

La Cigogne
Mourmelon-le-Grand
Marne, France
Nov. 4, 1947.

Dear Family;

I think I'd better start this out by saying at once that I feel much ~~xxx~~ happier about everything this week. I'm afraid my last letter wasn't much of a joy spreader, but there were extenuating circumstances. At the time I wrote, I had been suffering for over a week with a case of the G.I.'s, we had had three freezing days in succession to convince me that Winter was settling down in all it's uncomfortable difficulties for a six month stay; and Dorothy and Annette were recovering from that inevitable first-change-of-weather cold, entirely too slowly to suit me. Now my own digestive troubles are cleared up, all three children are completely healthy, and there have been a few sunny days to persuade me that even in France, the worst of the cold is always broken by a comparatively mild spells. Can it be that I'm ~~beginning~~ beginning to adjust?

After suffering my G.I.'s for a week, and finding that they just weren't yeilding to the usual bland diet and rest treatment, I finally got up courage enuf to go to a strange doctor in a strange town and ask for help. I'd better qualify that by explaining that shortly after we came here, to be prepared for emergencies, I had asked Lucien if there was a doctor in town, to which he replied ~~x~~ that there are three, and if there was a good one. To that his answer was that his personal doctor, while he couldn't exactly define his abilities, was a Russian Jew who had been at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, spoke English, and had some wonderful books in his library. That interested me enuf that I got Lucien to take me to his house so I could know a little what the man was like before I had real need of him, but the Doctor was out that afternoon, and we never got back. But I felt I would turn to him first when something came up, as I did. So this particular afternoon, I walked the half mile to his house, went on in to the bare, bleak waiting room with its railroad station tan walls and its hard straight chairs, and sat down with the man and woman who were ahead of me just as if I weren't having all those qualms. After a little the man who was already in the office came out and I got enuf of a look at the doctor to recognize him as the one Annette had pointed out to me as the man who gave the children at school their tuberculin test, and talked to her in English, and had completely won her heart. That made me feel a little better. When my turn came, sure enuf, he did speak English, and while his English was a little rusty, it was enuf better than my French that I was able to tell him what was wrong with me. It really would have been impossible- psychologically- for me to describe my symptoms in French at that stage. Then he ~~x~~ asked me a few questions, poked my belly a little, and gave me a box full of sulfaquanadine pills, with instructions to take four an hour-one every fifteen minutes (10) -for five hours. I asked him a few questions that had been giving me concern- whether there was any difficulty about getting drugs here now (He says no. There is even a French penicillin factory at Lyon now.) and he was very nice about taking time to talk to me a little. Then I asked him how much I owed him, and he replied- nothing. He went on to say that he couldn't take any payment from an American. That he had been in German, French, and Dutch concentration camps and prisons during the war and lost all his family to the Boche, and now when he could do something for an American, he would not take anything for it. And that if I ran into any difficulties about the children's health, he was always ready to help me. I thanked him with all the sincerity I felt, and walked out. I thought of what Lucie had told me

about his home having been very thoroly raided in his absence, by both the German occupation troops and the local French, and I thot of what he had just said, and I wondered humbly how I could have felt myself lonely and in difficulties here. The sequel is that I took the pills as prescribed, and next day found I was no longer going whoosh, and now am completely healthy again. I shall see if I can persuade him to accept some coffee and sugar and soap, even if he wont take my money.

We had an unusually nice weekend this week, Hews and I. He had finished his Greek temple drawing and gotten a favorable comment on it from one of the heads of the atelier during the week, and then Friday night late, he finally got to see the other man, and after a little talk this second one decided to let Hews enter in either the second half of the second ~~classor~~ the first half of the premier class depending on the decision of a jury after he has done a few problems for them to pass on. In eother case, he will start out working for a degree, and not have to put in a couple of years of preparatory work as most of the students- all the undergraduates- do. Also, he will not be required to take any examinations or technical lecture courses, just work on design problems. That doesn't mean there's much chance of his finishing in less than three years, it just means that there's a possibility that he may be able to get a degree in three years from a five year course. Also that he'll be working like all get out for a while until he has enuf problems done to present to that jury, and, if I know him at all, from then on out, too. However, there's a five day lull between the time when the bank problem he's working on right now has to be handed in and the time the next problem will be given out for sketches. If things work out I may go in to Paris for that time, or maybe for a couple of days of it, and see how things work out here if I take off for a bit. The plan, still tentative, is for Yolande and Eliane to sleep here with the children while I'm there and give them Breakfast and see that they get off to school. I hope it works. I'd like very much to be able to take time off and go into Paris just every once in two or three months. There are an awful lot of things there that I didn't get to see, and I've been rustivating long enuf now that I'd enjoy it a great deal.

We have something new to cope with now. Due to the prolonged drought, there is no water in ther hydraulic systems, or at least not enuf behind the dams to make as much current as is needed. As a result, all electricity is being cut down rather stringently, even the badly needed industries being restricted in their use of current. For us, it means no current from 7 to nine in the mornings except on Sundays, and no current from 7 in the morning to 8 at night on Fridays and Saturdays. Guess I'll go back to bed after the children leave for school and save candles. Do my ironing at night more. It's rather a nuisance having to time your activities acording to what facilities are available, rather than to suit your own convenience. Other than the nuisance value, it wont make much difference to us, tho. Thank heavens for wood stoves. And for being in the country. Helene, who works in Rheims, was down here for the weekend too, and told us that it's impossible to get wood in Rheims anymore. The same thing is true of Paris, too, and I understand there hasn't even been enuf milk to distribute the full ration for the children there. That we've had no trouble with. At least all the things our tickets are good for have been available here when we had tickets. I just hope it stays that way.

I've been having more fun with the children's little boy ~~visitors~~ visitors lately. The pears and nuts are still rolling in, and almost every evening when I'm cooking supper there comes a whistling out int the steet in front of the gate, - some body calling one of the

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children, and usually Cecile, who very much prefers to play with boys, and spends more time running in red hot tag games than the others do. Last night, one of her friends took his courage in both hands and came in to pay us a visit along with supplying a collection of comics that had been guarded (I wonder why) since the American troops were here. The children fell on the comics ravenously, completely ignoring the little boy. Then I found him a French comic, and there was absolute silence in the room ~~xxxx~~ while I worked. I was a little late fixing supper, and also a little ~~worried~~ worried that the child might expect to eat with us, knowing that this time there really wasn't enuf, so I tried to urge him along after an hour. Aren't your family looking for you? Is it all right for you to be out this late? Oh, no, noone was looking for him. Then he had finished the comics, and the children were still too busy with themselves to be much fun, so I decided maybe he didn't know how to leave and tried again. What time did he have supper? Nine-thirty. That fixed that, and he was such a quiet, nice, serious ~~ex~~ child, that I just let him alone, thinking that I wouldn't be firm until I had to. At last supper was ready, and I put the plates on the table. The minute I brought the first one in, he stood up, said polite goodbyes, and left. That was the signal he'd been waiting for. The next day at noon, he was back, with five pears for us, ~~hef~~ before he went back to school. And he ~~came~~ around with more today. He is one of the most attractive children I've ever seen, very quiet and a little sober, but with a quick grin that has convinced me he's just trying to be his very nicest around here and is still a little subdued. Very manly, and has been very nice to Cile. I'm not sure just what our attraction is for the children here. They must have very happy memories of the American soldiers, who were quite a source of chewing gum and candy. Also, this house means something to kids whose own homes don't have hot water faucets that run only cold water because lots of the homes have only a pump in the yard to supply water at all. The same wall paper that leaves me completely unimpressed is a source of awe to them, and toilets that work ~~and~~ something that is outside of their experience. I've seen a number of them, as they move thro a room, too polite to just stand and stare, turnig their heads to look all around, their mouths a little open. And so far three, at different times, have been so impressed that they must turn to me and say in wonder, "It's beautiful here" They are also, without a doubt, the best mannered children, with an inward delicacy that is more than just manners, that I've ever come in contact with. Even my children are enuf impressed to feel, as Cile told me, "The children in New Orleans weren't ever as nice as the children in France." My three are experiencing a widening of horizons here that is worth any ~~xxxxxxx~~ discomforts we have to put up with.

Granny's halloween party box arrived, by a miracle, on Hallowee morning. We decided that it was too difficult to organize a party that fast, and postponed it till Monday after school. Dorothy wrote out the invitations for the five little girls she mostly plays with, and we spoke to a few mothers, and after school they all came piling in, sort of glowing at having a party. The table was set, with the cookies in plates, and all the little girls just sat there and looked at the things, waiting for Dorothy to touch something before they dared to. I poured the malted milk, and their eyes bugged a little when they saw me come around with more. Not one took a cookie unless the plate was passed to her, and not one refused when it was. One child took a cookie each time and I saw her carefully fold it into her napkin(they had gotten the idea by this time that the napkins and candies and pumpkin candles were actually for them, and

they could keep them). There was enormous excitement over the balloons, and they were as thrilled to have a plastic bubble to

keep, too, as if they had really gotten something unbelievable, as no doubt it was. Maman and Eliane came over and watched the goings on and had a cup of coffee with me, and after an hour or so it was all over. No formal games, or prizes or anything that would have been really exciting at home, and yet ~~the excitement was~~ Dorothy and Cile have both talked ever since about what a good party it was.

I, too, am looking at us with a different sense of values, and I can see that when you can actually stop and ask yourself "What would I like to do this morning?" or "this evening?", when you have hot water running out of faucets and toilets that flush and you don't have constantly to make a choice between eating or having decent clothes to wear, you're not just getting along, you're rich.

Dear Mom + Pops -

Two nice things from you this week - two packages that arrived together & a first day cover from my sweet Pops that arrived the 4th of Nov. (Maple Post marked Oct. 21) Thanks very much, too, both of you. The canned fruit & Vienna sausage & stuff look almost too good to eat & the kids were really thrilled with the pencils, with their very own names on them & the paper & - oh, my child life! My child life! The packages got pretty battered coming, but everything arrived safely except the rice, which had all disappeared except a couple of handfuls that were wrapped in a twist of brown paper by a customs inspector who scraped it out of the corners, I suppose. I don't think it's a good idea to wrap rice with canned goods unless it's in a box, or was it? Bags give so. Anyhow we're going to have a high old time with all that fruit if I can ever work up an occasion that I think is worthy of opening a can. I'm really pleased to have that first day cover, too, Pops. I've had to fight off Cile & Arnette, but so far it's still mine.

Here are some stamps I've been snipping for Sandy -
Much love,

Cecile
Please - more letters