

Sunday, August 29, 1920.—This afternoon to Vilvorde, where on the wide canal, the sculling finals in the Olympic games were held. Nell and the Thomases went with me. The Thomases are excellent in all such matters, of unfailing kindness—gave up a week-end trip to Aix, for instance, to accompany me to Antwerp yesterday. Col. Thomas has a fine sense of duty. . . .

Well, the boat races were superb, and most exciting, and the Americans won everything. The first race, singles, between Kelly, American, and Beresford, English, was won by Kelly, and half an hour later he pulled in the two-oar boat and with Costello, won that. The great race was between the English and American eights; the English crew were the Leander, made up of the best oarsmen of Oxford and Cambridge; the American was the Annapolis crew, a splendid set of youngsters, each twenty-one, each weighing one hundred and eighty pounds, each among the first twenty-five in his classes, each six feet tall.

It was most exciting. We were on the royal barge; the afternoon was fine; the canal banks black with people, its sparkling waters enlivened by little motor boats, punts, sculls, all sorts of craft, with brilliant colour, in costumes, flags and trimming. Kelly's match with Beresford was beautiful, he winning by half a length, and then sitting calmly in his boat, his green silk cap pulled over his eyes, while Beresford almost collapsed in agony—what a strain on the heart it must be!—and leaned forward, his good English face twisted by pain. We gave him a cheer, and Kelly, speaking a few words to him, pulling up to the landing stage, got out of his shell and disappeared somewhere. It was so Anglo-Saxon, far different from those who won the next event. This was the finals for shells with two oarsmen and a coxswain, each man pulling an oar. The Americans and English had not participated in this event; it was rowed by French, Italian and Swiss crews. The race was between the French and the Italians, and at the finish, the Italians pulled ahead, and won; and as their shell glided past our barge the stroke, a long, brown-skinned Italian, with a brightly coloured kerchief tied about his wavy black locks, waved his hand in a graceful gesture of tri-

umph and when the shell had stopped they all fell akissing each other!

Kelly was in the next race, and he won easily, with his partner Costello, and Kirby brought them on to the barge to be congratulated by me, and we posed for the cinematograph operators. A fine big strapping fellow, Kelly—and to win two such events in an afternoon!

But the race between the English and Americans was the great event of the day. Far off up the canal they start; a gun is fired, the telephone jingles; after a few seconds—seconds that seem like minutes—we see two specks on the water; then the far-off flash of the sculls; they come on—the crews become distinguishable—the English are ahead!

Several Englishmen are standing at my side—yes, the English are ahead! We watch in the silence; then beside the English shell the sculls flash—and I knew that they were done. And then rowing like a piece of beautiful machinery, though it was so much more beautiful than any machinery, so human it was, so graceful, so rythmic, like poetry, our lads come on, and amid the outburst of cheering, they forge ahead, their long shell glides before us a length ahead of the Leanders—the pistol shot cracks, and the band somewhere is playing the “Star-Spangled Banner.” The Englishmen all congratulate me, and it is a lively moment.

The Leander crew crumpled up, some fell forward, some back, in the agony of the effort to get their breath, and in the pain, I suppose, of the overtaxed heart. Our lads give them a cheer, and they pull slowly back, and as they pass the Englishmen and I shout, “Well rowed, Leander!”

Kirby had the crew, our crew, come aboard the barge, bearing their long sculls, their bodies, like those of Greek gods, glistening with perspiration, and I congratulated them all and they gave me the navy cheer—and the cinematographs were worked industriously.

And we come home for tea, very proud Americans.

August 30, 1920.—A day of bright sun, but a cold wind—late autumnal weather, in fact.

Myra and Norman, back from Italy this morning, were here to luncheon, and immediately afterwards Nell and I with the Thomases to Antwerp, to see the distribution of prizes by the King, or to be seen, rather. We had a broken spring when nearly to Antwerp, but repaired it with a clamp, and arrived at the Stadium just