover to explain to him the food situation in Germany. He said that it was very serious, but perhaps not quite so bad as represented by some of the dispatches sent out from Berlin. He said that the Germans had done with the Kaiser, and that if food were provided within two months, the Bolsheviks would not make much headway, but that otherwise the Spartacus group would grow. Returning soldiers are even now complicating the situation in Germany because they absorb much of the available means of transport; the rich can still procure food.

Nickerson spoke of the feeling between Americans and French;

said that the French general at the Spa Conference had almost elbowed the American and British generals away from the table. He told me an interesting bit of history of the taking of Sedan. The city was in the section assigned to the Americans for the advance, but it was not expected that the advance would attain the city. The Americans fought so well, however, that they were evidently about to take the city; then Foch, seeing this, changed the orders so as to put French troops in the American sector, and let them take the city. But Pershing got angry, said, "No, damn it, no!" ordered his men on, and they entered Sedan. He announced the entry into Sedan the next day and the French thereupon issued a *communiqué* denying that statement in the American *communiqué*! Then the Americans took the affidavits of the German prisoners they had taken in Sedan—many of them while they were asleep in their beds!

But all this time the speeches were unprepared and no Hoover here for everybody to see! Then Swift came back, saying that the Burgomaster was furious and had called the whole thing off.

Lambert was in again, then Villalobar, and we drove down to see the Burgomaster. The decorations in the Grande Place and in the Cour d'Honneur were beautiful, great banners of the American colours, stars and stripes, hanging there, but the Burgomaster had gone. His secretary came and told us that the reception had been called off; police agents sent everywhere to notify the invited, and to prevent the school children from turning out.

Home to luncheon, and afterward Lord Athlone came in to call on me, and I sat and enjoyed very much a pleasant half hour with him. Then I drove to the Hôtel de Ville to express my regrets and those of Hoover, and had a chat with Max, who said that the only effect of the postponement would be to enable them to make it more imposing the next time. When I got home there was word from the Comité National to the effect that their dinner was called off.

And there we were—such a pothor and trouble as Hoover had made with his boorishness; keeping us all on pins and needles for nearly a week—and such a day as this has been!