

17 Rue St. Romain'  
Dec. 30, '39

Dear People,

We are installed in our grand new jernt, which is even lovier [?lovlier] than we first thought. It snowed 8 inches the day before yesterday, so all the furniture and shrubbery on the terrace is covered in what Helen would call a "deep blanket of snow". So are the roof and chimneys we look out on, but the streets are just slushy and wet, as usual. This morning when I got up, there was a beam of sunshine coming in the French windows, and for a moment I wondered what that strange discoloration was – which comes of not having seen the sun since<sup>2</sup>...

...as ever ... struggles in regards to ... not in ... find must needs before... Hello ... new circumstances ... my pets.

As I've said, gifts of things would soon land us in the local equivalent of the poor house. It was the usual struggle to interpret Helen's handwriting, but Jimmy has become accustomed to deciphering hieroglyphics through reading Pertimax's output each evening. He's even more cryptic than Helen, and refuses to come near typewriters. On the strength of the check, (which fortunately we were well able to read!!) I sallied forth to the best hairdresser's and got a permanent, so that I now sport curly locks. It set me back to 256 francs, which is a huge pile of money. I am also going to purchase a hat, because James is getting tired of the one my room-mate gave me last spring, which is tragic because I am still quite fond of it. I shall get a hat that will agree with my new armored dress, which I am passionately fond of, and have to be torn out of, screaming.

Christmas Day James had off, oh frabjious day! It was also our first day in the new jernt, so we spent the afternoon lounging about "contempting" as we say, then went to a free tea at the church...

...and [it] is natural that ... that cup of lusciousness ... coffee at café ... Paris

...Paris, but then we all had to walk home in the cold because there weren't as many taxis as there were Parisian Revelers. The place looked especially comfortable & luxurious when we finally found it in the dark. Great place to keep neat and beautiful, & to come back to of an evening.

Because of the distance from the office, we are having our Meal at midnight, when James comes home from work. I miss not seeing him twice or three times during the day, but it's the price we have to pay. This jernt is really furnished completely – the valet came around yesterday to show me the ins and outs. The hair-dryer and frigidaire I appreciate especially, to say nothing of the wealth of pots, pans, dishes, huge towels, blankets, etc. We only hope those friends of the owner don't come in February.

On Tuesday morning James got the cable from Helen, Ruth & Pat, & asked me who were my girlfriends. It was nice of you girls to send it.

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<sup>1</sup> StreetView photos of this address from the decade of 2010 are included at the end of this letter.

<sup>2</sup> This letter was torn roughly in half with some of the contents lost; it was "repaired" by Philinda in later life using masking tape. As you would expect, this rendered much of the letter illegible. I include what we have been able to decipher with relative certainty. She wrote on the back of the second sheet, in her somewhat shaky later handwriting, "It wasn't done by censors (too early) looks like a Rat!" referring to the irregular pieces of paper removed from the center of the pages, where they had been folded in half.

I got a nice letter from Mama a few days ago. The Bread pudding I made, but I will have to increase the wet ingredients in the future. I am planning to turn out some oatmeal cookies...

[...missing text...]

I've just finished *A Well of Loneliness*<sup>3</sup>, which I liked very much, and am now hard at *All Passion Spent*<sup>4</sup>, which is delightfully calm little number whose main ~~characters amount~~ (can't seem to spell it right) well then personages, are all over 80 and glad of it.

Thank you, Helen, for the letter & check & recipes. Fine things.

Love & kisses

Me

Number 17

Rue St. Romain  
about 2013



Entrance to  
17 Rue St. Romain  
about 2013

<sup>3</sup> *The Well of Loneliness* "is a 1928 lesbian novel by the British author Radclyffe Hall. It follows the life of Stephen Gordon, an Englishwoman from an upper-class family whose 'sexual inversion' (homosexuality) is apparent from an early age." From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Well\\_of\\_Loneliness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Well_of_Loneliness), accessed 2014-11-23

<sup>4</sup> *All Passion Spent* "is a literary fiction novel by Vita Sackville-West. Published in 1931, it is one of Sackville-West's most popular works and has been adapted for television by the BBC. This charming and gentle novel addresses people's, especially women's, control of their own lives, a subject about which Sackville-West was greatly concerned..." From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All\\_Passion\\_Spent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_Passion_Spent), accessed 2014-11-23

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Thank you, Helen, for the letters & checks &  
recipes. Truly  
Love & kisses

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