

5010 18<sup>th</sup> N.E.,  
Seattle, Washington  
April 4, 1918

My most beloved mother,

Enclosed you will find a money order worth \$56 or 112 pesos<sup>a</sup> from selling some of the items you sent. You had sent me a luncheon set (probably place mats), six baby bibs and two ternos<sup>b</sup> but one terno has not yet been sold. I'm sending the \$50 from one terno and \$6 for the bibs. When I sell the terno and other items, then I'll remit the proceeds right away. It is difficult to sell the terno and dresses because of the war and people are being frugal<sup>c</sup>.

If you would send women's slips and nightgowns similar to those provided by Ate<sup>d</sup> Emilla, that would be better since they sell faster. Of the 50 nightgowns sent by Ate Emilla. I made a net profit of \$37.50 after our cost of \$72. The best thing about these is that I'm paid immediately. So, take care of this and send the nightgowns right away so I can sell and remit the money to you. I have a feeling this is better than the clothes and cigarettes you sell because here I'm paid immediately and don't have to extend credit. So as soon as you have time, order the sewing of nightgowns and slips, sending them right away. This will require less effort on your part. Send every week, or as soon as you have 3 or 4 dozen available.

We received the bag sample<sup>e</sup>, abaca, cordage, oil and hats. Selling of abaca is not certain since the use of abaca for rope is controlled by the government. Therefore Mr. Nelson<sup>f</sup> can't attend to this. With regards to the bags, Mr. Nelson is checking out prospects at various farms.

Here, jute bags are \$0.25 each. If you could send several thousand immediately, I will take care of it at this end. Use my address above, although I can pick them up at the port upon arrival. If you are buying bags made in Manila, buy from consigners. Selling them would be easy for me.

Don't bother too much with the abaca and bags for now. Concentrate on the jute bags for rice and coffee. Same thing with the women's slips and night gowns; place an order to make right away. With these three commercial items, there is more potential, and it will be a great help to you.

I will write more later as I am late for class already.

Please do not allow Manong<sup>g</sup>Sixto and Vicente to join the Philippine National Guard<sup>h</sup>. Never. Never.

I am well through God's mercy and I will finish in June<sup>i</sup>.

Dean Ethel Hunley Coldwell, the Dean of Women at the University, informed me that she wrote to you. Please answer right away, it would be embarrassing to me if you don't.

Likewise, with Mrs. Nelson, answer her letters right away.

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Footnotes:

a – the prevailing exchange rate at the time, set by the U.S. colonial government, was two Philippine pesos to one U.S. dollar. Adjusted for inflation that \$56 is worth a little over \$1,000 today.

b – a terno is a formal woman's dress, with butterfly sleeves.

c – when Maria was writing this letter, the U.S. was within days of entering WW I.

d - Ate is an honorific, used to address an older sister or an older woman. None of us recognize the name Emilla, it could have been another relative. Maria had an older sister, but her name was Simplicia (nicknamed Piciang).

e – for bag, Maria used the word *bayong*, a traditional bag made from the leaves of the *huri* palm, woven in different sizes. Think of it as an organic recyclable bag, 100 years ahead of its time.

f – Maria clearly writes “Mr. Nelson.” This is the only reference to a Mr. Nelson, subsequent letters only mention Mrs. Nelson.

g – Manong is another honorific, used to address an older person, in this case her elder brothers Sixto and Vicente. Sixto was already a medical doctor, married and stationed in Jolo, capital of the Sulu archipelago. Vicente had graduated from the University of Illinois in 1911 and would soon be married.

h - the Philippine National Guard was a militia created by the Philippine Assembly to help the U.S. in anticipation of involvement in WWI. The militia would be placed under the command of General John Pershing. The war ended in November, and the militia never made it to Europe.

i – Maria received her degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry that June.