

December 28, 1921.—Our dinner at the Palace at Laeken last night was delightful, though touched of course by the sadness of parting, and most interesting. The King and the Queen, Prince Léopold, the Princess Marie, the Queen's lady-in-waiting, the Princess's new lady-in-waiting, Major Dujardin, Aide-de-camp, and an officer of the guard, whom I didn't know. The King and Queen sat side by side, which I haven't seen them do, this long while, Nell on the King's left, I on the Queen's right. . . . The Queen was charming throughout the meal; we talked small talk, nothing important.

After dinner, when we went into the red Empire drawing-room, where a cheerful fire was burning, Nell and the Queen sat down for a dish of gossip, which the Queen loves; the King said: "Let's go to the fire, I like heat." I liked it too, especially after the chill of the great rotunda one crosses in coming from the dining-room, and we stood leaning against the mantelpiece while we had our coffee. The King began almost at once in his abrupt way, talking about politics. . . .

As we were coming out from dinner the King had been talking of President Wilson. "It is wrong to criticize him," he said, "for the evil results of the Versailles treaty. Those evils have not been the result of President Wilson's ideas, for his ideas were not considered in the treaty as he would have had them; the treaty was made on a principle quite opposed to his as embodied in his fourteen points. That is, the principles that his opponents favoured were to an extent embodied in the treaty, and it is they that have brought about these evils. If there is any justice in the universe,

President Wilson will ultimately have credit done to him and men will see that he is not to blame.”

Later when we had our coffee and were sitting on a sofa, smoking, he those dreadful little “stogies” he likes, he again spoke of President Wilson. “I find that there is too much criticism of President Wilson by Americans I meet. I don’t believe that they know quite how badly it sounds, or in what poor taste.”

I wished that all America might hear this not because of Wilson, but because of the shocking taste many Americans display in Europe by just such criticism. In the eight years of my residence abroad I have heard little else from Americans but blatant, ignorant, vulgar abuse of their President.

Speaking of England the King said: “They are a great nation, a great, wise, and patient people. Their statesmen look far ahead. They are a great asset for civilization and order.”

We talked long about Socialism; he was deploring hatred and all that, talking of the evil of class hatred, of the general dishonesty that prevails everywhere, of the decline in the influence of parliaments, due to demagoguery, and so on.¹

¹ Immediately after this last dinner with the King of the Belgians, Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock left Belgium.