

La Cigogne
Mourmelon-le-Grand
Marne, France
Nov. 19, 1947.

Dear family,

I have been to Paris. Gee, it was wonderful. Hews finished his problem, actually two days before it was due, and we had two wonderful days and three even better evenings together in Paris, then the usual weekend here at home. Such a vacation! Such a good time! Such a wonderful man!

I came in to the Gare d'Est about 7:30 Wednesday night, and there was Hews on the platform, waiting for me. We went straight to his hotel, where he had arranged for Herbert to meet us for dinner, and found Herb already there- my train had been late. Then a very good dinner at the hotel, and I had Herbert laughing so hard he couldn't eat-with my descriptions of life in Mourmelon, and our house, and the goings-on at the Christelles, and our ex-collaborator landlord and his bastard daughter(subsequently adopted by his wife). After dinner, we started on a tour of some existentialist hangouts that Herb had spotted. The first, the cafe Flore, had a very familiar look. I finally decide that it was because the place looked very much like some of the older soft drink places at home. (Remember the old Schrafts that used to be in the Pere Marquette building?), and the crowd seemed to have been lifted bodily from Lafitte's, except that I didn't know anyone. I kept expecting Paul Ninas or Joe Donaldson to walk in. It was like that. The main difference here was that everyone was drinking- of all things- tea. It was very quiet, and Herb was dissappointed that there weren't lots of people sitting in window sills and embracing their friends with glad cries, as the last time he'd been there, so we went on. This time to the little bar and danceplace downstairs in the Mephisto. It was so strange- upstairs the place was closed, just an open door leading to the stair and a man wandering around to reassure paying customers like us that it was really open downstairs. Downstairs the place- which looked like a fairly nice, not too swank Chigao bar- was jammed and jumping. The piped in music was only SouthAmerican and U.S, and very good. The crowd was very young, all about college age, with a sprinkling of older, more exotic types like the two Chinese gentlemen who wandered around and managed to dance with most of the best looking girls. There was the usual casually dressed boy reading a book, tipped back in comfort in one corner, there were three young men at the next table to ours founding a brand new philosophy which they explained to us as being a cross between existentialism and intimitism- they have named this one animalism- and there were a bunch of French hepcats who put on one of the finest exhibitions of jitterbugging I've seen out of a movie. But nobody knew how to dance a rhumba, and some of the attempts were pretty funny.

Next morning Hews and I went to look up the two doctors at the American Hospital whose names Paul Getzoff had given us, and had such a good time playing "who do you know?" and "Ways and means of getting along in France" and " Paris versus New Orleans" that we ate lunch with DuPont, the one we had been able to pry loose enuf to come with us, till three o'clock, and never mind the tickets Hews had for a performance of some sort at the Palais de Shaero (that spelling is strictly guess work). They are a couple of very fine fellows, and we were very glad to get to know them. We were just in time too, because they're sailing for the states the end of next week. Night time, we want to see Baby Hamilton, which turned out to be everybit as funny as it was supposed to be. The story is of a family who have three grown sons and find a baby on the doorstepone xxxxxx morning with the note " I want my baby to be near his father" The problem of determining the paternity is very difficult, particularly because not one of the boys--or the father-- can be absolutely sure. Finally the mother turns up, and what do you know- it's Grandpa. It was well worth seeing- very well done.

The last day, Hews had to turn in his problem at the school and I couldn't come, so I spent a lovely hour wandering around in the Louvre, looking at pictures and sculpture and crown jewels, where I feel in love with a green jasper salt box and a fruit bowl that was carved, shell-like- out of a single piece of purple amythest. There were some xxx Roman murals, taken from Pompei, that were very interesting, but mostly I didn't have time to look at

~~xxxx~~ anything long enuf to do more than spot some things I want to get a better look at next time. There is a very fine collection of Flemish paintings there, and I didn't even get down into the Egyptian section, and Egyptian sculpture is something I like very much.

~~xxxxxxx~~ From there, at 12:30, we headed for the army PX, planning to gorge on hamburgers and malted milks there. But this is the Army, and the 1:00 shuttle bus got to the corner at quarter of two, and wouldn't take any of us because the driver had to go out to the American hospital and pick up a load there before he could come back to the camp. And the two o'clock bus had to, too, but while ~~xxx~~ we were ~~xxxxxx~~ trying to make up our minds what to do, the Colonel husband of the nice little Texas woman we'd been talking to came along, and we rode out to the base in his Ford. Felt very home-like, but very strange to be in an automobile in Paris. When we got out to the PX, we were shown a letter- Temporarily closed to students- but at least we were able to get something to eat at the snack bar. Cheese sandwich, 10 fr. Bacon and lettuce (Bacon)) 15 francs, malted milk, 15 francs, and doughnuts my golly, do. nnuts- 25 cents a dozen. We bought four dozen to take back with us. Then we ~~xxxx~~ looked around and looked to see what was available, even if we couldn't buy there now, and when I saw they didn't even have canned milk this time, I felt better. But there were lots of other things I'd have liked to be able to get, and I hope that temporarily won't be too permanent. That's the trouble with the army- you just can't count on anything.

Back in town, we raced madly thru a couple of stores, and finally managed to get some pretty satisfactory toys to reward the children for having been good girls- I hoped-. We spent too much money, but then it was a necessity, and anyhow, ~~xxxxx~~ this was something special. That night, we had tickets for a ballet at the Champs-Elysee, where Herb met us, bringing Louis Claiborne (cousin of the New Orleans family) along with him. They have rooms near each other in the Cite. The ballet was beautifully done. The costumes and stagings were excellent, and our students' tickets had put us in very good seats. They gave something classical, a tour de force (Pas a deux), and something modern that we all agreed was more the sort of thing we enjoyed, tho purely as a spectacle and as an example of what is given here, I was uncritically delighted with the whole thing. It's been too long since I saw any ballet for me to be very choosy.

We left Paris before daybreak next morning, with a mad dash to the train and just barely making it- because the alarm clock had been on Hews' side of the bed. That just doesn't work in our family. There wasn't anything to tell about the trip back, except that not having had time for breakfast, we were awfully glad we had all those doughnuts along, and I got a lot of knitting done. The children were exstatiely glad to see us, and they really had been as good as they promised me they would be, and the presents were a huge succes. The doll we got specially for Annette for her birthday was just exactly what she has been just aching for, and has gone to bed with her every night since. There was a lot of catching up for me to do, like sweaters to wash, and a cake to make so Annette could have her birthday- because of course you haven't had a birthday until you've had a cake- but we fed cake to her little friends yesterday, and jello, and a little packet of candy and a toy to take home.

I wish you could see those children at a party. It makes my heart ache to see the way they look at the goodies on the table- so sort of unbelieving. And the way they never grab or snatch, and they always have their minds on someone at home who didn't get invited. One little girl, when I passed the chocolate sandwich cookies, laid hers very carefully by the side of her plate, looked up at me seriously, and said "I'll take that home to Momma" Another, just couldn't finish her piece of cake, and said to me, sadly, "If I just had a little piece of paper, I'd take that home to my baby brother." What can you do? I brought out some pieces of paper, and we made little packets of all that was left of the chocolate cookies and the mint bubbles, and when I started to give a third cookie to one of the children, she said, "No, give it to her. She has two little brothers, and I only have one." How old are they? Six, six and a half. If only I were as rich as they think I am, It's very sad to be looked up at so hopefully, and know you just can't do the wonderful things the American army taught them were possible to Americans.

I have the addresses safely in my hand bag next to my passport. I don't think I'll lose them. Your "Country House" possibly wonderful. I'm sure this are draw back to the rustic life, but even so it sounds mighty good. Sandy. It's always very pleasant to hear from you. Say a million thanks to those stamps. I'd been saving some to always with you.

Sometimes the girls they were trying to kiss would shriek and run, and then they'd get chased, which made it even more fun for everybody. Most of the girls didn't object to getting kissed. It wasn't that. But they had on their very nicest dresses, and the paint the boys were covered with rubbed off badly. Besides, it's fun to be chased. Of course, all the boys were being as ferocious as possible, in their best Indian style, but the thing that amazed me most of all was that with all their cutting up and seeming wild, they didn't do a single thing like painting any of the cars or shop windows, or actually hurt anything or anybody. A few glasses got broken in one cafe - not more than three, - but outside of that, they were the most peaceable bunch of wild Indians I ever saw.

About midnight, most of them were in the Salle de Wagram, and the grilles were closed. The ever-watchful agents de police who were thick all around the Salle chased the curious crowd away from the door, and things quieted down. We had a last beer in the only cafe we could find still open on the Champs, and headed back to our hotel.

Next day we did a little book buying we'd been wanting to do, and caught the evening train back to Mourmelon.

School is closed now, and the children are having such a good time playing outdoors. It is also the first sunny day in two weeks, and we are valuing it accordingly. The next thing on the McCann program is a week in Paris with all three children over the fourteenth. We planning to do so many things with them. We want to take them to the puppet shows that are given every afternoon in the Luxembourg gardens, and to see some of the lovely parks in Paris. The night of the fourteenth, we are invited to climb the dome of the Invalides with the Dorians, and from there we'll have a wonderful view of all the fireworks and the illuminated fountains, and the buildings that will be lit up for the occasion. It should be something that we'll all remember a long time. Gosh, how I hope it doesn't rain! Keep your fingers crossed on that for us.

Mom & Pops, my dears -

Thanks very much for your offer of cash, but I don't think we'll need it. The trust dissolves on my birthday, & Mr. Doyle is sending me a certified check to buy taxless checks with. We had thought of asking you for a loan so we could plan our trip to Denmark in July, but there wasn't time, and this check will arrive sooner than any money you could send. I hope. My papers are all signed & should be in Doyle's hands this week. Besides the money he's sending, he's depositing all the rest in our account where we can draw on it as necessary. The way we heard it, sleeping reservations have to be made on the trains three weeks ahead of time, & paid for when made, so we're expecting to go to Denmark sometime during the first week of August. Our plans are still a little Pops indefinite. Everything takes so terribly much planning & arranging.

Pops & dear, I'm so glad you wrote to your brother & Mrs. Michaelson. It's so good of you to take that much