

Madris Aug 18th 1842

My dear Kate,

I yesterday received your letter of the 8th July which was a most agreeable surprise to me as I had supposed you too much occupied with your own affairs to find leisure or mood for letter writing. You need none of you yet being anticipated by your father, or by any one else, in domestic news; for you all ~~have~~ relate something, that the rest have omitted; or place things, already related, in a different light: and indeed I have such a wish for every thing that relates to home that I can read the same over and over again with never ceasing interest and gratification. If you all know what heartfelt enjoyment your unaffected, unpretending, simple narratives of domestic life and domestic affairs give me, I am sure your kind good hearts would feel amply repaid for all the labor of the pen.

In letters but of a day or two since you have sent me and your sister Mary I have given so many details of myself and my affairs that I have little more to communicate. Indeed now that I have got over the ceremony of delivering my ~~credentials~~ credentials and paying & receiving visits of ceremony, I have dropped into a completely quiet, monotonous kind of life, and shall so continue until the summer heats are over.

~~For the last few days I have been~~ I rarely stir out of the house until evening and sometimes not even then: passing occasionally a couple of days without going abroad. The heat here is of a very parching kind

owing to the rarity of the atmosphere: for Madrid, from its great elevation, on the vast ~~table~~ table land of Castile, breathes a thin mountain air. By ten o'clock in the morning the streets are all like ovens, and ~~it is~~ a dull parching heat prevails until late in the evening: especially that summer, which has been uncommonly sultry. I find the only ~~way~~ resource is to keep all my windows closed, and to remain quiet, in the thickest summer reinment. As my apartments are spacious & lofty I in this way get through the day without suffering from the heat, but I feel the want of exercise, and the absence of all refreshment in the atmosphere.

Having been accustomed to the green and mossy and grassy banks of sweet little running rills, and the soothing breezes of the Tappansee, I am left pined for these parched regions, where the city has the temperature of a brick kiln and the country the aspect of a desert. However, the summer heats will soon be past, and I shall then be able to go about, take exercise, and hunt up the resources of Madrid. As yet I have been but once to the Theatre; but calculate upon the Italian opera as a great standby in cool weather. ~~My~~ We are now beginning to have fine moonlight nights, and I occasionally stalk forth about ten o'clock at night and repair to the esplanade beyond the Royal Palace (not far from my residence) which overlooks the broad valley of the Manzanares and the sun-burnt regions beyond away to the Guadarrama Mountains. There I take my seat ^{on the parapet} with some of my young diplomat household; and we enjoy the temperate night breezes rising from the valley; and talk about home and distant friends. The valley of the Manzanares runs north and south like the Hudson; the castellation of the long fort runs from

as just as it does from the Cottage; so, with the aid of fancy which is ever ready to lend me a hand, I conjure the dimly lighted landscape into a double row of houses, and the Guadarrama a mountain and into the romantic line of heights beyond the Hudson.

The only thing that disturbs the illusion is when I turn round and behold before me the vast palace, with its ~~col~~ colonades and columns all sleeping in the moonshine.

It is a great source of pleasure to me, in this exiled state, to hear about me companions from our common home and circle of relations and friends. We have so many sympathies and topics of interest common to each other. You would be amused to see, when the mail arrives, with a budget of letters from home, what an exchange of anecdotes and gossip takes place among us, and what a fund of household conversation is afforded. My choice of Hamilton as a secretary was a very fortunate one. He is a bright, intelligent, entertaining companion; of most amiable disposition and gentlemanlike manners and is indeed the life of the house. In an official capacity he is clear, quick and comprehensive, and calculated, I think, to make a first rate diplomatist. Indeed altogether I feel quite proud of my diplomatic household. My young gentlemen live together in perfect harmony and make my home quite a pleasant one.

To day Mr Hamilton and myself take a sociable dinner with Mr Aston the British Minister; who has made the most prompt advances towards a cordial acquaintance, and whose house I fancy I shall find one of my pleasantest resorts. We are to meet there a son of the Marquis of Northampton and two other young Englishmen who have, more than a dozen, made their way across the Pyrenees. It is quite rare to meet with either English or American travellers at Madrid.

To day I expect the arrival of my cousin, Geoff, since he has been Paris, having been more than a month on the way. I shall then get my establishment more completely in order; having had to make

Sheff, furniture, by hiring articles of household use, table linen, plates, knives
& forks &c by the day - not an unusual mode in Spain, when money
was from year end to year end in this kind to much manner.

Your account of Mr. McInture, and of his pleasing manner of turning his
carriage into an omnibus for the accommodation of the neighborhood coincides exactly
with my idea of that most generous, kind hearted man; whose great delight
is to do good and disburse happiness. I was sure the McInture family
would prove most excellent neighbors.

Miss Catherine Allen Spring

Care of E. Spring St.

New York.

And now my dear Kate before I finish let me say one thing - and bear
it in your mind. Your father writes that the notes in which some of your sisters
have been money invested have paid no dividend. They must make no difference
in your allowance - because he has full authority to draw on my resources for
the deficit - as to yourself, I let no limits to your allowance - In your position
you will naturally incur various expenses. I authorize and authorize you to
to get from Pierre de Spring in my name, whatever money you may stand in
need of. You must think of me in those matters as of a parent, and act accord-
ingly - and so God bless you my dear and excellent little woman
Your affec. uncle - Washington Irving