

July 20, 1920.—At 4:30 I drove to Laeken and there was received by the Countess Elisabeth d'Oultremont, who led the way to the familiar red Empire drawing-room, where the tea table was set out. Her Majesty had left word that I was not to wait, but to have tea served at once, and the Countess had just poured me a cup when the Queen came in. She was dressed in a simple white frock, white shoes, and wore a white canvas hat, against the sun. She sat down and had her tea, and then we went out to play. The six holes that Penell has designed in the great park were naturally in better condition than when I played with Her Majesty last winter; there are no flags on the green, and no cups to putt into, not even holes cut for that purpose. Her Majesty said that she had given orders to have the holes cut, but that it hadn't been done; "I don't know why," she said, with an odd, amusing helplessness, and we commented, as every one does nowadays, on the worthlessness of servants, and the impossibility of getting any work done, deciding that it was the fatigue of the war.

"I'm that way myself," I said, "I can't bear to do anything I should do—too lazy for words."

She looked up eagerly, and said:

"So am I; I am just like that."

We played the six holes; she playing better than most women do when they begin, but, of course, it wasn't golf. We had a lackey to carry our bags, and I made Her Majesty's tees for her, and gave her hints now and then, and we looked for lost balls in the long grass, and laughed, and enjoyed the sun and the fine air, and when we had played the six holes, we played them once again, and had a great time. She is a perfect dear, so simple, so feminine, and so pretty.

Dinner was to be at 7:30, so at seven we went back to the Palace, and I was shown upstairs to an extensive suite of apartments where I found my valise. I bathed, and dressed, and going down at 7:30 found Nell sitting with the King in the red salon. The King was in evening dress, which he wears rather uncomfortably. I imagine, possibly preferring the uniforms in which he looks much better.

We had time for a little chat, for the Queen was late.... The

King talked about his trip to the Savoy Alps, and about his mountain climbing, of which he is fond. "It changes one's thoughts," he said. "It is better than talking politics, and going to the ceremonies, and listening to discourse, and looking at fat cattle." We talked about the Matterhorn, and about Edward Whymper, and so on. . . .

And then the Queen comes in, and the King in his fond way, his admiration of her is so patent, joked her about having kept us waiting, and she appealed to me to say that I had been late too, and we went out to dinner, without ceremony. It was the simple dinner one has just with the family at the Palace, and the table was confined to the King and Queen and us. Their Majesties sat side by side, as they used to do before the war. Nell on the King's left, and I on the Queen's right. I had the Princess on my right, and spoke once or twice to her, but she nearly died of embarrassment each time that I addressed her, and so I thought it kinder to let her alone. . . .

When we went back to the drawing-room, I overheard the Queen whisper to the King: "The photographs," and he exclaimed, "Oh, yes!" and then from a table he took two large flat boxes, and gave them us; one was his photograph, in a silver frame with a crown above it, and the inscription: "To the great and faithful friend of Belgium and excellent companion of our visit to the United States, Albert." The other, framed in the same way, was of Her Majesty, and inscribed "To my dear Mr. and Mrs. Brand Whitlock, in true friendship, Elizabeth." . . .

As we lighted our cigars we went outdoors, on to the terrace. . . . There on the benches we sat down, and smoked our cigars, and talked.