

American consulate
Milan, Italy
March 30, 1941

Dear Sarah:

Your letter of March 6th arrived on the 23rd, and I am glad to note that the time for the transmission of airmail has been decreasing recently, due probably to improved weather over the Atlantic. However, improved weather over the Atlantic doesn't help us much here. Today is one of those days I wrote of being afraid of the last time. The heat has now been cut off for two weeks at home, and one week at the Consulate, and today is cold and rainy. There doesn't seem to be any way to get warm except by going to bed, and I'm not quite willing to do that yet. There may be more than the usual number of typographical errors because of stiff fingers.

There is really remarkably little to write about. You in America know more about political developments in Italy than the Europeans do. I was just thinking the other day how I would like to see the New York Times, to get a better picture of what is going on in Yugoslavia. The local press has carried next to nothing, so I am dependent for news on the radio, which would hardly be called reliable, and the Basler Nachrichten which has no correspondent in Belgrade and gets only the news that filters through to Budapest, where their Balkan correspondent holds forth. American newspapers are probably the most informative in the world and the American people have a better opportunity to know what is happening than any other people. Our press may have its faults and its prejudices, but it comes a lot closer to printing "news" than the press of any European country except Switzerland, and there they are handicapped by lack of funds and fears of stepping – even lightly – on the toes of their powerful neighbors. The fact that Basler Nachrichten can be sold in Italy should be ample evidence of its inoffensive character, from the Italian point of view. It is said to be banned in Germany, however.

I was very glad to hear that you have been giving such a marvelous series of dinners. I have just read over your letter, and my mouth is watering. I know that the praise you have received is well deserved. The whole business sounds very sophisticated. I am particularly glad to hear that you serve wine with the duck; I think that wine adds a great deal to meats of all kinds, and I imagine that you can get American wines of satisfactory qualities is rather inexpensively. I wish I could send you a few bottles of Chianti "Stravecchio"; it would be fun to have an Italian dinner sometime; the Chianti is perfect for spaghetti and other forms of "pasta", and also good with tasty meat. If I might be permitted to suggest a slight addition, it would be to add cognac or brandy to the liqueurs for those who don't care for the sweet liquors or prefer the stronger ones. If you can't get French cognac anymore you might try the Spanish "Fundador" brandy which I have seen advertised quite a bit recently in the American magazines. Incidentally, I discovered recently something in the liqueur field which I had never suspected before; namely, that the best cherry brandy is made in Copenhagen with the brand name "Hering". It is nothing like any cherry brandy I ever had before, as it is sweet without being cloying, and it leaves no unpleasant sweet, sticky taste in the mouth. It is still being sold here, but costs from \$4-\$5 per bottle. The price given in my prewar Freeport catalog is \$1.35. I've been lucky enough to collect, by devious means, a few liqueurs for after dinner when I have company. I have two bottles of French cognac, one good, the other very good. I found some Cointreau for sale here last summer, which I got for only two or three times what it is worth. There seems to be a good supply of the Bénédictine around and it sells for only £. 75 (\$3.75) which probably isn't much if any more than

you now have to pay for it at home. I still have a little of the Scotch left that I brought with me, and it is literally worth its weight in gold. When it can be found here, the cost is \$12.50 for Johnny Walker Red Label, which as you know is not a superlative brand by any means.

While speaking of supplies of this and that, I might mention that we now hope to receive some supplies from the U.S. within the fairly near future (two or three months). These supplies were ordered in January en masse by the embassy, and they are supposed to have been shipped on a Panama flagged ship which sailed recently from New York under charter to the Swiss Board of Commerce and Trade. I heard last night that 6 tons of stuff arrived which have been ordered by officers (Consulates) in Switzerland and is now awaiting shipment in Genoa. Whether ours came on that boat or will arrive by a later one which left New York March 15th, I don't know. There are many hurdles still in the way, and judging by past experience, it may be a long time before the goods actually get to the ultimate consumer. Included will be flour, sugar, coffee, cigarettes and other necessities of life.

I hope you have good luck with the maid. I sure wish I could send you over one. Mine gets \$10 a month with room and board and does everything – cooking, shopping, washing, ironing, pressing, etc. And she does everything well and is that as honest as the day is long. She is unusually good even for here, and I would be glad to double her salary if necessary to keep her.

I hope this will find you well and that Daddy has not had any more trouble with his appendix. Also that Melody has been well and is enjoying her schoolwork. I am well and take two Squibbs vitamin A and D tablets every day just for the hell of it.

Love and best wishes to all,

Air mail

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
March 30, 1941

Dear Sarah:

Your letter of March 6th arrived on the 23rd, and I am glad to note that the time for the transmission of air mail has been decreasing recently, due probably to improved weather over the Atlantic. However, improved weather over the Atlantic doesn't help us much here. Today is one of those days I wrote of being afraid of the last time. The heat has now been off for two weeks at home, and one week at the Consulate, and today is cold and rainy. There doesn't seem to be any way to get warm except by going to bed, and I'm not quite willing to do that yet. There may be more than the usual number of typographical errors because of stiff fingers.

There is really remarkably little to write about. You know more about political developments in ~~America~~ ^{Europe} than the Europeans do. I was just thinking the other day how I would like to see the New York Times, to get a better picture of what has gone on in Yugoslavia. The local press has carried next to nothing, so I am dependent for news on the radio, which would hardly be called reliable, and the Basler Nachrichten, which has no correspondent in Belgrade and gets only the news that filters through to Budapest, where their Balkan correspondent holds forth. American newspapers ~~are~~ are probably the most informative in the world, and the American people have a better opportunity to know what is happening than any other people. Our press may have its faults and its prejudices, but it comes a lot closer to printing "news" than the press of any European country except Switzerland, and there they are handicapped by lack of funds and fear of stepping - even lightly - on the toes of their powerful neighbors. The fact that the Basler Nachrichten can be sold in Italy should be ample evidence of its inoffensive character, from the Italian point of view. It is said to be banned in Germany, however.

I was very glad to hear that you have been giving such a marvelous series of dinners. I have just read over your letter, and my mouth is watering. I know that the praise you have received is well deserved. The whole business sounds very sophisticated. I am particularly glad to hear that you served wine with the duck; I think wine adds a great deal to meats of all kinds, and I imagine that you can get American wines of satisfactory qualities rather inexpensively. I wish I could send you a few bottles of Chianti "Stravecchio"; it would be fun to have an Italian dinner some time; the Chianti is perfect for spaghetti and other forms of "pasta", and also good with tasty meat. If I might be permitted to suggest a slight addition, it would be to add a cognac or brandy to the liqueurs for those who don't care for sweet liqueurs or prefer the stronger ones. If you can't get French cognac any more,

you might try the Spanish "Fundador" brandy, which I have seen advertised quite a bit recently in the American magazines. Incidentally, I discovered recently something in the liqueur field which I had never suspected before; namely, that the best cherry brandy is made in Copenhagen ~~byvtnu~~ with the brand name "Hering". It is nothing like any cherry brandy I ever had before, as it is sweet without being cloying, and it leaves no unpleasant sweet, sticky taste in the mouth. It is still being sold here, but costs from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per bottle. The price given in my pre-war free port catalog is \$1.35. I have been lucky enough to collect, by devdous means, a few liqueurs for after-dinner when I have company. I have two bottles of French cognac, one good, the other very good. I found some Cointreau on sale here last summer, which I got for only two or three times what it is worth. There seems to be a good supply of Benedictine around, and it sells for only L. 75 (\$3.75) which probably isn't much if any more than you now have to pay at home. I still have a little of the Scotch left that I brought with me, and it is literally worth its weight in gold. When it can be found here, the cost is \$12.50 for Johnny Walker Red Label, which, as you know, is not a superlative brand by any means.

While speaking of supplies of this and that, I might mention that we now hope to receive some supplies from the U.S. within the fairly-near future (two or three months). These supplies were order in January en masse by the Embassy, and they are supposed to have been shipped on a Panama flag ship which sailed recently from New York under charter to the Swiss Board of Commerce and Trade. I heard last night that six tons of stuff arrived which had been ordered by offices *(Consulates)* in Switzerland and is now awaiting shipment in Genoa. Whether ours came on that boat or will arrive by a later one which left New York March 15th, I don't know. There are many hurdles still in the way, and judging by past experience, it may be a long time before the goods actually get to the ultimate consumer. Included will be flour, sugar, coffee, cigarettes and other necessities of life.

I hope you will have good luck with the maid. I sure wish I could send you over one. Mine gets \$10 a month with room and board and does everything - cooking, shopping, washing, ironing, pressing, etc. And she does everything well, and is as honest as the day is long. She is unusually good, even for here, and I would be glad to double her salary if necessary to keep her.

I hope this will find you well, and that Daddy has not had any more trouble with his appendix. Also that Melody has been well and is enjoying her school work. I am well and take two Squibbs vitamin A and D tablets every day, just for the hell of it.

Love and best wishes to all,