

4-29-1890

Ida Honoré Grant to Sis, April 29, [1890]

Ida Honoré Grant

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(1890?) Tuesday, April 29th

Dear Sis -

I was delighted to get a letter from you two days ago, as I do not hear so often now, from you all, but realize that you are very busy - His boy, has been a very busy time for me, indeed, as it turned out, that just after Lent was the

dinner for all the Ministers
that were to be given dur-
ing the season. Every
Ambassador it seems, gives
a series of dinners every
year, to the Diplomatic
Corps, each dinner of 20
to 25 covers, with much
elaboration of hired
servants, and Ceremony.
As I wrote you before, such
is shown in the extravagance

Ceremonious place, by lines of ser-
vants up the stairs, and in the hall
as you enter, by the Portier, in Magnifi-
cent regalia at the door, and the Ches-
seur behind the Ambassador's Chair,
being superb - Each Ambassador,
has kindly invited out to dine, and each
time, we were asked to the highest
dinner, that is with the highest price
Palace. The Minister of foreign affairs the
this is all arranged by their having about
5 or 6 different dinners, so that at each
dinner, the Ambassadors can sit on
each side of the host and hostess, they
being thus divided out ^{for the different dinners} - And then
as the Ambassadors, giving the dinners.

Having been here for many
 Years, of course, can fill
 up their bottles with Minis-
 ters, ^{they know well -} Attaches and Secretaries,
 Then the highest ones, the
 Ambassadors can be named
 the best always - Of course
 after going to all those din-
 ners, then, felt that he
 wanted very much to ask
 the Ambassadors here, and
 then came many interesting

of all we can only entertain
12 at one time, not
having space for more;
then Mr & Connel not possi-
bly give a series of dinners
dividing up the Ambassadors
Doss and inviting others
to fill up, as there were
not enough others who
had ventured to entertain
and not enough China of our own,
as and we have been
tired of everyone, since
the first moment your

(By the Voyage 1873)
coming, that it was the thing here, to
hold off, and not make the slightest
venture to anyone, which we have
taken pains to do. Then I said, if
we asked only 12, it would be stupid
to have one or two ambassadors, that
were so plain, to such a little affair,
and they would think it better to
put all ambassadors, at such a
small affair, as they are so great on
rank here - And then nothing is a
winner at all, unless there are 20 or
25 people asked. So he thought it would
seem to them more worth while their
coming ~~to them~~ if there, magnificent
all people of this own rank. I
really have been terribly worked up
over the whole thing, but what to do -

9th

as the question of rank is
some thing terrific here,
and also, the seating of
guests at table, and I tried
by having more than two
Ambassadors, we would
have to have all, but the
two first in rank along
the sides of the table.
At last however, we made
up our minds to draw
it out, and ask Kabooky

(the ministers of foreign affairs)

The German, French,
Italian and Spanish
Ambassadors together.
We had the best we could
in the way of a dinner.
The stair-case lined
with flowers coming up,
very expensive roses on
the table etc. etc. Music
in the side room ^{during} after
dinner — But I felt badly
all the time, as I knew
that the two Ambassadors
who sat farthest from us —

Were feeling strangely at ease -
but it seemed the only thing to do.
They admired our glass; our plates
extravagantly, thought them much too
fine to use on the table, thought the
silver was beautiful, and to the de-
light, spoke especially of his dining-
room chairs, and thought they really
talked and ate, at no other table I
have been to, as much as they did at
ours, I still have a terrible sinking
when I remember that we went against
all the usual etiquette of the Diplomatic
Corps and of Comma, they can't know
just how it was, but Fred continues to
think that we did just right to have
the high ones at table, when there were
to be so few, and then one place was a

Pleasant as another - There is
 nothing done here however,
 without great Ceremonies and
 etiquette. For instance, at
 all other Courts it is said,
 that the Diplomatic Corps are
 most informal with each
 other, and Ambassadors
 & even to the Honours of
 Secretaries when they are
 friendly, but here they follow
 in the footsteps of the Hopstays

are great on bonne etiquette, &
a secretary, of good taste, will
never ask an Ambassador to
his house, or place him in
the position to refuse, for the
same reason that the Minis-
ter's wives, never give soirées here,
as the Ambassadors do, —
for the reason, that an Arch-
Duke or royalty never enters
the house of a Minister, only
that of an Ambassador, since
the latter comes as the representa-
tive to them, of an Emperor or

a King - The ones who have been here the longest, are the quietest, attempt the least sociability only doing things in several formal way - They few even have a reception day, for the reason that the highest aristocracy here, do not have days etc -

All these rules and regulations are most amusing. At all the dinners I sit much higher than I should, usually going in with an Ambassador for the reason that only a small portion of the Ministers are married, and one or two of the Ambassadors are single or widowed - Prince Henry Liechtenstein who lived in America, has been exceedingly polite & ceremonious - took us all through the gallery of their family, which is magnificent filled with von Dykes Rubens etc. He also invited them to go out with a very high.

17th

Select party, shooting, on
his own place last week,
but the latter, had to decline,
as he had made his dinner
engagements. Of the party were
Prince Louis, Prince Joseph
Poniatowski and others of
highest place. We are to have
tomorrow evening another din-
ner, which we feel forced
to, the Greek Minister & wife
Russian Military Attaché and
wife, and our Military at-

all having seen ^{quite} Miss
Tache and Mrs, with (Miss
Brightling) Mrs Canfield of
N. Y. and Mr and Mrs Purdy
who are with them and Cousins
of the McLeers whom we
know so well in Washington
The Americans come right
along, there being, here now
Mr & Mrs DuRoi and daughters
who lived in Chicago years ago
have been to our home. Then
Mr Phipps, the partner of Carni-
die, whom we know but this -

family - Last week we felt obliged to
give a large dinner for the Michaels
of Philadelphia, whom we loved well and
all his friends - They all come to see us,
Mention having seen Mr Phelps in his
saloon, the Minister ~~at~~ Paris or in Spain
and elsewhere, and altogether there
seems no way out of our entertaining
them. I tell Ned, that from this on I'll
only have the very choice ones, for dinner,
and will now get up a little card party for
those who are here, something easier -
There is no use of our running ourselves
to try to keep up with all other Ministers
are doing - I felt obliged to have the
Canfield party, as my ^(Miss Houghtling of Chicago) (she) is related to
everyone I know in N.Y. and so we tried
to combine them with the diplomats whom

214
We feel it necessary to state
this, though that is not at
all "en vogue" here and I
don't know how they will
all like it - how so, I
must Confide in you, that
our Secretary & wife and
Attache' and wife are rather
"Cuffy" that we did not bring
them forward at our State
dinner, this we know from
remarks and innuendoes, and
they have hinted that the Anti-

Sadlers, in joining Amur, in with
their different measures of Se-
gation etc, and returned the
hint, that that was true, they
gave banquets and indiseries,
and beside, their Secretaries,
considered themselves "Aides"
etc, that it was a regular ses-
sion, and that there was
no attention or respect to
great, apparently, for them to show
their Chiefs etc. - You know
our government appoints Sec-
retaries, entirely independently

if the minister ^{them} Congress he can bring them forward and make much of
of the Ministers, and they only show him the
same respects that these foreigners do their
Chiefs, when they are very polite like Lorax
and chose to do it. Our Ministers can only
claim, that they perform their duties in the office,
and with true American spirit, they often try
to out-do, and rival the Ministers socially,
which is not at all the thing among these
people, who make all the difference in the
world, as to rank. I have said nothing at
all about our Secretary & wife, wishing to
make all as pleasant as possible as he was
particular appointment of Glaines & Wain
sons, there is every reason to get on with them.

When they arrived they, she especially, was full of
her equality feelings, and her money power.
Indeed she told me, the first time I met her,
that the Secretary, Wain, and his wife, who had been
in London for years, had had wonderful

25th

Success there socially
no ministers had ever held
the place in society, they did
etc. - She was too indisposed
for two weeks to call on me;
had just lost her brother a
week before, so I went to see
her, which set a bad example
and then her father and mother
came (great intimates of Mr
Blaine) and he called, but in
the end, I had to call on the
mother (the son having just
died) to keep things smooth
When I have entered rooms

all the winter, Mrs Chew keeps
her seat if I speak to her, which
is considered terrible here, all
the other attaches & secretaries
wives, always, rising, and coming
to me when I speak with them,
as they do to their Chiefs wives - I
had entirely ignored all
this, knowing the American
feeling of equality, though it
may have seemed strange to
others, on one occasional
dinner the hostess asked
our attaches' ^{wives} -
Mrs Keim if she would move
and give me the place on

The boys - The Percerells, though such smells
at home, fell into the etiquette of the place,
and said it was better for their credit here,
that they should put on proper form of manner
with their Ministers and wife, so they took
 pains to do just the right thing every time,
being well-bred - All this does not in the
least concern me, I have taken no notice
neither has Mrs, but they all seem to be put-
ting on a thing or two - Now, since we have
been invited by ~~every~~ ^{to dinner} ~~company~~ and
they only asked by one after the high Miners
over over, to a small young people's af-
fair, or to their succession of dances &
which all of society are invited - So all
appearances we put on ^{with the dignity & grace} splendidly and
we wish it so, as we are really sincere
in desiring very much to please the Pri-
vate & Secular of State, and keep this place

29th
I remain for the 4 years
first of all because there
is nothing to go back to at
^{no opening for Fred} home, and secondly, be-
cause, I am really so glad
and grateful, to be here, in
a nice home having the
advantages for ourselves and
especially for the children. I
am most anxious that all
news which goes to America,
(Chew was in the "State Dept." for
years and his father before him)
will be pleasant and satis-
factory - Chew & wife know

a very large elegant apart-
ment one more room than
ours, not next door to us
which the father furnished
beautifully. They keep French
Cook at great expense, a
house keeper, fine turn out
etc, and do everything in
really more dashing style
than the Corsicetti but are
not so popular being less
bright and au fait. We like
them to appear here, and
strange to say, very one, of

New York who ^{by the way} applied for the position was
my rich - they like to have a little business
Diplomacy abroad. The Salazar would not
support nicely a married man - This ^{Chad} took
a day for receiving, this winter, which
here is considered far from modest and
proper ~~especially~~ the first year - After
one does as is most convenient. The first
thing is to hold one's self high and secluded
rather, as well as exclusive - which is
the reason I took no day and made
no unbecoming steps - just going where we were
invited, and being quiet and dignified -
I only mentioned all this about the Legation
because I thought ~~it~~ should be amusing,
knowing just how it is - It is utterly im-
possible as far as ^{particulars}, at this
Court for a secretary in any way to rival
his minister socially, who stands high above

in rank without an effort
 whatever it may be in other
 places - The Greatest deference
 you can imagine, is paid
 to rank & much so, that it
 would be almost disgraceful
 for a Minister to ask a
 Secretary to introduce him
 to anyone etc. - Now I
 am nearly killing you, run-
 ning on, about etiquette
 here, though you always ask
 about it
 We have used at our funerals

and every divides the place
— ^{your present} —
ornament, with roses and
long grass in it, which you
seem to scorn so, though we
think it is beautiful so un-
usual, everyone, having
an ornament of flowers
in the center. Ours is much
remarked, as are the
lovely shades for candles,
which are so unusual as
well as beautiful; and all
think we have gotten them
straight from Paris — De Har-
alos, taken the greatest

pleasure in our home-made pickles
at each dinner, everyone tasting them,
with evident pleasure. I am simply
disgusted and distressed about your
glass being so detained, indeed it
was a shame, but Lotmeyer says no
fault of yours - that it is the first time
such a thing ever happened to him,
and the must have changed the reputation
etc - I told him to write to you himself -
He is quite distressed and mortified -
He gave me really nothing, of course,
to you, and I looked at so many that
I think in the end I chose the least
pretty ones - We are very much contented
that we brought over all our own things
from home, and it is really the greatest
satisfaction to surprise these people, by

37th

telling them that the things
they are certain must have
come from London or
Paris, are from N. Y. and
all made in America.
They have very strange ideas
and vague ones, of our Country
knowing of the wealth etc
but not realizing fully the
culture, refinement, and
advantages we have now.

I am sorry to say that they
are vainly think we are
wildly travelling in

Europe, and my little Patriotic Mother
own home, and the impression they have
that American Fathers are willing to buy
bitter for their daughters, over here I feel
sorry today, is being constantly confirmed -
For instance everyone asks me here, how
any girl could possibly make up her
mind to marry Prince Katschub, who is
considered a Timid Rone and Black Sheep.
They look down upon her, and her family for
allowing it, and at the same time, always
coolly ask, how much money he will have
etc - as if that were only consideration - Think-
ing of these foreigners and for mention of
Genl Rodolinda, reminds me today, that
though the foreign men are different in
some ways; from what I can see, they
are quite as devoted, attentive and polite
as husbands, as the Americans, generally

Speaking, and though they may care
on their affairs outside, it is far from
being the fashion here among the Arist-
cracy to be fast, ~~openly~~, indeed, there is the
greatest appearance of dignity and
elegance in the first society, and I do
not know of any woman in the West
who could be considered more happily
and delightfully situated in life, than a

41st

One of a foreign Ambassador
before whom, everyone
unmeasured bows and
scrapes, whose husband is
always on his highest and
best behavior, because his
place is to represent a Country
and a Crown with honor
and whose children grow
up among the very high-
est, in rank of every land,
and who are admitted to
the very highest circle

of every different Country
They visit which is most
interesting and gratifying
to them. There is no one higher
~~Authority~~ the King or Emperor, as
they represent one from home,
they outrank all the rest
of the Royalties —

Now to a more agreeable
Subject, I want to know
what your plans are for
the Summer and what
you think of doing.
I wrote you that we

are going, remain quietly right here,
until July 1st, when the Children will
put aside their books, and we will
all take a trip travelling rapidly and see
all we can in the 60 days time.
Naturally I want to see all we can
of Germany then of Norway and
Sweden and anywhere else, that we
can get to in the allotted time. Now are
you not coming over? We want so much
to see you the Children and Mr Palmer,
and it is so little trouble for you to travel.
Surely it is a surprise to me, this taking a
house to keep, and I presume it puts
aside for the present all idea of her
coming abroad which she by the
way has never so much as hinted at
doing. Perhaps she will like keeping
house for her sons, but I hope she

Will not take too much
 care - She has debated
 the idea always of doing
 it, that it may seem more
 pleasant, than she thinks
 I will be - I am so pleased
 that she has thought properly
 she thinks well have a
 future, and that Aunt
 Laura thinks of doing the
 same thing with her
 money - It is lovely for me
 to imagine anyone making
 money - My children have

perfectly charmed with
their most beautiful
Easter Cards which are
lovely or rather the Valentines
and other cards - I fear
my children sent some
miscellaneous little things,
which they went out and
bought for themselves without
my taking a hand in it,
and I told them they
were not fit to send at
all - But it is my nice

and I met in Howard and Min that
though they have everything settled
long they seem to enjoy the simple
things, also. It will be so long if you
can all come over this summer -

As Miss Mc Low has given up her house
and Low Harry and Dixie's house ^{to her}
where it is - Pellie has written, telling
me it is important for her to come over
to see us now as she has again workmen
in her house, and then the season
will be coming on, etc. I shall hope
very much to have a visit from the
the last of May - He has not written to us
for over a long - I have not heard
yet what Mrs G's plans are for the
summer - We hear from every one
that she never looked so young, well
or happy - That is not as it should

48th
he, she has had a fearfully
crowded house for years
past, and now will have
a rest in it all to herself.

And just into my relations
she wishes to have mother
and not always some in-
dependently inclined
daughters-in-law. I really
think it should be so.
Mothers like their own
homes when they are so
used to them. Mary is
said to be a very pretty

Month here as it is always
~~at~~ very warm, and I intend
to take things quietly, and
drive a great deal, as we
are about decided, to give
up our carriage the first
of June till fall again,
as all the fashionable
go out of town by that time,
and we will not need it,
can hire one, when we
wish: The water is lovely
all of May and many
people go wild over the

Races here, not to visit us, and so we
have not taken a 'lope' except on the
most especially good days. That I enjoy
most of all, is seeing how much the
children get on studying, proving etc.
It is such a blessing their having these
opportunities - I was getting quite des-
perate as to how we would educate
them, in New York it was so terribly ex-
pensive - You never told me what
you heard from Mrs Grant as to the
imitation you were good enough to tell
her, if she does not reply, she simply
can't tell what she wants to do, will be
the reason - She is really so unsettled
in her own mind about her plans -
She was perfectly and overwhelmingly
enthusiastically charmed with you last sum-
mer - do write all about everything & when
you are coming - excuse longest letters. Yours

P.S.
Dear Sir, I just want
to add, about our Am-
bassadorial dinner,
about which I have al-
ready bored you much,
that though small in
numbers it seemed quite
gay and bright, being
much talking carried
on and ^{two} of the Am-
bassadors remained
quite a long time until

Nearly 12 o'clock with the
Ladies to play whist, which
is most unusual as
generally we leave their
houses promptly within
a half hour after dinner
is over so, that we quite
appreciated their civi-
lity - People really
do always enjoy a small
dinner where all can
talk together. Please

Do not allow it to be talked of, that
remarked about the effort, at all,
on the part of our Secretaries - I will
~~not~~ ^{not} have ~~just~~ ^{such} a thing repeated for the
world, as they have ~~just~~ ^{not} as some of our
friends at Washington as perhaps,
and as I said before, but we really
are seen to go on swimmingly here
and I do not trouble myself with
any particular intimacy, so it is
just as ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~conspicuous~~ ^{conspicuous} in every res-
pect as if we had in our Legation, in
the world. I never could have been very
intimate for I had with anyone, and it
is very easy for me to make up about
this couple - If a relation would have
been here, he would have come right
in with our family and all been one;
more agreeable & more naturally and a higher
position for him - Several Ambassadors have