

AMERICAN CONSULATE  
Milan, Italy  
April 18, 1941

Dear folks:

Sarah's letter of March 21<sup>st</sup> and Daddy's of March 24<sup>th</sup> have now arrived, and of course I was delighted to hear from both of you. It was sad, however, to hear that Ninnie had broken her hip. As a matter of fact, I have delayed writing to you in order to write to her a note last Sunday, which I hope will cheer her up a bit. Broken hips really seem to run in her family, and I am very glad that Aunt Vonie has managed to escape so far. Poor Ninnie; I had just received a letter from her saying how worried she was about my safety. I pointed out in my reply that she shouldn't worry, that I was obviously safer than she was.

Since my last letter we have had another visit from the Ambassador. He was just as charming as ever, and is now recovered from his cold. He seemed to be stronger generally than he was before. This time I had a nice chance to talk to him because Mr. Schnare had a luncheon for him to which I was invited. I don't recall anything especial about what he said, or that I could repeat in a letter, but it was pleasant all around. The purpose of his visit was to meet his wife, who had just come over from the U.S. She was delayed in Geneva waiting for her baggage to arrive from France, so that the ambassador stayed a day longer than he had expected to.

Just after they started giving Yugoslavia the business, we had our first anti-American demonstrations here at the consulate. The first wind we got was when we arrived on Monday morning and found about 20 uniformed police gathered in the ground floor of the consulate building, while outside there was a mob of plain-clothes men. Not much happened Monday so Tuesday they were back again. During the morning, there were two small demonstrations of students at the Yugoslav consulate, and shortly therefore they gathered in front of our building to which their attention was directed by the squad of police who lined up along the curb in a formation designed prevent the admission of any demonstrators into the building, and yelled some insulting remarks about Mr. Roosevelt. To be specific, they called him a "porco" (pig), which is considered pretty insulting here. After a few minutes, they went away. There was a notable lack of enthusiasm in the crowd, and no one ventured to yell for war. The students know they would have to fight then. I have heard that, when a group of students were invited to volunteer after an inspiring rally in Trieste, five came forward and the rest slunk away into a side street. The gilded youth of whom Sarah often speaks are by no means confined to the U.S. On the other hand, I don't blame the boys for not wanting to fight; they don't stage the demonstrations voluntarily anyway, but only on suggestion from the party officials. Today, the outside gate of the building was closed again for a while, and we thought the boys would be around again, but they didn't show up. Incidentally, our only regret in the first demonstration was that no one in the consulate had a camera ready, as we would've liked very much to have a picture of the scene. I hope very much that the authorities will order another one soon, as we are now prepared.

I shall bear in mind Sarah's suggestion about vases for the mantelpiece and also the Dresden china. I should be very glad indeed to bring these things back with me if I come in the normal course of events. Under present circumstances, however, I may have to leave very suddenly with a very limited amount of baggage, in which case I wouldn't have room. As a matter of fact, I would then have to leave without my radio and most of my books. Perhaps it would be a good idea to remind me in about a year, if I am still here, and the war is over. If the war ends, I might be able to get home in the summer of '42 - unless, of course, you will be coming over here.

I have just seen in a radio bulletin that the D. A. R. Convention has been opened with an address by a diplomat, so I suppose the family seat has temporarily been moved to Washington. How I envy you! With all its high rents and low salaries I think I would rather be in Washington than anywhere else in the world. I hope the convention was interesting and now more Tory than usual. When you write next, please give my best to Curt, Mary and Karlchen. That reminds me. I'm slowly but surely losing the slight capacity I once had to speak German. The Hungarian Consul General called up this morning and spoke in German and I got lost in the middle of my first sentence. No more "Sprachgefuehl".

I am most sorry to hear that the experimental well drilled turned out to be a dry hole. That certainly will make it harder to keep the place up; I hope they will try another, as Daddy suggested, and perhaps they will have better luck this time. I should be very sorry to see the place sold, as I have so many sentimental memories of my boyhood centered there, but of course sentiment shouldn't be allowed to interfere with an economic necessity. Glad to hear that Bob reports things humming at Fort Knox. Great things depend on what our boys in the Army and in the factories are doing, or are going to do.

I'm afraid I shall have to cut this a little short as it is now time for me to leave the office. I am going to spend the week-end at Bellagio, a beautiful location on the Lake of Como. My hostess will be the Princess della Torre e Tasso, an American who married a title some years ago. She is a very pleasant elderly lady, dignified without affectation, and her estate there is a showplace. Incidentally, the name given above is the Italian version of Thurn und Taxis, a family of which Sarah doubtless has heard. I shall report my week-end in my next. Love and best wishes to all,

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