

November 23, 1951  
Far past midnight  
Madrid

Dearest Nelle:

I surely hope this letter will reach you before you sail and I hope you will come to Madrid. I've never seen a place that seemed to me so enchanting. We (Dorothy and I) expected to stay here about six days. Now it looks as if we would double that stay. I could not begin to tell you in a letter of all the wonderful things that have happened to me on this trip. In the first place the State Department cabled all the Embassies that we were coming and they have certainly laid themselves out doing things for us and so have our Spanish hosts. We first went to Luxembourg for a night and day at the Legation with Perle Mesta. She was so grand to us; took us all over the length and breadth of Luxembourg and sent us on down to Paris in her car with her chauffeur who knew all about the country. Stopping two days in Paris where friends were extremely kind to us, we came on to Spain. We were met at the border by a welcoming group of officials and a lady or two (about a dozen in all); they were simply laden with flowers. You can imagine the exchange of felicitations, neither understanding the others' speech but all understanding the smiles and gestures. Between trains, about 1½ hours, they had us for the most beautiful delectable dinner. Arriving in Madrid next morning we were met by another welcoming committee including Spanish officials and Embassy officials and their wives. From that moment until now we have been in one grand whirl. We have just returned now from a cocktail party of the Sonny Vanderbilt Whitneys (whom I knew in Washington.) She is so beautiful and charming. We met tonight so many Dukes and Duchesses, Countesses and Barons, I can't remember any of them - Ambassadors too.

The first event of course was the opening of the International Exposition of Medallie Art which brought me here. I'll send you a brochure telling about it, showing a picture of my meeting Generalissimo Franco, which I believe is an experience not many here have had. He was most gracious - said through an interpreter that he knew all about my coming and hoped my entire stay would be delightful. Every day since we came (Dorothy and I) we have been to luncheons, cocktail parties and dinners. Luncheons start at 2:15 or 2:30 and end at 5:00. Cocktail parties at 8:30 and dinners start at 10:30 or later and go on until after midnight. Last night we came in from dinner at a quarter of 2:00. Such a life, can you imagine! And we may be sure it is only one side of life in this old country that we are seeing - and that's not the seamy side. I feel very humble about having so



much privilege lavished on me "what more than others do I deserve, yet God hath given me more", quoting our mother.

This is a fabulous place. I wish you could see the suite in which we are quartered. The sumptuousness of it baffles description. A large room each for Dorothy and me, elegant bathrooms for each and a sitting room lavish in detail. Such carpets, I wish you could see them - and the walls! Outside the rich draperies, up and down on each side and across the top is a wide gold leaf frame such as you see in frames for paintings. In my room the wall is covered with silk brocade such as we had in the Executive Mansion and there are crystal chandeliers galore.

Returning to the Exposition, it is very fine. I am quite satisfied with our Mint exhibit of medals which is prominently displayed. Italy has taken the chief awards which is not surprising. I had no idea that the artistic merit of ours would measure up to that of these old countries. I wish I could describe the beauty, even grandeur of the National Library where they have the Exposition, all the flags standing like sentinels out in front, the dozens of great clustered globes, made the approach to the building on the opening night a scene never to be forgotten. I, being a woman official coming from afar, was treated with much consideration. My escort was from the Embassy and has shepherded me ever since I came and also Dorothy. He sees that we get everywhere comfortably and when any situation arises where I am in doubt what is expected of me he finds out and guides me. Yesterday was Thanksgiving Day. We were at a perfectly beautiful dinner given to a most interesting company of about 30. I sat by the British Ambassador, Lord Balfour, who was simply delightful.

Sunday we are going down into the country with the Angier Dukes (she's from North Carolina) where a crowd is going. I think they are going to have a semblance of a bull-fight with young things about like calves.

You can understand that with all this partying we have not been able to do much shopping and Christmas is near. Any little gifts of mine will surely be belated of necessity. Madrid has some of the most noted couturieres of the world. Embassy women have taken us to fashion shows one after another. Prices are supposed to be greatly under those of Paris and it is said you can get more for your money here than anywhere in the world. A fine product though costs a good deal. I am having an evening dress made, which I believe will be the loveliest thing I've ever had. It's a combination of softest blue and soft rose pink in rich heavy silk. I am also having two modestly priced wool dresses made, which are fine values. Dorothy is going in for considerably more than I am. My, how I wish that some of you of my dear family were with me. You would love the



things I am seeing and doing. My decision to come was sudden though I had been urged to come since last March. Our reservations are for return sailing December 26 on the Darby, a government transport, which I learn will not be crowded. I wish I had time to tell you about the ship coming over, but I haven't. It was not glamorous. The Darby is much better I hear.

The Director of the Mint of Spain took us today to the Escorial, a famous near-by place which has the rarest collection of tapestries in the world. We have yet to see the Prado museum, which is called the worlds finest - (too many parties thus far). It sounds kind of silly going to so many parties when there is so much to see. Of course there's nothing much more interesting than able, attractive people of which there are many here. The Spanish are extremely attractive and their speech and manner most beguiling. At the Embassy parties and other places we have met many highly placed, also the Ambassador of France and of Belgium, who is a prince of royal blood. His wife, the Princess, is so charming and good looking (in a double sense.) I had a coughing spell and she sent me a little box of lozenges and then afterward asked me to keep the box as a memento of the occasion.

Nelle, if you come here you'll want to go to these famous couturieres of which Baliago is one of the outstanding. I got my evening dress at Natalios.

Please send this on to Alfred and Sara with my love and ask them to send it on to my office to be copied by my Sec'y, Mrs. Anderson. I'll never get time to write so much again. She can pass it on to my children and to Brother Sam.

A happy voyage and much love.

Nellie