

June 18, 1919.—The familiar haze that lay on the calm sea this morning betokened, as I could recall from our experience at Ste.-Adresse, a warm day.

The King was up early, and had a swim in the sea, then went for a walk, leaving word that he wished to see me on his return. I was standing on the sidewalk before the hotel when he came back, and he approached with a hearty greeting. He said that the hotel was too noisy.

“I never sleep well,” he said.

I refrained from making the obvious remark, and he began asking questions about the President. Did he like to smoke? Would he find the programme too fatiguing? etc. The schedule, indeed, indicates a terrible day.

The motors were drawing up as we stood there and His Majesty said, “I must get my wife.”

They appeared presently, the King going off in his big Renault car and the Queen following in a closed car.

Then Hoffman and I and all the others, went off to Adinkerke.

We were there at nine: troops were drawn up along the platforms of the little station, with a band; there were flowers and red carpets and the Burgomaster was there in his sash, and the aldermen. There was also an army of photographers and anxious spectators, the miserable army that spoils every public function in these days.

The train rolls slowly in—stops—the King and Queen are waiting near the President's coach. I see de Cartier, who has got off the train, bareheaded, bowing to his sovereigns. They board the train, I follow. There is the President, smiling, looking very well; he sees me, smiles a welcome—I shake his hand, am presented to Mrs. Wilson, Miss Benham, Admiral Grayson. General Harts is there, we are huddled in the little salon of the coach. The President wears a morning coat; a valet is handing him with almost reverential solicitude a freshly ironed high-hat; he dons it and we get off.

The band has been playing "The Star-Spangled Banner," over and over and over; we walk slowly down before the troops, uncovering to the Belgian flags. Hoover is beside me; Vance McCormick is there, and the tall, grinning, white-haired, thin-lipped Jew, Barney Baruch, and Norman Davis. I chat a moment with Margaret Wilson....

As they get into the big car, the President and the King, I tell the President that he will be most uncomfortable in that high hat; he thanks me with relief; says, "I was not quite sure what would be expected."

And we wait while a traveling cap is produced and a long, new, linen duster. Then, thus attired, they drove off, and we enter our cars to follow.

In my car were Hoffman, de Cartier, and Vance McCormick. The large caravan moves swiftly off, the King setting a terrific pace. A great cloud of dust arises and floats off over the fields of Flanders, where poppies and bluets are blooming.

We stop at Nieuport and scramble about, among, and over the ruins. Nothing remains of the town but piles of brick and stones and mortar. We look at the locks, the canal—it was there that the King said, "We will retreat no further," in 1914. As we walked along I said to the President that there was something infinitely pathetic in the spectacle of the ruins of so many houses, when we thought of the happiness that had existed in each of them. He replied that houses were always being destroyed; that it was sadder to see the means of common life destroyed, such as the canals.

We drove on—along the road I had taken in May 1917, the depressing road from Ramscapelle, Furnes and on to Dixmude, where we stopped, then to Mercken, where the Belgians won their victory last autumn, and at noon were at la Forêt de Houtholst. Here we paused for luncheon.

It was a strange scene. A tent had been erected, also an awning, and then a table was spread with the dishes from the Palace, brought down in a motor lorry from Brussels, by the faithful maître-d'hotel with black mutton-chop whiskers whom one sees at the Palace.

We waited while the servants set the table; indeed, we had gone so fast that we had arrived somewhat ahead of time. There were newspaper correspondents, American and Belgian, secret service men, the army of photographers and cinema operators—who hung on the outskirts of the presidential and royal parties as we sat down to luncheon.

Then another army appeared, an army of enormous black flies, that bit us like mad. It was terrible. "There are no flies on you!" said Norman Davis across the table to the Queen. She looked astonished, and perplexed and turned to me helplessly. "What does he mean?" she asked. I explained, and said something about the prevalence of slang in America. The President was disgusted; "Much of our slang had better not be used," he said. The Queen then said there were no flies on her because she was in white. "They do not like white," she said, "that is why I took off my dust coat."

She asked us to keep on our hats. The luncheon was simple—chicken, cold, bread, sandwiches, a salad, coffee, and red wine. During the meal the Queen arose, and joining the industrious photographers, took several snap-shots of us.

The President was very gay during luncheon, laughed a great deal, and told several delightful anecdotes of Dr. Jowett of Oxford. I related one of him that I had recently read, and I think the King and Queen were rather uncertain as to who Dr. Jowett was.

Alone with the President, he spoke of the Senate at home. "Did you ever hear of such actions?" he said. He spoke of the Irish question, and I said that the action of the Senate in voting on it at all was unspeakable in its disregard of international comity, and he agreed. "The trouble in Ireland is," I said, "that the people pity themselves, and when a nation pities itself, it is lost." "That is what ails the French," he said. "They suffer from self-pity and from fear—a craven fear of the Germans." He was

bitter against Poincaré, whom he called a ———, and to Medill McCormick he referred as a ———. I told him of McCormick's failure to go to La Panne when the day had been fixed for the audience he had requested, and the President was disgusted.

The President was reciting a limerick to me—and we kept the column waiting. Then on, to that desolate lunar landscape toward Ypres—and Mt. Kemmel blue in the distance! Tommies along the roadside, and German prisoners piling up and sorting ammunition and duds—great heaps of it. Then Ypres, a mass of whitish stones. The Burgomaster showed the President about, a great crowd following: English, Americans, Canadians, New Zealanders, and our own troops, and many Belgians living somehow among the ruins of the destroyed town. Mrs. Wilson asked me to go and interpret for the President, which I did, as he strolled along; the Burgomaster speaking in French.

The caravan started, but our car would not budge. We waited half an hour, then got into another car and started on, far behind and late. We had an open car this time, not so comfortable as the limousine, and we had an officer and Swope of the *World* in the car with us. Through Menin and Thourout and Roulers, always behind the others and witnessing thereby the aftermath of the receptions; flags, and dispersing crowds. We had a puncture and lost more time; the party was going to Ostend and thence to Zeebrugge, where we were to take a train at six to return to Brussels. Fearing we would be too late, we did not go to Ostend but drove on through Bruges and so to Zeebrugge, arriving there before the others, and in time to have tea at a Y.W.C.A. hut.

It was a strange, almost wild ride; hot and hazy—"this typical landscape of Flanders," as de Cartier said over and over during the day. He had an eye for all the beauty of the scene—though McCormick had not; or at least gave no evidence of it, if he did.

The party arrived after awhile and we drove out upon the mole, where we were received by British naval officers. The King had said to me earlier in the day:

"I selected Zeebrugge not because the Belgians did anything there, but because the English did, and I thought that as Anglo-Saxons you might have a pride in their exploit."

I told this to the President, and he was pleased.

On the mole were Captain Evans, who had been with Scott on his Antarctic expedition—a brisk, black-eyed, bright little chap,

June 19, 1919.—The King and the President went to Charleroi and to la Providence this morning to see the ruins of the factories destroyed systematically by the Germans. But I remained in town, concerned about the luncheon and fearing that I might be late if I went. (I had explained to the King and the President.)

The luncheon was set for 12:30. We had flowers everywhere, and a red carpet spread at the entrance; there were two lines of American soldiers as a guard of honour, and to present arms, and the headquarters band of the Third Army in the Park, playing all morning and ready to give the President and the King their flourishes and ruffles when they arrived. (I had asked for the band; it gave a concert in the Parc Royal yesterday afternoon, and another this afternoon.) Our flags, of course, were up, and we had placed another staff, and had posted Gordon there to break out the Belgian flag just as the King drove up. The guests were all gathered—Max, the Cardinal, Villalobar (because he had had charge of our interests here), de Mérode the Grand Maréchal, M.