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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Mexico, March 11, 1942.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'P. ...'.

My dear friend:

Huberman came in to see me, somewhat undecided as to whether he would leave today for New York or remain for another week and give a concert together with Kleiber. Unfortunately these first weeks have been so occupied with things that must be done that we were able to attend only one of Huberman's concerts. He played magnificently and while in some ways he may not think his trip here has been a success, it was in any event a personal triumph of a great artist.

The pen and pencil arrived some days ago, for which many thanks. The bottle of ink which you sent also arrived today. I shall treasure these very much and it is good of you to have sent them.

We spent the last weekend at Cuernavaca in the home of one of our friends who has temporarily rented the house of General Calles there. It is a beautiful modern house with a splendid outlook and we had a delightful weekend. It did us a great deal of good for the altitude is about 2500 feet less than this city. I am inclined to think that we shall be going down there frequently for weekends as I think, even though we may accommodate ourselves to the altitude here, that a change from time to time will be desirable. I fear that so far as associations there are concerned I would on the whole wish to be somewhat of a recluse, for there seem to be all kinds of our compatriots there. Since Europe is closed to certain people who have been accustomed to move about from place to place and lead a useless life some of them seem to have found Cuernavaca, which is a really delightful place with a splendid climate. The Presi-

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Mr. D. N. Heineman,
50 Broadway,
New York, N. Y.

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dent and most of the members of the Government have homes there and spend weekends there. The President has a nine hole golf course attached to his very simple home there and he has just sent me word that he would like me to come and have a game with him there this coming Sunday. I look forward to this opportunity for our first really intimate conversation.

We have on the whole accommodated ourselves fairly well to the new situation. Marion has not felt the altitude at all. Mrs. Mustard has felt it a great deal and I am not at all sure that she will be able to remain here. I do not know what the difficulty is, but she seems to be not well at all and I am beginning to have doubts as to whether she will be able to accommodate herself sufficiently to stay. She would like very much to do so and we want very much to have her here with us but only time can tell whether she can stay. So far as I am concerned I have suffered a good deal of inconvenience, principally through bad digestion. They tell me that in high altitudes digestion is much slower and it undoubtedly is. As my stomach is my weakest spot it is rather unfortunate, but I find that I am much better this week in that respect than during the first three weeks of our stay here. I also suffer a good deal of inconvenience at night through the nostrils becoming congested and therefore not being able to breathe easily, I have been up four or five times in the night until they clear up again, but even this seems to be better. I see no reason why in a few more weeks I should not be thoroughly accommodated to the new situation.

I have almost completed the round of official visits on my colleagues and on chiefs of missions and have also been able to receive a good many of the leading people. The newspapers have been most kind and have given me a good start. From the Government I have met nothing but a most understanding, sympathetic attitude and I am very encouraged. The fact that I am able to get along in rather bad but fluent Spanish has been of a good deal of assistance to me. So far as the general atmosphere is concerned I could not have wished for a better start and it is now up to me to see what I can do.

We are tremendously hampered in taking care of our major problems - old and new - by physical and administrative problems which we have to deal with. The establishment here is a very large one and I have some 160 people. So far as quality goes I could not wish for better, but our friend Daniels was anything but an administrator and the large establishment which grew rapidly will have

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to be pulled into an efficient, well-organized working unit. This I would ordinarily have no trouble in accomplishing as I am used to it, but the problem is complicated by a physical situation which is difficult to solve. We have practically a whole square made up of the residence, the Chancery and a connecting building which we have recently completed. In addition to that we have at least four rented buildings in the immediate vicinity. The residence itself is at present occupied by offices. We have extensive repairs in progress in practically all of the office space, so that our staff is working under great physical difficulties, and these repairs will last for at least another two or three months.

One of the most unpleasant features is the fact that the Embassy residence, which is admirably adapted for the purpose, has been rather neglected and it is absolutely essential that repairs be made before we occupy it. The ground floor, which is taken up with the servants' quarters, etc. is in such terrible state that I would not think of putting any servants there. Even the sewers and drains are in terrible, unsanitary condition. On the main floor, which is used for the family living quarters, the rooms are admirably adapted for our purposes but need extensive going over in many respects. A central heating plant will have to be put in without delay and before the rains start, as I could not think of asking my family to live in an unheated house here. The climate here is good but treacherous and one needs heat a good part of the year. I am trying to accelerate all these repairs as much as possible and I make a tour of the buildings three times a day and in this way I may be able to get progress. In the meantime we are living in the Hotel Geneve, which is only a stone's throw from the Chancery, and we are relatively comfortable so far as the rooms are concerned but the meals leave everything to be desired. Besides, it is naturally a great handicap to me not to have a proper place in which to receive people, for it is so essentially a part of one's technique and equipment in a place like this.

I had intended to endeavor to find a suitable house which we could rent but I find that there is none available which is nearly so good as the Embassy residence. There were many fine old houses in the city, but the social structure here has really changed very much and these houses have been abandoned by their old owners and are being torn down or being remodeled for use as business quarters. It was with some regret that I did be-

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come convinced that we must remodel the old Embassy, as it would have been easier to move into a house at once than to await the completion of these essential repairs in the Embassy residence which will, at the best, take several months more.

Mr. Conway came in to see me and we had a very pleasant chat. He is a man of culture and I look forward to seeing more of him. His wife seems to be a very active person and as she plays bridge Marion sees a good deal of her. I asked Mr. Conway to tell me about the situation with respect to the equipment the company needs and he has given me a memorandum which I am studying and I hope to be able to go into this matter very thoroughly. If we are to get out of Mexico the raw materials which we need there will have to be available more power and it seems to me that it would be only wise and prudent to see that this power is available and for that reason the steps should be taken immediately rather than later. We have been doing too much fishing behind the net and it is awfully difficult for many of us to keep our perspective and to realize what things are first things.

So far as the attitude of the Mexican Government is concerned in the political and economic sphere, it could not be better. We are getting a surprising degree of military cooperation already. It is my primary task to develop this cooperation in every field. The Mexican Government has taken a well defined and, I believe, a firm position and one that is altogether favorable to us. The Government, however, is well in advance of its people among whom historical features still play a big role. The government, therefore, must proceed with caution, but when one considers the circumstances they have done, in my opinion, a very good job so far. It is our business through the cooperation which we can get to help the Government in every possible way so that it can justify the further cooperative steps which it will take before the people. Here the pressures have to come from the top down rather than from the bottom upwards.

The Foreign Minister, Dr. Padilla, is an extraordinary man and in my opinion has as great comprehension of world problems before us as any Latin American. The only one approaching him in the other American Republics is Aranha and I am inclined to think that Padilla is, on the whole, more sound and has his feet well on the ground. It is a great fortune that a calm and considered man like Avila Camacho is President of Mexico at this time and that he has a Minister of State like Padilla who has his full

confidence.

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After we get settled you and Mrs. Heineman must come to see us here, for there are many interesting things to see, as you know, and I am sure that as both of you love the mountains you will enjoy Mexico City and Cuernavaca and some of the interesting points in the immediate vicinity, which of course I haven't seen but which I am told are really picturesque and have much interest. I shall hurry the work on the Embassy as much as possible so that your visit here may not be too much delayed. I would not wish you to come here until the Embassy is ready, as the hotels - all of them - leave much to be desired.

The news continues to be bad, but the lines of communication of the enemy are becoming longer and our strength is growing. As to the final result I have no doubt, but we have some bitter days through which yet to go.

Marion and her mother join in affectionate regard to you all. With every good wish,

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'G. F. Smith', written in dark ink.