

1/0 American Express

Peking China

Sunday — June 7, 1931

Dearest Ma —

Since last Wed. I have been in Peking, having left Shanghai on June 1st by train, stopping a couple of hours in Nanking, in all a fifty hour trip hot and dusty but extremely interesting, scenicly and in the types seen — as it was in fact my first glimpse of China, since Shanghai is not China but a special little world in itself. As always happens, wherever I go, I at once fall under the protection of welcoming friends: a Mrs. Lucille Swann American sculptress who has lived "la vie artistique" in Paris, Tahiti, Algiers, and all the other places that such people go; some of the Legation young men who have already started me on the round of cocktail parties (which I rather regret as I consider such circles a waste of time) and a dinner in honor of Ambassador Forbes (to Japan) and most surprising of all, your old friend Arre Nobles who has been living here for the past eleven months — (he has a house with another chap from Seattle.) and has been doing rug designs for one of the best rug concerns here. He has also been buying up all sorts of wares, having jewelry made, and going on all sorts of exploring expeditions into Mongolia etc. He is shipping all his treasures to Seattle where he himself is going soon to sell them for a fortune. Yesterday we went out

to the edge of the Western Hills, spending hours exploring the enormous pleasure grounds of the Dowager's Summer Palace - that old dame certainly had imagination of the Hadrian villa type, as well as being able to play a Queen Elizabeth, a de Medicis, and several other roles combined. And she built on such a grand scale. But then all the dynasties were equally extravagant with space and size. The city of Peking is stupendous, there is no other city planned on such noble lines, such broad avenues, such symmetry - the most modernistic of city planning is not as modern or as suited to the modern traffic problems as 2000 year old Peking.

Life among the foreigners seems to be very pleasant here, especially since, if they have their own houses, they can live so terrifically cheaply with servants to wait on their every gesture. I am going to try it for perhaps two months; I will take over Orre Noble's house and his domestic staff, altho I haven't the faintest idea of how I am going to keep them busy. In the mean while I may go on a ten day trip to see the most exciting part of the country with Orre, Deane (of Seattle) and three American women - it will be by bus, barge, and donkey, and promises to be something very unusual.

Dr Hirschfeld came on to Peking a week before I, cutting his stay short, so that he had already left when I arrived, so I fear that our ways have now parted as he goes on to Canton Hongkong Bali etc. I still plan to go back later to

Shanghai for more material, but that ~~stay~~ ^{active} stay
-town is too much of a continuous adventure
for contemplative work.

Later * * * It is now
agreed that I will be allowed to join the ten day
expedition into the interior - starting Tues. the 9th
at dawn. Helen Burton, the prime mover of the
Trip, has a gift shop in the Pekin Hotel - and
has evidently done very well, as she has a
beautiful home, and travels almost every year to the
States where she has branch shops in Bar
Harbor and other New England resorts. She knows
Alan and Marjory Clark very well, having met
the first here.

Orra took some good photos of me which I
will send you in my next. It is very hot and I
have just acquired ~~the~~ khaki shorts, and a whole
complete Summer wardrobe: Palm Beach, duck, and
pongee silk, and even a white monkey jacket
which they wear here for dress. Society here tends to be "arty" and effete. I over-
heard an ordinary Marine who has been exposed to
Peking for two years, complain that he did not
like Shanghai because there was only one pagoda
there! You can imagine what the Legation specimens
are like, with their gardens and the porcelains and
their jade rings.

Be good, and keep cooler than I am
Muen love - Scho.