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Washington, D.C. September 7, 1905.

Mrs. Albion W. Tourgee,
Care American Vice Consul,
Bordeaux, France.

Dear Madam:-

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th July, which come to me while I was on a vacation. I have been much troubled with Sciatica, which has caused me to get behind with my work, and with correspondence.

I desired to write you soon, on account of what you said as to the De-artment's reason for not granting your request. Of course I do not know, but I was informed that it was solely on account of leaving the new Consul free to do what he wished. There was certainly nothing in his way to prevent him remaining in Washington for months, if he had cared to do so. If you wish at any time to get any information here that I can supply without a violation of my duty here, I shall be glad to assist you.

It is not usual for the family of a deceased Consul to be considered, except with regard to the last illness, and possibly the transportation of the remains, and the allowance to the widow or heirs. I suppose the interest is transferred to the new Consul, on the theory of "The king is dead - long live the King." In any case, our Department has been in some sort of a transition stage. You know, after Mr. Hay's son died, he wished to resign, but upon staying, has not paid up to the time of his death, any attention to the Department proper, nor to the routine of Legations and Consulates - only dealing with Diplomatic affairs, proper. The Third Assistant has been most of the time extremely busy with other necessary matters of the Department, and except for his trip of inspection abroad, I would not think he could have had very much time to take up matters regarding the personelle of the Consulates. Indeed, I think the appointments, and the ordering of officials to their posts has been almost entirely under the direction of the President. Of course, the Consular Bureau have attended to details, but under the direction of various officials at different times. So you see, one gets between the upper and the nether millstone.

As you say that you are coming to Washington, I must ask permission to call, when, if it is possible, I will be of whatever assistance to you at the Department that I am able to be.

I trust that you will be able to bear your affliction without too much suffering, and that you and your daughter will have as happy a time in your new home as I am sure you deserve..

I am, Madam,
Very truly yours,

Reverend A. Merritt
Dept. of State.