

August 28, 1923

My dear Nelle:

Thank you for that long letter, which certainly was of intense interest to me.

You surely have one round of gait up there surpassing anything I know about I'm sure.

Yes, indeed I did want to hear ~~xxx~~ about it all -

We came back from our trip three days ago - It's wonderful to be home again & hang our clothes up in the closet. We did so many things & saw so many people & scenes I feel as if we had been gone months.

First let me say we never had so much as a puncture - the car never once failed to do what we asked of it. I didn't know such peace of mind in motoring was possible - We didn't so much as have to put air in the tires. So we were most fortunate in that way - We did run into lots of rain and soapy roads - Will drove after Ambrose left us at Sheridan.

Our first point of real interest was Sheridan - Perhaps I wrote some of you about that - We were entertained at Senator Kendricks - The Senator by the way had just left for the Presidents funeral (Perhaps you noticed he was a pall bearer) Will had an invitation from Sec. Hughes to be present.

We had a hard time impressing Mrs. K & others in Sheridan that what ever attentions were shown us must be quiet on account of the Presidents death. When I see you I'll tell you about the gorgeousness of their home - which really appealed to us less than some others - the Patricks for instance, who have a country home just out of Sheridan (15 miles). It is simply charming - They had for us an afternoon tea first, & afterwards had us at a supper party - You must remind me to tell you all about it if I see you this winter. (This is that same family that lived at Happy Hollow) O Nelle, such dishes, silver, etc.

And then we went to the Montcriefs country home for luncheon - It is just as English in atmosphere as if it were over there - There are two brothers who have had these homes near Sheridan - one of them has just gone back to England to assume a title and big estate - They have in their family some of the greatest estates in England. We saw pictures of all of them. The luncheon there too, was the acme of elegance - I'll not take time to go into details, only I was impressed how good the first course was - simply one slice of tomato on lattuce, spread with caviar & a generous spoon of mayonaise - They had (equahs-?), wine etc. (Of course we didn't touch the wine, though every one else did) - Then we were at dinner at the Marshalls' charming home & at luncheon at a Mrs. Gillettes - whose house Will thought far the loveliest of all - So many beautiful rare things they had - I hope I can remember to tell you about it when I see you - We stayed in Sheridan from Sun - to Wed. then I went to the Horton dude ranch, returning to Sheridan Friday for the memorial service for the President, where Will made the address - I am going to send you a paper giving a copy of it - It's the first speech he ever wrote out & read - I insisted upon his doing that - We both thought he must know exactly what he was going to say - Oh, what a difficult thing to prepare - He almost tore his hair in despair when he found he had to do it - He said to me "I can't do it! Here I am without a stenographer, office, reference material or anything, & interruptions every minute - visitors, committees, etc!" It was terrible, but he decided he had to do it or be misunderstood - So he shut himself up in the bedroom at Sen K's - began the work on it & finished it at the Horton ranch - (The truth is I finished it, at four o'clock in the morning, having sat up all night trying to get it in shape & copied for him) Well after that was delivered and off our minds we had a much better time.

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We met so many interesting people at the Horton Ranch (& other dude ranches where we made short stays). At the Horton's were Pres. Garfield's son & his family - We did not see them, because they had gone further up in the mountains with pack horses, camping - (Such parties were coming and going all the time) We met ex vice Pres. Adlai Stevenson's granddaughter - the Chickering family (of piano fame) - the leading surgeon from Johns Hopkins - Mary Roberts Rhinehart, - a Mr. Rollins who has articles running in Sat. Eve. Post - & has written a number of books ("The Cowboy") - At one of these dude ranches where we stopped just for luncheon, was Dr. Henry Van Dyke - He just happened to be out fishing & we didn't see him - I was much disappointed -

Much as I enjoyed the fine scenery in & out of the park, the thing that gave me most real pleasure was our little visits at towns along the way - Will was exceedingly reluctant to let people know when we were coming or to give them a chance to do anything for us - We did let them know at Sheridan & at Cody & at most other places they found out just when we were coming - And I can't tell you all the kind attentions that were shown us everywhere -

At Cody, Lander & Casper, the Chambers of Commerce gave banquets in our honor - (about 70 guests at each place) - & then they had receptions, smokers, card parties Etc. for us - at Lovell 3 carloads of men came out to meet us - fifteen miles.

At the little town of Jackson, away off the R.R. where the people are having a hard time owing to local conditions & the general depression, they didn't know we were coming, but they got up impromptu, at one of the homes, a little gathering to meet us - about 30 I should say - We all sat around the room just visiting - Afterwards Will asked me if I talked to a Mr. Jones there - I said not much - He was a very quiet, diffident, plain looking sort of man - Will said they told him that he has running in the Sat. Eve. Post a series of articles on gold mines - He keeps a little bit of a store there - He thought he had talent for writing - sent his articles to several magazines which rejected them - Then they were accepted by the Sat. Eve Post. Really we met so many people out of the ordinary - Another was the head of the law school at Harvard.

I could fill a whole letter telling you about Casper - & one lovely home there where we had dinner. We are in love with Casper.

Such attentions we received in the Park! They were expecting us everywhere, ~~and~~ had reserved for us a suite of rooms in each hotel, including a parlor in one - while they were so crowded they were putting five people in a room - a table was reserved for us in each hotel & while people were standing line at the dining room door in hundreds, literally, we were ushered in & served delicacies prepared especially for us - Honestly it made us ashamed - (Will quoted from Shakespeare "What meat has this man fed upon that he has grown so great") We paid the minimum price \$6.50 a day each - All these favors were complimentary - At the Pahaska Teepee just before we reached the Park, they heard we were coming and while 300 people from drives (?) prissed (?) at the door we were ushered into a specially prepared luncheon of fried chicken & everything good, & they didn't charge us a cent -

I wish I could make you all miserable because none of you would come & go with us - We were so disappointed not to have you.

I forgot to say that at each hotel a ranger was awaiting to attend us - fishing or whatever we wanted to go - We were taken without charge, out on a motorboat - on the Yellowstone Lake - Such a lovely lake that is! Of course the Park is wonderful - You have to see it to get any idea of it -

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While all these attentions reduced, for a time, the expense of the trip for us - still it cost a good deal - We had to fee the servants liberally whenever we visited & of course must in turn, show attentions to all those people when they come to Cheyenne - At the same time it was a great honor & pleasure to go the way we did.

We think we secured a position for Georgie up there as Park ranger for the winter - He has to go up there to see them, which involves the risk, in case he does not qualify, of his losing the position he has & all the cost of going up there. They pay \$125 a mo - We were convinced it was just the kind of place to build him up.

Ambrose is working at Sen. Kendrick's ranch for \$35 a mo - which certainly seems absurd - That's all ranch people are paying - After talking with leading ranchers all over the state, including the Kendricks, I am convinced that the time has passed when a young man can get a ~~good~~ start ranching & make it pay - They all say so - It's this way - Good land is no longer available for leasing - The land has to be bought outright - at too high price to make success possible - It takes 40 acres range for one steer - Its most discouraging in regard to Ambrose - Outdoor life is the thing he has counted on always - I guess he is going to Laramie to school - He hates the idea, but understands that we absolutely can not afford to send him south this year - Yes, he is in love with that girl - but I wouldn't be surprised if that is just puppy love -

It's the truth - Nelle that these girls up here are as lacking as can be in the refined charms those Southern girls have - Ambrose & George too scorn their crude manners & their bold masculine clothes - kahki trousers half the time - I feel sorry for him & do so hope that things will turn out well for his happiness

I'll tell you the truth - I'm afraid of these co-ed schools for both my boys -

We go over to the University pretty often, & while we think the instruction there is fine, the place is terribly lacking in "tone" - I'd be afraid to have this quoted even in Tenn. for fear it might get back to Wyo.

O, Nelle, think of Christmas being so near! It's so sweet of you to suggest my letting you know some of my wants & needs - My dear, they would fill a book! Things to wear, Things to wear - chiefly accessories. It's such an immodest thing to do, this making suggestions. And since everything is so expensive, I hesitate to mention a thing - If I suggest things that seem costly, eliminate them from consideration unless you could find something on sale, or all of you go together -

Let me explain ~~xxxx~~ here that the Gov's Conference is to meet in West Baden Ind. about the middle of October - That is the annual conference of Governors & distinct from the meeting Pres. Harding was to have called in Washington to confer regarding law enforcement - Last night's paper said Pres. Coolidge was going to call that meeting for the last of Oct. If he does we could probably go right on from Indiana -

The truth is Nelle, we can't afford for me to go to either - Still it is the only opportunity of the kind that has ever come into my life, or any of our family.

Mrs. Kendrick said eight years ago the Governors & their wives were entertained at the White House at dinner - & never since I believe - And as long as they have been in Washington, though they have been at the White House for other functions, never to a dinner - (The Coolidges will about have to do that, I think, if they call the Governors). I have been hoping I could go on down to Memphis from Indiana - I haven't talked with Will much about it yet (he is so much of the time tired & keyed up) How I wish he could go with me! He may think if he takes me with him on these other trips

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it will be all & more than we can afford & that I shouldn't even suggest going on to Memphis.

You all know how I love to be with you & if I don't get there, it will be just because I can't.

This matter of clothes is terrible - They entertain wonderfully I'm told at these Governors conferences - I have just one evening dress - the blue & silver I bought in Memphis is a rag - I've been wondering Nelle what I could do about an evening ~~new~~ coat. I have none at all - I just have a feeling my good sister would lend me hers if I were nearer - Does it sound presumptuous! I simply can not afford to buy one, and imagine my going in with all these celebrities, wearing last winter's dark coat over my evening dress!

I have one nice looking black crepe dress - & a suit which I bought at a sale for \$35 which does look cheap (the material) It is navy - I am distressingly in need of a neck fur - not a large one - I've wanted fox but don't know how much they cost - Returning to the subject of Christmas presents -

I've been needing terribly some kind of an evening scarf - Spanish lace or something like that - I have no decent shopping bag (was careful on this trip never to be seen with my bag) neither have I a bag to carry for dress (You know I loved that bead one you sent me - but it came to pieces around the handle) - ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ I'd love to have one of these sets of bracelets people are wearing, to sort of dress me up - inexpensive ones) I have no pin at all, but probably an inexpensive one could not be found in good taste -

I have no trunk that seems possible to travel with - And I know the trunk sales are over -

Nelle, I am so grateful for the great measure of blessing that has come to us, that it would be wicked for me to even feel a complaint, much less express it - but it truly is hard for people as poor as us to fill this position with any dignity.

And while people frequently predict Will's running for the Senate, not for anything would I have him do it - Even if he were elected we couldn't possibly sustain the position - It's too hard in this one.

In reading back over this letter I find my response to your request for Xmas suggestions so mixed up with the discussion of clothes in general, you can't possibly know what I mean -- It's just accessories I had in mind - & if not one of them appeal to you, whatever you send me will make me just as happy - Maybe something I've never thought of - Only, thank goodness, I don't have to have things for the house.

Nelle, in case it were possible for me to include Memphis in the trip next month, of course I'd have to take Bradford - And while I couldn't stay ~~long~~ as long as I have other times, I couldn't have him missing much school - would it be possible to send him on to Memphis from Indiana in case he didn't have to change trains & let him stay with you till I could come - putting him right in school there? I can think of no other way I could go - It's a lot to ask of you - Of course he needs no physical care - He can do everything for himself - but I know he would add to the confusion about you - Maybe this is just a wild idea, but I know I can not have him at home just with servants for any length of time.

You'll be interested to know we left Mr. & Mrs. McCrackin (Will's sec.

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& wife) in the house while we were away - We paid Mollie's wages & all the other expenses - I think they had the time of their young lives, entertaining - They kept things in perfect condition and it was most satisfactory to us.

It's ridiculous my making my letter so long. I just seem to have so much to say & haven't even touched upon some of the subjects which interested me in your letter - I'll write you again soon.

I so much want to see you all - And it will nearly break my heart if I miss Howard when I next visit you - I can't bear for your children and Jane to ~~xxxxxxx~~ grow away from me - Mrs. Walton (?) said Bob requested Howard first choice for roommate - I'm sure Bob is a wholesome, honorable boy - And I imagine Howard's gentle influence would be fine for him too.

This is for family consumption - if you think they all will be interested Please send it on to George with my love.

I was interested in what you said about the Williamsons. I remember Jean as such an attractive little girl - I was so sorry about Mary Williamson's death. Did you know your friend Mr. Buxton has a cousin here? A young bride from Denver - Mrs. Schalk - She is very nice.

With love to you each one, including Alfred & Sara & all the children - And your father & mother, I am your devoted sister - Nellie

Tell Sara thank you for her peach of a letter.

This was written at the top of the 6th page : "No, I don't mind a bit your reading any of my letters you want to, to others, only I know your good taste will prompt you to omit the parts I intend for the family alone."

The letter was written on stationery:

EXECUTIVE MANSION
Chayenne, Wyoming