

May 9, 1940

Dear people.

Two airmail letters have come from Poppa, & a letter from mama, which pleases me. Steve, was the official guardian of our mail until you begin sending letters to the Embassy, tells me he took two more home some days ago, & forgot them so that's nice.

Since I wrote you last we have been to Taylor Gannett's house for an evening, & for a dinner party. Taylor G. is James's new boss. He was recently married (Feb.) and his wife is a nice girl who graduated from the U. of Edinburgh, although she is American. Evidently an impatient "type" (as they say in French) she is already planning an infant. They have a big apartment in the Alma Section, but it is as nothing compared to ours, in beauty & likableness. What I envy them is their servant, whose name is Publio & who only speaks Spanish & his own version of French. Taylor G. used to be a consul in Ecuador, so he jabbars away with him. Being, as I think I brought home to you in my last letter, in straightened financial circumstances, I was forced to content myself & my social obligations by having the Gannetts to tea of a Sunday, thus deferring the eventual dinner party until such time as the money begins to roll in. This habit of paying employees once a month, rather than twice as it should be, is most boring!

The rent allowance I spoke of in my first communiqué is a delightful system for keeping the Embassy staff more than respectable lodgings, so that the natives will be properly impressed by the Grandeur of Our Great Country. It's a perfectly lovely idea! Maximum (I understand) for us is 40,000 francs a year, which is enough to buy your way into the Elysée Palace, & since we pay only 6000 per year, we are to receive 24,000 a year on general principles, unless we are forced to leave here for some more expensive place, in which case the allowance would go up. A great new piece of news is that the Embassy has just announced that it will give 50 francs to the dollar (N.Y. rate) rather than the French rate, 43 francs. Which raises our salary no little bit. So, all in all, the final result is that, as of this moment, we are to receive 80 dollars a month (approx.) which is 40,000 francs, and about 1700 francs for rent & house expenses. Which is not quite twice as much as we were getting at the U.P., which is in turn just lovely!

The girl I was going to teach English to went & got a job at the last moment, knocking in all our plans.

Steve and his girl now think they will get married in July, because his vacation comes then. She is a very nice girl, as I think I have mentioned, so we are going to let him do it.

James has been having some friends up to play bridge of an evening, which is nice because the friends feel it their duty to bring along two bottles of red as a peace offering, & then never drink it all up, so we profit!

I have been reading David Copperfield¹.

¹ *David Copperfield*, (full title: *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger of Blunderstone Rookery (Which He Never Meant to Publish on Any Account)*) is the eighth novel by Charles Dickens. It was first published as a serial in 1849–50, and as a book in 1850. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Copperfield, accessed 2015-11-29)

I am very worried about the fate of my masterpiece, receipt of which you have not as yet acknowledged. I am afraid the censors kept it. I have another copy, thank goodness.

Mrs. Jones, Sr. said in an air letter, that you have “very considerably” written them apropos of the new Job. Of course, we had written them also by airmail, but it was quite all right for you to do what you did.

Steve, Mary, some people at the church & we are planning to take a two day bicycle trip next Sunday & Monday. Everyone in France ceases work on Monday, because it is Pentecôte, whatever that is. We will probably go up the Marne. Mary & I have a plot on to keep the average speed of cycling down to 3 or four mph, being sissies. We want to go canoeing once we reach our destination.

I have finished Jude the Obscure². How T. Hardy hates women!

I must stay & have my frugal repast, it being noon.

Love and kisses,

Me

P.S. May 10 – Steve brought me your letters yesterday, one of which contained a very welcome check for 6000 francs. Nonetheless I’m glad I asked for the loan, because I am very anxious to stock up on some good clothes.

This is a sad & worried day for France³. Glad to hear you got the MSS.

Love, Me

² *Jude the Obscure*, the last completed of Thomas Hardy's novels, began as a magazine serial in December 1894 and was first published in book form in 1895. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude_the_Obscure, accessed 2015-11-29)

³ **May 10, 1940:** Nazis invade France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister. (<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/ww2time.htm> accessed 2015-11-29)

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Love's times,

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Love, me