

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

March 23, 1939
Stuttgart

Dearest Ninnie and Aunt Vonie,

I ought to be shot for delaying so long in answering your two nice letters, especially since you were so kind as to send me \$5.00 for Christmas. It is true that we have been very busy, but I really have no excuse, especially after your second letter arrived, so I will just say that I am terribly sorry and that I'll try to do better next time.

Your Christmas letter with the money arrived December 22 - just in time. We had a lovely picture Christmas here, and you have already read from Jennie Owen's letter

2. how I celebrated it. I really enjoyed myself much more than I thought I would, the reason being, I suppose, that I was where children were all the time.

Right at this very moment I am envying you your warm climate even more than usual. Although this is theoretically the second day of Spring, it has been snowing more or less continuously during the last three days. The snow is not staying on the streets, but melts periodically making it very wet and nasty. There is a strong, cold, wet wind that is very penetrating. Altogether, Spring is getting off to a bad start. I wish, though, people, when I came home this evening, I found no one here, no fire in the heater, and no coal to make one with. It can't be over 68° in this room, and I have a sort of comfort

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around me trying to keep from freezing. This isn't
 the first time this has happened, and I am
 very annoyed. (S-27 P 3/7)

In your letter you inquired whether
 it was dangerous to express your opinion and
 whether I could write what I want to.
 I do not think you need hesitate to say
 anything you wish when you write to me, and
 I have been expressing my opinion very freely
 in letters. So far as I know, only one of my
 letters addressed to the Consulate has been
 inspected and only one on the way out. They
 are powerless to touch me so long as I only
 write and talk freely to foreigners: if I were
 to "propagandize" among Germans, it would be
 a breach of international etiquette, and the
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would be more than happy to explain it to them - with gestures! (S-27 p4/7)

For instance, I might tell them that I think the seizure of the rump of Czechoslovakia that was left after the October paring was a disgraceful procedure.

I am inclined to believe that the real reason why Hitler decided to reconsider his promises of only a few months ago was the difficult economic situation in which the country now finds itself. Dr. Rudolf Brinkmann, the second man in the economics ministry, has recently gone on extended leave of absence because of an alleged nervous breakdown, and he is reported to have said some very peculiar things. Among them was that it would be impossible for Germany to continue the present rate of steel production for the armaments program,

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and that each cannon was costing Germany about eight times as much as what other countries pay, because of the use of expensive substitute materials to avoid imports. While of course I have no way of telling whether they can keep it up or not, I do know that they have gone to great extremes in attempting to get more iron. Nearly all the iron park railings in Germany have disappeared: they are probably occupying a place of honor in one of the new frontiers in the form of snappy new anti-aircraft guns. Besides the shortages I mentioned in my former letter, there is now a scarcity of coffee, and all the cafés are displaying signs "Save coffee - drink tea." I now have cocoa instead of coffee for breakfast about twice a week on the average,

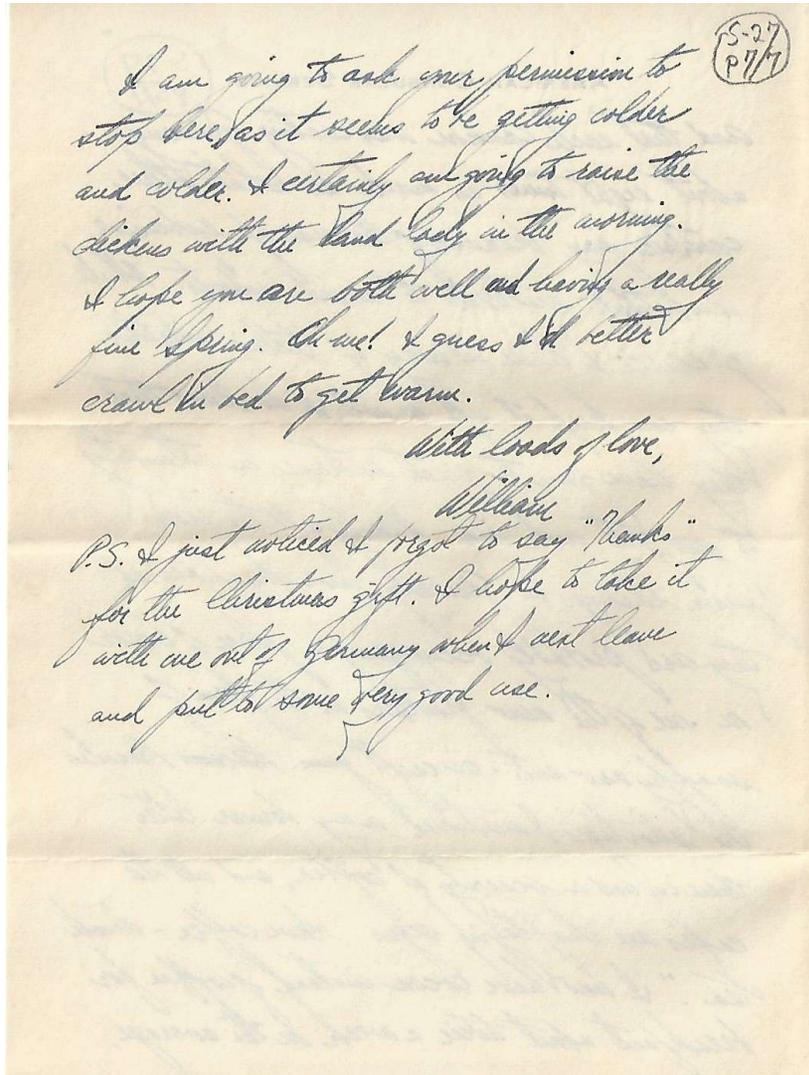
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which I do not really object to. One sign (S-27 P6/7) reading "The German man drinks tea" was so absurd it was taken down, as the Germans have always been great coffee drinkers and care only moderately about tea.

Of one thing we can be quite sure: this mad armament race is impoverishing the people of every country, and its continuance is sheerest folly. Germany is forced into these mad international flings in the attempt to gain more raw materials to support his armament programs, and the rest of the world promptly follows suit by building more and more. Eventually some one will go too far, and the terrible war will start which will mean the end of European civilization and the economic disruption of the entire world. Not a pleasant prospect, is it? But to date there appears no light on the horizon.

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I am going to ask your permission to stop here as it seems to be getting colder and colder. I certainly am going to raise the dickens with the land lady in the morning. I hope you are both well and having a really fine Spring. Oh me! I guess I'd better crawl in bed to get warm

With loads of love,

William

P.S. I just noticed I forgot to say "Thanks" for the Christmas gift. I hope to take it with me out of Germany when I next leave and put to some very good use.

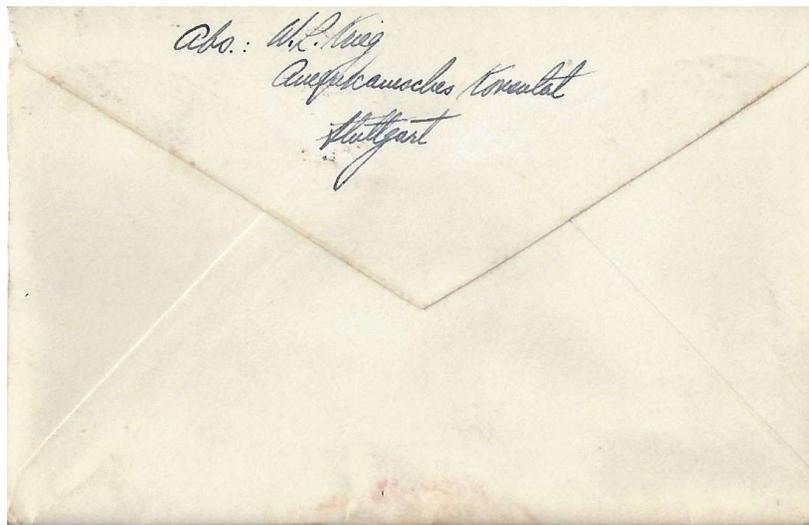


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Über Havre, mit Dampfer Normandie



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