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June 7th, 1923,

Dear George:-

Seeing Rpsstiter here a couple of days ago--he was speaking of you--acted so vigorously upon my sense of responsibility with respect to arrears of correspondence that here I am, looking the jolly old typewriter straight in the eye and preparing to do my worst, or approximately so. He told me that letters addressed either to the theatre or to the Family Club would land; I prefer the former. I regard the latter askanse, suspiciously. How in hell one can satisfactorily combine the characteristic stigmata of club and family in a single institution is beyond my comprehension. Still, they do wonderful things in California, and perhaps they have burbanked the two successfully. I pause for reply.

We are in the midst of stirring and epoch-making, perhaps, events. Whether the news has percolated to your far bourne, quien sabe; but I am serving as a secretary and adviser, principally the latter, to the American section of the U. S.-Mexican conferences. When the conferences were arranged, I was asked to ~~help~~ ^{help} out, and after a bit of hesitation--based upon purely personal and somewhat ~~selfish~~ ^{selfish}, and probably over-cautious, reasons--I concluded to go along. It was meant work and lots of it, so far. But it is mighty interesting. What the harvest will be, deponent sayeth not. But, conservatively, I really do feel hopeful that our people and the Mexican commissioners will get somewhere--somewhere worth while. Our men, Warren and Payne, are corkers. It is a delight to see them in action. They are not only big men, who know what they want, or rather, what is necessary to be done, but they function sensibly and humanly. Both of them fit into the scenario here admirably, perfectly, is the better word. They possess that subtle quality of winning confidence and personal liking--they are simpatica--which carries such a long way with our Mexican friends.

So far they have handled themselves a hundred percent plus in their contacts and in their dealings. One cannot help but feel that they have gotten much further along the road than any others who have had a finger in this mess at any time since we began to get at cross-purposes with the Mexicans. This is the fourth week of the conferences. There has been an immense amount of underbrush to clear away; but that is all done now. Both sides appear to have reached an agreement as to the necessity of certain things being done, and to have arrived at the point of fashioning ways and means of doing them acceptably. Our people are giving the other side all of the time they want, and proceeding with the utmost tact and patience, and with a sympathetic appreciation of the difficult position in which the Mexicans find themselves. They are in satisfactory personal contact with both O. and de la H., upon both of whom so much depends; if the expressions--private expressions--of the two of them count for anything, Warren and Payne not only have their respect, but their liking and confidence as well. It seems to be an accepted fact that our people are not trying to put anything over. They are asking, or rather suggesting, only what the Mexicans themselves agree is right and fair. So today we are confronted, principally, by the problem of ways and means. If I could talk to you, I could be more impative, but writing on such a subject has its limitations, especially as we are all rather sealed up. You will appreciate what that means. But it is a good show; and if something positive and favorable does not come out of the mill it will not be the fault of los delegados Americanos. Warren did rather remarkable things in Japan, in getting the Japanese to listen to reason in six or seven important matters, and I judge that he is pursuing the same tactics here as those which served his government and the Japanese in Tokyo. How long a siege we are in for is problematical, but I think I see at least two weeks more ahead of us. Rather wisely, they, W. and P., are playing all that the hospitable Mexicans want them to do--each week we have taken some trip outside of town to various points of interest; and besides they are carefully accepting all invitations that come to them from Mexican

sources. That's all in the way of creating "atmosphere," and thus far a most agreeable ambient has been produced. The big boulder to get out of the path is the agrarian question; it's far more difficult to reconcile with our insistence that foreign property, if taken, must be paid for adequately, than the petroleum question in its current phase. The latter is well out of the way, I think, or will be, when the time comes.

Hearst, sooting success in the conferences and seemingly keen to get on the bandwagon, blew in the other day, and immediately began to boost. That is very nice; in a case like this it is a lot better to have Hearst boosting than knocking--so little may make or mar. Joe wrote me about a month ago, more or less directly suggesting that it would be feasible for him to get into action on the negotiations, effectively. It wasn't in the wood, and so I told him. The main reason was that the existing compact organization--as a matter of fact, the real dealings, so far as doing actual business is concerned are between our commissioners and O. and de la H.--was admirably sufficient to handle the task in hand. No outsiders, I mean outside of the commission itself and O. and de la H., are being consulted. This seems to be working very well, and to reduce to a minimum the squattering around which is an almost invariable accompaniment to negotiations of this nature when there are too many cooks hovering about the kitchen. I haven't heard from him, in reply. But it is a fact, that neither side is calling in anyone, nor will they.

de L. is still in New York, and a recent letter gives no positive indication of the date of his return. From all accounts he covered himself with glory, and from several directions I have heard the highest commendation of his work. The jinx seems to be persistent in its pursuit of the Moran family and its affiliations by marriage. Constantine is still jobless and half-sick, Carleta brought off a miscarriage the other day, Clarence barely escaped with his life in a smash between his car and a tram, and two days ago young Manny Moran, the youngest of the family, died of black smallpox. These are the most grave of the various misadventures of the family. Roberto is up and coming. He is playing around on the side effectively, on the conferences; and incidentally is getting ready to twist the tail of our old friend Doherty in a big petroleum matter, involving the title of a lot of very productive territory. The latter is a story in itself; I'll give it to you later, when the pie comes out of the oven.

Being busy, I am more or less happy. Personal matters are looking up a bit; still keeping my nose above water, and trying to clamber out on the bank. I'll fetch it, given time. This last year has been a hell, though. I'm sending you a check in a day or so to cover interest on that four hundred. The first loose cash I have you get it, my pronto, caballero. This isn't a self-dun, but merely to let you know that you may still list it as an asset. Jane has perked up in health quite a bit recently, and is more like her old self that she's been in a long time. Our love to you all. No chance, is there, of your detouring via Mexico on your way back to the east? Here's hoping.

Always yours,

