

[PHOTOCOPY]

COPY

Sunday, December 26, 1920.

My darling Nellie:

I wrote you on the morning of the 24th in the headquarters of the President-elect while I was waiting for 7:30 breakfast with the Hardings. I went over at the appointed hour and was shown in to the Library, where in a few minutes Mrs. Harding appeared soon followed by the Senator. They were very cordial, and we went to breakfast at once. They had waffles and creamed chipped beef for breakfast, with coffee and toast. They offered me eggs, but as I saw this was extra, I declined. It gave my conscience an excuse to eat what I am fond of but would not have eaten if my regular breakfast of eggs had been on the table. The conversation began about the telegram Mrs. Harding had sent you in respect to Mrs. Jaffray. Mrs. Harding had gone over the White House with Mrs. Jaffray when she went to tea with Mrs. Wilson. I think Mrs. Harding was a little afraid Mrs. Jaffray would think she was going to be putty in her hands and took occasion to let her know that she expected to be mistress. I told her I thought she would find Mrs. Jaffray satisfactory, that she was from Canada, knew her place and was quite unobtrusive, that a housekeeper was essential to look after the servants. Then I put in a word for Arthur. Mrs. Harding said that Mrs. Wilson had spoken in the strongest terms of him. I told his history and elaborated upon his indispensable service. We had quite a long conversation over the social question. The Senator was disposed to "chuck" ceremony, to use his own term. Mrs. Harding took a different view, and I stood by her and insisted that it was essential. She is anxious to entertain much, and I am glad she is. She asked me about precedence and whether she could be advised by the State Department. I told her yes, although that was not always satisfactory and controlling. We discussed the continuous row between the Ambassadors and the Supreme Court, and that between the Cabinet

and the Senators, and I sided with the former in each case. Then the Senator left us for a while, I talked more with her and commented on the necessity of insisting that all his friends, except the family, should call him Mr. President instead of Warren as they do now, and that while he will dislike it for a while, he will find it necessary to avoid too great familiarity. I had not realized until I talked with them how little they had known of the White House. You see they have only been in Washington six years of Wilson's term and she had never been entertained in the White House at all. She wanted to know if she could not begin garden parties in the Spring. I urged her to do so. She said she was going to have informal teas and a continuance of some little Senatorial female social coterie. She is a nice woman, who will I think be all right. She is a little disposed to be anxious not to be backward, but she will readily adapt herself. She is four or five years older than Harding, and I think she tries him sometimes, but he is very considerate. She is not at all bad looking. Her newspaper pictures don't do her justice. After I came away, I bethought myself of the last three chapters of your book where you give a great deal of information about the White House and our entertainments there. So I wrote her a note calling her attention to this. I borrowed a copy from Louis More and he will send it to her in tomorrow's mail. We commented on the little entertaining which the Wilsons have done. Harding said he thought Wilson had saved \$60,000 a year out of his salary. They don't think Wilson will drive down with Harding either way, though it is announced that he will. I advised Mrs. Harding if Wilson did not ride, to accompany Harding each way. They wanted to know about the lunch on inauguration day. I told them the practice. Mrs. Harding left us and my interview with Harding began. To my great surprise, he plunged at once into Cabinet matters. He said he had offered Hughes the State Department and Hughes had gone home to consider it. I said I had thought Hughes would like to be Chief Justice, but he said he thought Hughes preferred not to go

back to the court. I said I had hoped he would take Root, but he said Root was an elder statesman in a different generation. I dwelt on Root's great function as a wise advisor, but I agreed that next to Root, Hughes was the best. I said the people were counting much on his Cabinet as a great one. He said he knew it. When he came to the Treasury, I referred to the fact that I had, at Fred Starck's request, written my opinion of Hilles but would not have butted in had I not understood from Fred that he was making inquiries at Harding's request. Harding said Fred is a good fellow but he is over zealous. He said he had read carefully what I had written about Hilles, but he was going West for the Treasury. He said he had made up his mind to take Charley Dawes of Chicago. I discussed Dawes and agreed with him that he was as able a financier as there was in the country. I said I had meant every word I had written of Hilles, but I recognized the strength of the Dawes appointment. I pointed out that he was a partner of the Morgans in many enterprises, and was a friend of the Packers, having tried to stop a prosecution in my day, but said that those things would not move me, were it my responsibility, and he said he did not care either, that he would not mind going right into Wall Street, if necessary. Then he said he had offered Hoover a place in the Cabinet. He wanted to make him Secretary of the Interior, because he thought he would make a great one, but he might have to make him Secretary of Commerce. Hoover preferred the Interior. I said with three such names as these it would be a great Cabinet. He said he was going to have others as good. Weeks wanted the Treasury but he would not give it to him. He wanted to give Weeks the Navy, but Weeks did not want it. He was anxious to give him the Postmaster General Ship if he would induce McCrae, Governor of Indiana, to agree to appoint Hays, Senator, if New resigned as Senator from Indiana. Then he would appoint New, Secretary of War, Weeks, Postmaster General, and Hoover, Secretary of the Interior. I asked him if he had thought of Max Pam, who was a great friend of mine and an able lawyer and a representative Jew, as well as a confidential adviser of the inner propaganda.

circle of the Catholic Church. He said he has not been considered at all. He said "I remember him. I talked with him this Summer, but I got a fixed impression that he was inclined to take charge of everything." I spoke of him as being well qualified as Solicitor General under Daugherty, if Daugherty were Attorney General. He said Daugherty will be Attorney General. I said the Solicitor General was a most important place and needed an able advocate. I took personal interest in it because I had been Solicitor General. He said that's a place for George Wharton Pepper. I said Pepper was an able lawyer, very, but I hardly thought he would take it because his ambition was probably the Supreme Court. Well, he said, he might take this and then go on the Supreme Court. I suggested Max as Minister to Czechoslovakia where he was born, but he did not respond. I suppose he thought he could attend to foreign appointments when he reached them. I asked him if he intended to recognize the Jews. He said he would like to do so. There was a live wire, a Jew, named Lasker from Chicago who had charge of the publicity end of the campaign. He is at the head of a great advertising firm who, he thought, would be an ideal man for Commerce, but he did not know whether he could get him in. Max had spoken to me of Lasker as a Candidate for the Cabinet, with a contemptuous description of him as "a typical loud mouthed Jew." You see Lasker's going in might depend on Harding's putting Hoover in the Interior Department, and that won't work out unless Hager is gotten rid of I think. Harding said he would have a fight with Johnson over Hoover whom everybody expected to be in the Cabinet. I mentioned one thing in Hoover's career as a possible source of criticism. It was something he did with a desperation in China. This Spurgeon of the Ledger called my attention to, but Harding said it did not disturb him. Something always turned up in a long active life, but if a man had survived with a high reputation, it could not have been important. He insisted something in Charles Dawes's career when it appeared that he had given a check of his bank for \$100,000 to Lorimer's bank to enable it to stand government examination, after

which the check was returned. He said that Hoover would make a great Secretary of the Interior, but he said he was a great advertiser. I said I did not think much of Hays. I thought he was a light weight. He rather demurred to this. He said he was the man to whom the Senate Oligarchy had turned to beat him, Harding. He said "you know because you furnished the evidence". He continued "I confirmed that in a curious way. Alex Moore, of Pittsburg, an enemy of yours and an old Roosevelt man who had supported Johnson in the convention, came over to me at once after the Convention and sent me a long letter from Procter in which Procter recited the whole story of how Wood and Lowden, under the influence of the Senate Oligarchy, were to go over to Hays, and why it failed." I said I understood that it had been arranged at a luncheon of the National Committee or an inner ring of which Bryce Thompson was a chief promoter, and at which Hert of Kentucky was present, and that Hert declined to carry out the plan in the Convention. He asked what I knew of Hert. I said I knew very little, that I knew Hilles liked him but I had been told that he had made his money in a questionable way which ought to be looked into if he was to be appointed. He said the Kentuckians were pressing him hard. Indeed he said he knew that Harry Daugherty wanted him appointed very much, but Harry was sly and had not said a word directly in his favor. He said he could see through Harry when Harry did not suspect it, but he said Harry was loyal and a good lawyer. I said yes, that he Harding was entitled to have such a friend in the Cabinet, but that he ought to have a big Solicitor-General. He said I insist on it and referred to Pepper again. At another time, he referred to Henry Anderson of Virginia as a man Slomp had pressed. I spoke highly of Anderson, though service abroad had swelled his head into great mannerism. He had noted that but he was anxious to do something in the South and he had not found anybody in Tennessee or elsewhere. Harding said he had a great difficulty as to the Department of Labor. He said he was going to put in a Union man. I said I thought he might

take Nolan, the Congressman from California who was a Union man and a great friend and supporter of Johnson, which might keep Johnson quiet. Harding said Yes, that is true, but Nolan is very socialistic, and I'll have to fight Johnson anyhow. I said yes he would have Johnson to fight, that Johnson was just waiting to select his ground and he Harding could not force a fight on a stronger ground than Hoover's appointment. I suggested for Labor a Vice President of the United Mine Workers who was in our National War Labor Board, who is an English born man. He said he wanted an Irish Catholic, other things being equal. I suggested Hutchinson, of the Building Trades, who was also on the National War Labor board. He reminded me that he had sent "Hutch" to me with a letter of introduction in one of my campaigns which I had forgotten. But he said "Hutch" would not do. Hutch was getting rich. He owned a farm of 500 acres and other things difficult to explain. He said the most presentable and conservative man was O'Connor of the Longshoremen, but he was charged with being a grafter. I said I knew O'Connor, that he had appeared before us and seemed a self-contained conservative man. When I went to Cincinnati I thought he thought me of Bill Mahon of the Street Railway Union. He is the most courageous, straightforward man I know. Insists on contracts and keeping them and puts arbitration into every contract.

The Philippines were mentioned. He said he was opposed to independence. I agreed with him. He said personally he would be glad to appoint Chamberlain of Oregon, Governor General, but he supposed it would not do. I said it was a mess out there and I thought he could get Forbes to serve a while and he was his best man, with Gilbert as Vice Governor. Harding said Gilbert was an applicant. Referring to Chamberlain again, he said he was really sorry he was not elected, but I reminded him that Chamberlain's defeat gave him two more Republican majority in the Senate and the majority of 22 was necessary to destroy the nuisance power of Borah, Johnson, et al. He said he

had been fully aware of that. He said he knew a good deal about the Philippines because he was Chairman of that Committee in the Senate. In the course of the conversation, after we had talked about the Cabinet, he said, "If I can arrange the Indiana matter, I may force Sutherland into the Interior Department for a while and put Hoover in Commerce where Hays wants to go. Hays does not want the Post Office. Sutherland wants the Supreme Bench and I am going to put him there". I said he would make a fine Judge. He was after Root, the ablest lawyer in the Senate. "Well", he said, "he could wait". "By the way", he said, "I want to ask you, would you accept a position on the Supreme Bench?" He said "because if you would, I'll put you on that Court". I said it was and always had been the ambition of my life. I had declined it twice for reasons I explained, but I was obliged to say that now under the circumstances of having been President, and having appointed three of the present Bench and three others, and having protested against Brandeis, I could not accept any place but the Chief Justiceship. He said nothing more about it and I could not make out whether he concluded that was satisfactory or whether he did not further wish to commit himself. In a note I sent him yesterday, I rather assumed the latter and said that if he concluded to take some one else as Chief Justice, as he well might, I should still be very grateful for the honor he had done me in making the offer. I told him in the note that many times in the past the Chief Justice had said he was holding the office for me and that he would give it back to a Republican Administration. He cleaned up the League pretty quickly. He said he was sure the American people wanted no League with a military or political obligation on them, that they did want to join the other nations to help peace, and that they did not want a separate peace with Germany. He proposed to deal through their Ambassadors here, i. e. the Great Powers, to have them send a Commission here and with a Commission here to change the Treaty and League and then enter it. I asked him if he would put Root on that.

He said "Of course I'd make him the head of it. He said at the same time he would put a Bitter Ender on too. I suggested Brandegee or Knox but he disappointed me by suggesting Reed of Missouri. He said also what I gave out. I did not give out that he was convinced that the people would not have a separate treaty with Germany, not because I did not rejoice at it, because I think it is the key to our success in that we must take up the Treaty and League for amendment and revision, but I did not want to stir Johnson and Borah up too much before Hughes became Secretary of State and the inevitable was opened to these guerrillas. He asked me to give out something and I wrote it out and submitted it to him and he approved it. I was pressed for time to catch the train or we thought I was so that I had not the chance to talk to him further, as he said he wished to talk further with me. We were photographed together. He was anxious to have me shake hands with the group of correspondents which I did. He was evidently anxious not to have me stay the afternoon because he needed that himself. Xmas eve was not the best time to go but it was all I could do.

I was non-plussed at the way in which he took me into his confidence and was nearly struck dumb when he asked me if I would go on the Supreme Court and felt I spoke in a confused way and must make myself clearer in the letter I sent him yesterday, which he must have by this time. Max told me that Ullman told him that Brandegee told him that he (Brandegee) spoke to Harding, and said he wished to press me for Chief Justice and that Harding said that would be agreeable to him. I don't feel at all confident it will work out as I would like it, but it is more favorable to my hope and life ambition than I thought possible. That was the way he dealt with Hughes, with Hoover, with Daves and now with me. I assured him I would regard his confidence, and I have. I told Horace, but not Charley or Annie or Bob. I did not think I would tell you, not because you would not keep it, but because I don't want to raise



your hopes to have them dashed, but I concluded I owed it to yo, Derling. Max Pam called me up yesterday morning but I had to mislead him by saying that I could not give him anything except about the Treaty. I could not or had no right to trust him with Harding's confidence and I did not want to hurt his feelings. Horace met me at the train. When I reached Charley's they were having a Xmas tree at Elinor's and I went over there. There were Bob and Martha and the boys; Maria, Jennie, Catherine, Georgia, Jack, Eleanor, Inman and John. Dr. Ratchford, Dr. Rhodes. They were all in good spirits. Of course Louis, John and Catherine were there, too. In the evening after dinner, Maria and Eleanor came over and we had a good talk. Yesterday morning I wrote some letters, one to Harding, another to Mrs. We have a big Xmas dinner and then I went to East Walnut Hills, called at Allie's and found the whole connection there, Eva, Allie's four boys and her girl and all the grand children, Burton, Laura and Ella and a cousin, Miss Baker. They were just having a Xmas tree. I hurried away to John Farrington who is nearly well and looking well. He and his wife were at home. Then I went to Mrs. Longworth's. Nannie and Buck were there with her and Nick just from Washington and Nannie's boy Landon. They are telling more stories of Alice's inhumanity to Mrs. Longworth. She is expected next Wednesday. She spent Xmas at Oyster Bay. Then I went to Catherine Wulsin's and we had a nice visit. Then I went to Jennie's where they had some egg nog. Bob, Martha and the boys were there. Billie counts ten firmly, distinctly and well. Catherine Winer was there. Mary Stettinius came in and took two glasses of egg nog. Maria and Eleanor were there and I brought them home. Last Night I read part of the Xmas carol to the family. This morning I wrote a letter to Mrs. Harding enclosing one from Mrs. Thomas, who wanted the Hardings to come to Augusta as we did before our going to Washington. I wrote Mrs. Harding all about the Thomas's and their relation to General Wood. By the by, Harding gave me to understand he would not put Wood in the War Department. He asked me if I would. I said no that Wood would have the army by the ears.

He said he thought so too. But I said I did not know you would put him in the Interior Department. He said ~~an~~ Hoover he wanted there etc. I telegraphed Landon Thomas to send a Delegation to Marion at once. Wellive, the Publicity man, told me they would want to go to rest for February, somewhere. Harding has been there and likes the golf. It is convenient to Washington and yet far enough to keep the crowd away. I shall hand you this letter on the steamer, if all goes well. I hope you will keep it. It is as close to all Harding and I talked about as I can recollect and it will be an interesting memorandum for the future, even though we don't realize our hopes. I have been disappointed too often and so have you to count any chicken until it is fully hatched.

Lovingly yours,

Will.

[JOHN W. HOWARD 1911]

P. S. Harding impresses me as having thought out his Cabinet with much force and grasp of the situation, and seemed to me to be facing a fight with regret but with firmness. He is certainly determined to get the best men for his Cabinet he can. I don't know why he shies at Root, but it is perhaps because he wants a man who can last through his term, and second I think he thinks Root a more vulnerable than Hughes in the fight he just expects. As I anticipated he might say, let us go through the ~~the~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~and~~ ~~their~~ ~~register~~, but he is ~~to~~ ~~save~~ ~~appearance~~ by having the conference on the spot, after consulting the Ambassadors of the great Powers. He said he disliked the Council very much but he did not say he would insist on its elimination, but he would wish its powers curtailed. ~~Maxisokxtixed~~ though how, when it has no real powers, I don't know. He looks tired. He had his Doctor there when I was there. Mrs. Harding has been delicate always and has had parts of her kidney removed. I pressed on him the necessity for insisting on three hours in the afternoon for exercise. Mrs. Harding will have to be careful, and her intense desire to do things may be dangerous. If Harding

succeeds in getting

Hughes for State

Dawes for Treasury

New for War

Daugherty for Justice

Weeks for Post Office

-----for Navy

Hoover for Interior

Wallace for Agriculture (we discussed Wallace. I know him well. He could not get a better man. I stayed at Wallace's house twice)

Lasker for Commerce

----- for Labor

He'll have a Cabinet of all the talents. If he puts Sutherland and Pepper on the Bench, he will strengthen that body. It will give him a great standing with the people and he can bid defiance to Johnson and Borah. I don't think it would hurt him in the country to make me Chief Justice but it would give some people a disgusted feeling. Harding evidently feels no particular friendship for Wood because of the fight he made against him ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in Ohio. I urged upon Harding that he appoint no negroes South of Mason and Dixon's Line, because it did neither the negroes nor whites any good to make appointments of negroes in communities where the leading element was white. Harding said sarcastically this was matter he must of course give attention to because of his reputed ancestry. The real friend of the negro in the South was the good Southern white man but he would be alienate from his support by this policy. I asked Harding to look at my inaugural address on this subject. To my surprise, he had no books with the inaugurals of the Presidents. He asked me whether they were published by the Government. I said they were. He said he thought we could gain Southern States. I said I thought so too if he would not appoint negroes there. He said we came within sixty-thousand of carrying Texas. He said he believed in a Lily White Republican

Party and not a Black and Tan. He spoke favorably of Creager and Scooby in Texas, ~~Maxxaid~~ but not so much so of McGregor, because McGregor had played with the Black and Tans, but I said he had not done so this year. Creager and Scooby are great friends of Harding. He was their guest at Brownsville, and Scooby is an schoolmate of Harding's. McGregor was a good friend of mine and a very earnest Republican. I should hate to see him unseated, but I heard when I was in Texas that he was likely to be ousted the next time. I told Harding Roosevelt's statement to me about Wood that while he was a warm friend of his, he knew Wood was cold bloodedly selfish, and I knew Wood was a constant intriguer although an able and competent and hard working officer. I did this in re my suggestion of him as Governor General of the Philippines. Harding said he liked Frank Lowden, but that Illinois was in a bad situation because Small and Thompson were in power. He intimated pretty broadly that he would not call him to his Cabinet. I should not wonder if he sent him to England, and I expect Lowden would like that. His wife would certainly grace the post and he would be very acceptable. Some other facts about the interview may come to me, but I think I have got about everything in.

W. H. T.

He will not make Hilles Secretary of the Treasury and Hilles would not take anything else. I feel on the whole that it is better for Hilles as it is. He has a great future, I think. He is independent. People will be coming to him as in the past.

Made at Bermuda January 23rd, 1921.

Addendum to my letter to Nellie giving a detailed account of my interview with Senator Harding, December 24th, 1920.

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The Senator asked me if I would appoint Wood, Secretary of War. I said I would not do so, that the army had cliques and Wood was at the head of one of them, that he would have his favorites classified by lines drawn, friendships made, and enmities occurring for decades, and that it would not make for peace in the army but constant trouble. I had thought that Wood would make a good Secretary of the Interior, because he knew the West and the West seemed to like him. I was bound to admit, however, that Wood was an intriguer, He was always planning for his own advancement. Roosevelt once discussed Wood with me. He said he liked Wood much, that their tastes were much alike in respect to sport, and their opinions coincided as to affirmative policies, preparation for war, etc. He said Wood was a very able man, and a very efficient officer. He always made good. His principle was to win promotion by efficiency in office and that made it safe to give him any task. But he said Wood's ambition is such that he is coldly selfish. "To illustrate", he ~~xxxix~~ continued, "I have helped Wood always and have stood by him when he needed a friend in power; but I do not doubt that if he could get into heaven on my shoulders and at my expense, he would not hesitate to sacrifice me?". I told Senator Harding that my experience with Wood justified Roosevelt's view of his capacity. He began as an army doctor, but that was because he could not go to West Point. He became President McKinley's medical adviser as to Mrs. McKinley and used this relation and the Spanish War to get into the line of the army. He was always a soldier. It was no mistake to put him in the line. That was where he belonged. He did well in the Philippines. He was thorough and put the army under him in good condition. He was progressive and aggressive and attached the

men who served on his staff to him. But with all his good service and his efficiency, he could not help seeking to lift himself by intrigue. The Runcie incident in ousting Brooks from the Governor Generalship of Cuba, his dealings with Bellairs, his attitude toward Rathbone, his relations to Congressmen when Chief of Staff under Stimson in promising them everything and then forgetting, of which Stimson complained to me, were all instances of this. I gathered from Mr. Harding's remarks that he felt that Wood had not conducted the campaign fairly before the Convention and had left a bitter flavor. I said but what are you going to do for the Progressives? I said I realized that when it came to pick Representatives progressives, there were none. He said that Lasker, the Jew, who had been publicity manager, had been a Progressive, and he would like to put him if he could. I mentioned the fact that had come to me that Pershing and Crowder and some others would resign if Wood were appointed.