

December 23, 1921.—A little walk, a lot of work, packing papers, and so on, then a telegram from d'Oultremont to say that the King was coming to call on Nell and me tomorrow at five. He has never shown any one, any Ambassador at least, such an honour.

I have written very little in my journal of late; these days are so crowded and so hurried, and withal so sad, with their constant adieux, their sensation of *jamaïs plus*, that I have had neither the time nor the heart to write. And besides, I have this feeling that it is all of such small use and profit, that I am tempted to abandon journal writing altogether. What I do is of no interest or importance and what I think—my impressions, feelings, and so forth. I haven't the energy to set down. My principal feeling just now is one of sadness at having to leave Brussels, and Belgium. . . .

I am more at home here than anywhere, and should rather live here than anywhere save perhaps England. As for America, I have no desire to live there. The things I like, admire, esteem, are not respected there. A graceful life is thus impossible; there refinement,

culture, literature, art, are almost unknown. In that respect the country has undergone a distinct decline in my lifetime. Now the spirit of vulgarity prevails; vulgar money, vulgar politics, vulgar and ignoble journalism, and over all, above all, dominating all, that provincial, nonconformist, puritanical Middle-West spirit, which is responsible for the horror of prohibition, that fond-foolish attempt to solve one problem, correct one evil, by substituting a worse for it. It is not the prohibition of alcohol that I dislike, it is the spirit behind that prohibition. Liberty is dead in the land. The old English or Anglo-Saxon spirit is overwhelmed by the flood of foreign alien thought and mentality that has flooded us. . . .

But where to go? Not France; I couldn't endure that. There remain only England and Belgium. That is the choice we seem to have. And yet I should like to have my own country. I should like to feel about it as an Englishman feels about England (that I can understand. I feel the same about England) or as a Frenchman feels about France (that I can understand too, though I do not share the feeling). But the sad truth is that I have never left America without a feeling of relief and joy; never turned my face homeward without regret and aversion; each knot the ship makes on its westward way my heart sinks, and is heavy when I disembark. And it seems wrong to me to feel that way; but I can't help it. I have been homesick, in a way for Europe all my life, was so even before I ever saw Europe. Ah me! What a wretch I am! And yet there is, or was, an America that I loved: the old America of Lincoln—still the greatest and first of my heroes, and of Washington, that magnificent gentleman, soldier, statesman!—and Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, Howells. But they and all they stood for, represented, or exemplified, is gone.