

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.

and Mme. Delacroix, M. and Mme. Paul Hymans, and others. The guests, then, had gathered when we heard the bugles and the drums and then the band playing the "Star-Spangled Banner"—the President! And Nell and I took our places at the foot of the steps, and received the President and Mrs. Wilson, Margaret and Miss Benham, Admiral Grayson, and General Harts. We ushered them into the salon, the presentations were then made. The bugles and drums again, and "la Brabançonne"—Their Majesties were coming! The President went with me to the foot of the steps and as the King alighted, the President said: "I am pleased to welcome you on American soil."

Luncheon was almost immediately announced.

"Leurs Majestés sont servis."

The President had my seat and Mrs. Wilson Nell's; the Queen on the President's right, and Mme. Delacroix on his left. The King was on Mrs. Wilson's right, the Cardinal on her left. I was at the Queen's right, Nell next to Hymans, and so on. It all passed off well, and rapidly. The President could not talk with Mme. Delacroix, he speaking no French, she no English; he talked to the Queen and to me instead. I don't recall what was said; it was all light, touch and go, and pleasant. Because the Queen suffers from hay fever, Nell had not had roses, for which the Queen expressed her gratitude; there were, I think, sweet peas instead....

Coffee in the salon—and the King and royal party were away, and the other guests; the President remaining for the reception to the American colony and various delegations, the press, some clergymen, and so forth.

I hurried this along, and he was off in half an hour.

At 2:30 we went to Parliament; vast crowds in the sunshine and troops all along the way and great ovations as the King and the President drove up. We went to the Chamber of Deputies; its galleries were full. Seats were set for the King and President and a chair behind the President for me. When the Queen and Mrs. Wilson came in there was applause, and when Hoover appeared he had a little ovation. Then, Belgian soldiers bearing the battle flags of the Belgian army, mounting to the tribune; the flags have the names of the battles.... There was tumultuous applause, and there were tears. Then the King and the President—and thunder.

After a bit, silence. His Majesty mounts the tribune, and reads a speech, in French; then Hymans in English, making a pretty reference to me, at which the Chamber arose, and I arose and bowed

my acknowledgement. Then the President, making a splendid, solemn address, extempore, very decisive, notable in thought and diction, perfectly suited to the occasion, saying just what should be said.

Incidentally, he undid all the French propaganda—and announced that the American Legation here would be raised to an Embassy.

Out then, and away to Malines, racing over the familiar road. Great crowds at Malines, children lining all the sidewalks, and Denys ringing the carillon. The Cardinal received us, read a little allocution in English, referring to his visit to America, the President responded; then, tea and small talk, and we ran off to Louvain.

The King drives so fast that we could not keep up with him; the ceremony in the old Hôtel de Ville was in progress when we made our way through the great crowds up to the entrance. The old Burgomaster read his allocution, the President signed the "golden book," then we followed on foot to the environs of the University. There, in the midst of those tragic ruins... where the library was—only its broken walls remain standing, the roof is open to the sky—a carpet was spread, and a table and chairs were placed and the Rector, Mgr. Ladeuze, read an address conferring on the President the degree of *Doctor honoris causa*. The President replied, accepting and excommunicating German scientific men from the brotherhood of scholars. It was an impressive scene, of immense implications, and the President much touched. He told me afterwards that he had a sensation of unreality, as though he were looking on at some scene and not participating in it. "Was ever a degree conferred in such circumstances?"

The diploma was a beautiful ornamented parchment, handsomely bound. We ran back to Brussels, we arriving by some hazard before the others. I learned or noted afterwards that Mrs. Wilson had gone to the Palace to change her gown—and as we entered the Hôtel de Ville, Nell and I, the choir of girls thought it was the Presidential party and began singing the "Star-Spangled Banner." The audience assembled in the Salle Gothique, across—and laughed as we alone entered.

They came after awhile. Max made his speech, the President replied, then we went into the Burgomaster's room, where the President signed the book, then out onto the balcony to look down on that loveliest of all scenes—the Grand Place. The banners of the corporations hung from the old guild-houses and all around were

the crowds. Across the Place, before the Masion du Roi, was a great military band, and a male chorus: the "Star-Spangled Banner" was played, then choruses were sung, then the crowds joined in the singing. It was most moving.

Then to the Palace for the reception to the diplomatic corps. We had to wait until the dear colleagues could all assemble; then I presented them to the President. He talked long with Sir Francis and Lady Villiers, and with Villalobar.

It was eight o'clock; dinner at the Palace was to be at 8:15, and I found that the military motor that had brought me had gone!

I ran all the way home, tired and sore and lame. Villalobar took Nell in his car. I took a bath, dressed, drove back to the Palace and we entered just at 8:15. I was never so weary in my life, didn't know my own name. The dinner was brilliant, uniforms, laces, jewels, footmen in scarlet coats, great numbers of tiny pink roses, and one hundred and fifty guests; speeches by the King and the President. Then, standing about in one of the great salons until the hour for departure, when we drove to the station—Gare de Luxembourg—where the Burgomaster and Villalobar and others were gathered, troops presented arms and the "Star-Spangled Banner" was sung, and good-byes, and the train pulled out. The President smiling in the salon of the coach and giving salutes, and it was over!

And what weariness! But it was a success, not an unpleasantness had marred his visit.