

May 13, 1940
Monday

Dear people,

You must think I've gone crazy over letter-writing, as a *great* change. It is the present situation which produces this strange phenomenon, I think, and in this particular instance, a desire 1) to thank you for your admirable calm 2), to tell you about the nice Sunday we spent.

Owing to the situation, henceforth to be referred to as factor S, the French Government called off[f] the usual Pentecôte holiday, which was to have been today. So the Embassy called off its holiday too, and Steven decided to work all day Sunday because they are having such a rush at the U.P. So we had to un-hire our bicycles, & stay at home instead of going on the trip we had planned.

Saturday afternoon we didn't do very much, other than take a trip to the Libe, walk from there to the Church, have a Ping-pong battle, come home, get supper, go to bed, get up again for the alerte. Sunday was a beautiful, sunny day, so we decided we would go to the Flea Market to have a look at it, since neither of us had ever seen it. But we couldn't remember how to get to it, so after breakfast we walked to the Café Flore¹ where some of our friends are practically always to be found (although many of the people who go there come under Jimmie's strict censure, as being "bums", whatever he means by that). There we had a coffee & talked to Sam Dashiell from the U.P. He was sitting down on the Terrace with Vincent Sheehan (? spelling?) the famous gent, & two of our friends. Vincent S. was very sleepy & still quite a bit drunk, so we went right on to the Flea Market, where we wandered about for two hours at least, fascinated by all the junk. The place proves that you can sell anything. After that we walked over to Montmartre (where I had *never* been before!) saw Sacré Coeur, & the old section. I was pleased and amazed at the picturesqueness, which I didn't know existed in Paris anymore. We sat down on a square where the neighboring cafés have established tables & umbrellas, & drank red as we listened and looked. Fun! Then Jones & I went to the U.P. to see what had happened. Nothing, relatively speaking. On to the church, where we played a fast game or two of doubles in ping pong, had dinner, came home, to bed. Alerte at midnight. Alerte at the usual hour, 6:30 A.M. All very sleep-destroying. Everyone says the war is here at last, but people are much calmer than in September. All the French soldiers who come to the Church are going back today or tomorrow, all leaves being cancelled. God, it's awful. One particular boy I have spoken to a lot on his permissions, was one of these French-American children who elect nationality at 21. He chose French because he had a good job here, and now has legitimate regrets, poor boy. He has promised us a puppy when he breeds his dog, who is a charming mongrel. Both of us would like a dog. Francis (that's his name –

¹ Café de Flore. 172, boulevard Saint-Germain-des-Prés... [see street-view below]

Cover None. Prices Be prepared to spend €5 for a café crème. Dress Casual.

Hours Daily, 7:30 a.m.–1:30 a.m.

WHO GOES THERE Regulars, tourists, intellectuals, neighbors.

WHAT GOES ON One of the key landmarks in literary Paris, Café de Flore was founded in 1865 and named after a statue to the goddess of flowers, which no longer sits outside. If you feel like watching Saint-Germain Parisians in an original Art Deco setting, come to the Flore and nurse a coffee or glass of wine. The prices are high, but it's not every day that you can hang out in the digs of Apollinaire, André Breton, Picasso, and above all Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, who wrote here regularly because it was heated. The tradition continues – intellectuals, filmmakers, and philosophers stop in often. ...

IF YOU GO Weather permitting, sit on the terrace, order a café crème, and plan to while away a leisurely hour or two.

- from David Applefield, *The Unofficial Guide to Paris*, 6th edition, 2010, p. 436.

the boy, not the dog) doesn't know what to do with his dog now he is leaving for good. He has been on sick permission for four months.

Did I tell you we saw Picasso a few nights ago, at the Café Flore? He hangs out there. I want so much for the U.S. to stay out of this that I can't talk about it. I must peel a few potatoes.

Love,
Me



Photo 1 Café de Flore. 172, boulevard Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris 75006.
Google Street View

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(F-51)
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