

Deering

Hotel de Crillon, Paris.
October 22, 1919.

My dear Deering:

Sometimes it seems as though it were a long time ago, and then again as though it were only yesterday, when I received your very kind and welcome letter of September 12. You say "My dear General" when I would much rather hear you say "My dear Bliss", as used to be the case in the days when we "foregathered" with our dear friend Charlie Schofield.

When you wrote to me, Mrs. Bliss was not here, nor is she here yet; but from word which I received yesterday from our transport people I hope that she will land at Brest sometime to-morrow and be here the following morning or evening. I shall show her your letter when she comes and I know that she will have the same great desire that I have to visit you and your family at your charming place on the shore of the Mediterranean near Barcelona.

I do not know whether your place was standing there in the year 1897, or whether you have built it for yourself since. Barcelona used to be an old stamping ground of mine in the year before the Spanish War and in the first few months of 1898, and I have the most pleasant recollections of that part of Spain. In '97 our Minister in Madrid, Mr. Woodford, sent me up to Corunna to be present there when General Weyler should land on his way home from Cuba. Weyler had been relieved from command in Cuba as a result of Mr. McKinley's

first note to the Spanish Government, and which was handed to it by Mr. Woodford shortly after our arrival at St. Sebastian that year. His relief caused the greatest irritation throughout the Spanish Army and Navy and the governing classes generally. It was not because they liked Weyler, but because they disliked the United States. There was much talk of a revolution breaking out when Weyler should land. So I was sent up there to find out what was the sentiment of the community at that time.

Unfortunately for him, the sentiment of the community was dead against him. The people of Corunna and all of Northwestern Spain had seen 200,000 or 300,000 conscripts passing through there en route to Cuba; and they saw those that didn't die there come back emaciated by all of the choice selection of fevers that prevail in Cuba and with every evidence of lack of decent attention by their government. Right or wrong, they blamed it all on Weyler, and when he arrived at Corunna and ~~sent some~~ of his staff officers ashore he found the local sentiment so hostile to him that he decided not to land there but go with the ship round to Barcelona. So I chased across country by rail to Barcelona to meet him on his arrival. While waiting for him, I passed my time sightseeing in Barcelona, visiting Montserrat, Tarragona, and Poblet and, afterwards, Valencia and many other interesting places.

So you see I am not a stranger to your country.

I do not know whether you will be

there when Mrs. Bliss comes, nor am I sure the state of her health would permit her to make the trip. If she can go, and if my work here will permit me to take a few days off, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to come down to see you, provided you are still there. But it will largely depend on our work here. We hope to get the Bulgarian Treaty signed in early in November and perhaps there will then be a government in Hungary that can sign the treaty for that country. If we should be required after that to take up the vexing Turkish problem, the chances are that there will be a considerable intermission in our work.

Meanwhile it may be possible that you and your family may make a trip to Paris. This city seems to be the Mecca for good Americans and the hotels are full of them and getting fuller. If you can come I think I can scare up some good Scotch whiskey from among my English friends with which we can drink to the memory of our old and dear friends Charlie Schofield and Bill Schuelze, and to the health of Teddy Feeder, and many others that I need not name, - the dead and the living.

Perhaps you have heard of the row which is now on between the French, the British and the Arabs over the disposition of Syria. It seems that certain promises were made to the Arabs in the early days of the war and now they are so unkind as to insist on these promises being fulfilled. The consequence is a ~~very~~ grand triangular row with insistence on the part of the Arabs that the matter be arbitrated by the United States. The Emir Feisal, the

Chief of the Arabs and the son of the Sheriff of Mecca, is here and demands that I be the American to do it. One of the other parties has half consented, while the other flatly refuses. I myself have declared that I would not touch the question, even with a pole long enough to reach from here to Syria, unless I were positively ordered to do so by my government. It isn't likely that that government will do anything of the kind. The fact of the matter is that we ought to demand the immediate settlement of the whole Turkish question, - provided we are going to be mixed up in it at all. The question of mandates is now being quietly settled by the various military occupations being carried out by the European Allies in Mesopotamia, in Syria, in Palestine, and in Smyrna. When it is all done, the United States will find that the European Allies have gotten, or taken upon themselves, mandates for every oil well and gold mine that there may be in Asiatic Turkey and we will be asked to take a mandate for whatever pile of rocks and heap of sand may be left. I hope that we will have sense enough to keep out of it altogether.

With best wishes to you and yours,
and hoping that I may soon meet you again soon,
and with many thanks for your kind letter, I
am, as ever,

Cordially yours.

T.H. Bliss

Mr. Charles Deering,
SITGES (BARCELONA),
Spain.