

September 11 [1940]

That noon James said it was too late for the courier, and anyway I became annoyed with fruitless letter-writing. For three months we have had no letters from any of you, yet only a week ago we got a package – the Covermark Mother so sweetly sent. That came ordinary mail, so you could get us a letter through the State Dept. in a month at most. Other people at the Embassy get mail from the U.S., so all we can think is that you have all decided you hate us. We love you.

Lots of things have happened: ① Our birthdays celebrated quietly (you knew, didn't you that Darling's is on Sept. 3?) ② We will not starve this winter, even if we do freeze, because the Gov't. has arranged to send us complete supplies of food, tobacco (!!), soap, etc. We will get 25 lbs. of coffee, lots of sugar, meat, canned goods, oil, butter, chocolate, dried vegetables, and such like necessities, plus concentrated milk and 2 cartons a week of American cigarettes!! What bliss. Also soap for faces and for dishes. If only they could send over a little heat, also! For two weeks we had perfect weather, but now it is grey and cold, for winter is almost here.

We are glad we aren't in London. How unimaginably horrible war is!

We went to the Comédie Française last Sunday, and saw the Misanthrope of Molière, It was very good. We had met one of the ladies in the cast the night before, at our neighbors'. By the way, I think Jimmie's French is fast improving, because for at least an hour every day he speaks it with M. Minet. We are going to ask Mme. to take our picture, because she is a wonderful photographer. She just took the premier danseur at the Opéra, who is a nice chap in a dancer sort of way. They have very interesting friends, do our neighbors, and they are not at all "French", in the usual stuffy, formal, chilly way. M. Minet & Jones argue happily all the time in French. Pierre Minet thinks the only *raison d'être* of man is religion, spirituality – in short he is a mystical moralist, while all Jones worries about is the terrestrial betterment of mankind, so you can see they would argue forever. It's fine for J.'s French.

I've read all the English books within a mile, so I have had to resort to French. I read a Stefen Zweig translation, some Tchekhov stories, and the New Testament – oh, and that Flaubert novel, which looked sick beside Madame Bovary.

Kay Herrick is trying to get to Turkey, where she can have a job at the American Womens' College in Istanbul. Visas are pure gold, and you have to be a mining engineer to find them. We envy her. She says she is trying to escape from Maine, where she is considered by those in her original milieu as quite too daring and irresponsible. She wants to go around the world in easy stages.

The stamps, if they get to you, are for payment (very partial) of the Covermark. Please write to us, don't be discouraged. Three months, voyons!

Love,

Me