

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
April 13, 1941

Dearest Ninnie:

I am writing you on a beautiful, moderately warm Easter Sunday to say how shocked and sorry I was to learn, through a letter from Sarah, of your accident. It really bowled me off my feet, although not so much as it appears to have done to you. I know how utterly annoying it must be to you, for I suppose you will have to be in bed for several weeks, and even months. But I also know that you will keep up your courage, and Sarah says Lewis Mitchell says that this is the most important thing to do. You certainly have had more than your share of trouble and sorrow, but it has given you strength of character and what the preachers like to call "Christian fortitude", and I haven't the slightest doubt that you will come through all right in the end. Sarah didn't mention how the accident happened; when you are able, I hope you will write and tell me all about it.

There is just one other thing. I know that this will cause you a great deal of extra expense. If you need any help, please let me know. I don't suppose I could send any tremendous sum, but what I can do, I will.

Your letter of February 2nd didn't arrive until March 27th – a very long time even for these days. You see now how unnecessary it was for you to worry about my safety; as it turned out, you were in much greater danger than I. We haven't had any riots in Milan; that whole story appears to have been invented by someone for some unknown reason. Quite the contrary: it has been peaceful and quiet. We haven't had any air raid alarms recently.

You asked about the climate here. You are quite correct in assuming that it was warmer than Stuttgart, although Stuttgart is certainly mild and often avoids the extremes of the U.S. Here, I am glad to say, Spring comes much earlier than it did in Stuttgart, or Boston, or Hanover. Right now the air is mild and the leaves are beginning to show plainly on the trees. There is, however, certain crispness in the air which prevents a person from being too warm. It is comfortable in the sun. According to the regulations our heating came to an end March 15, and we have experienced some rather chilly time since then. Actually, the latter part of March was nicer than the first part of April when there was a great deal of rain. Without the heat, houses became very damp, and it was, on the whole, very unpleasant. When I read at home at night, I have to cover my feet and my legs with a knitted Ottoman, which only partially keeps out the cold. My apartment, unfortunately, is faced by another large building which completely cuts off the sun from the living quarters. The kitchen and maid's room gets some sun in the afternoon, but this doesn't do me much good. I expect, though, that by the first of May it will be warm enough outside to make living without heating comfortable.

About the temperature, Milan is moderately cold in winter. The temperature in December and January is generally near freezing. There is little snow, and the snow melts almost immediately after falling, although it can be nasty for a while. After the middle of February come the first hints of spring. I remember February 22nd particularly as a warm, sunny day. While March is a little unsettled, the general trend of the temperature is upward, and we have better weather in March here than in the States. April is usually a wet month, and May too, isn't always the thing of beauty we expect. By the end of May however, it begins to get hot, and during June, July and August the heat can be rather unpleasant. Most people who can, leave Milan at this time, and the

week which contains 15 August is traditionally a holiday for the shopkeepers. Milan really becomes a dead city at that time, and probably doesn't have more than a third of its normal population of over a million. After the 15th of August, the heat breaks, and we have a slow and generally pleasant descent into fall and winter. In the winter, the city is almost continually shrouded in fog, and that, together with the blackout, has made it none too nice this year.

I really haven't done anything recently which is worth writing about. Outside of work, there hasn't been much to do. At night, I generally read and listened to the radio. I have, however, joined some of my colleagues in taking season tickets to the Scala, and we have enjoyed the opera season very much indeed. Altogether, I saw 15 operas which was an experience for me in as much as I have never had the opportunity to go before, and I would never be able to afford opera in the United States. Actually, I don't care an awful lot for it, but I am learning to appreciate it much more than I did at first. At present, they are having a concert series, also at the Scala, featuring symphonic music, the Scala chorus and soloists. I prefer the selections which are purely instrumental.

I don't know exactly what I am going to do this summer, besides work, of course. I will probably be able to get a vacation for at least two weeks, but I don't care much about traveling unless I have someone to go to see or to travel with me. Then, too, with the rapid extension of the war, the areas where one can travel are rather limited. I had thought of going to Budapest, where I have a friend in the Legation, but now that the transit across Yugoslavia is blocked, I doubt that I can go. There are many parts of Italy I would like to see, and perhaps I can make some arrangements. In any case, I hope to hear soon of your rapid recovery. You know that my best wishes are always with you and dear Aunt Vonie, who I hope is bearing up under the strain.

Much love to you both. *William*

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You asked about the climate here. You were quite correct in assuming that it was warmer than Stuttgart, although Stuttgart is certainly mild enough and avoids the extremes of temperature which are such a common feature of life in the North of the U.S. Here, I am glad to say, Spring comes much earlier than it did in Stuttgart, or Boston, or Hanover. Right now the air is mild and the leaves are beginning to show plainly on the trees. There is, however, a certain briskness in the air which prevents a person from being too warm. It is comfortable in the sun. According the regulations, our heating came to an end March 15th, and we have experienced some rather chilly times since then. Actually, the latter part of March was nicer than the first part of April, when there was a great deal of rain. Without the heat, the houses became very damp, and it was, on the whole, very unpleasant. When I read at home at night, I have to cover my feet and legs with a knitted ottoman, which only partially keeps out of cold. My apartment, unfortunately,

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Milan, Italy
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Miami, Florida

S.U.A.



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