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CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

à Bordeaux. August 8th 1897.

My dear daughter: I have meant to write to you often but do not seem to have time for anything. We rise between 6 & 7; bathe dress and walk a long quarter of a mile to breakfast at eight. This is the petit dejeuner, bread butter and coffee, to which we have added an egg. Always the same. At 12.30, we have dejeuner ile fourchette — an elaborate meal of three or four courses with wine, claret or sauterne. After that sleep until 2 pm. Practically, nothing is done during this time. At 7 dinner: a good enough meal but nothing can be done after it. So you see the day is taken up with eating and sleeping. Having so light a breakfast and so heavy a truncheon is perhaps good for the digestion but is fatal to life and work. Nobody hurries here: today is always tomorrow and tomorrow next week. The only thing you can buy and get sent home the same day is a prescription and that only if the doctor marks it to be expedited. I walk, you see, a mile and a half each day, to and from my meals and climb the staircase of 61 steps from four to eight times a day. For this reason or some other, I am tired all the time and

really have no inclination to do anything.

The work of the consulate is a matter of no consequence — I mean the regular work and accounts. Your mamma could do it all in two hours a day. We have, however, perhaps 50 callers a day who want to know something or nothing and letters from five or six Americans each day, who want to know everything. These have to be answered. I get along fairly well with the French callers by making them write out their inquiries. The all think I am deaf, because I read French and speak it but cannot hear it.

The office-work, except questions that have to be referred to me — as all about America do — are answered by the vice-consul or clerk. Mr. Beecher has gone to Havre where the salary is $400. a year more and the work only half as much. I have now no vice-consul, but only one who is to be such, a Mr. Albert J. H. Martinsen, who is a big Russian of Scandinavian descent, 28 years old, and who speaks six languages, English very badly, French very fluently, Spanish very readily and Russian, German, Swedish and Dutch, I believe as barbarously as they deserve. He has been all over the world and strange enough does not know everything. I unlock the safe each morning, take out the change and give it to