

Feb. 21, 1940

Dear people,

Today the package from Peck & Peck came, and was received with open arms. Because the things hadn't been worn, they cost 130 francs including fees, but then you can't buy 6 pairs of good silk stockings for less than 150 francs, let alone a good cashmere sweater! So far everything has come over safely – sooner or later. All it takes is patience, apparently. You people are angels to go to such bother, but I do appreciate the things when they arrive. I just appreciate and appreciate! But it must be an incredible lot of trouble, etc. on the other end. Thank you, Mama.

The luffly black cashmere sweater just fits exactly and will come in very handy both now and later in the year. I have had my suits cleaned, and my grey coat cleaned and repaired, in hopes that spring is just around the corner. I will have quite an extensive wardrobe if it ever does come, (spring, I mean) compared to my winter condition, since I came here with a spring outfit, totally unprepared for cold weather.

Last Sunday until seven Steve worked for Jimmie, so we went to a movie! We saw an old French film which was very good, at a tiny movie joint a block away from the Hotel Trianon Palace¹. We've been just deluged with movies recently, because about a week ago Steven stayed on a few extra hours because his girl was away anyway, so we saw Mr. Smith au Sénat.² Steve is a fine friend to us, and the movie was very good.

Today I went out to Neuilly³ to see a friend of mine who has been sick in bed for 5 months. She hasn't moved one leg since the day she went to the hospital, poor thing. Her name is Mrs. Clifford de Roode. I mention it because her husband is an officer in the French aviation now, and was in the Lafayette Escadrille during the last war. His name and pictures of him have been blossoming forth on every paper for the last 4 months, so maybe they have penetrated to the U.S. also. He accepted an honorary officership after the last war, but it later appeared that the title was more than honorary because he was mobilized in September. Since his business is here, he thot it the better part of valor to let it go at that. The lady is very nice and came originally from southern Ohio.

I have only two more volumes of Men of Good Will to read, having finished Verdun, so Jules Romains⁴ had better get busy and turn out some more. The ones I just finished (put in one volume and called The Battle in English) were excellent, and while I wouldn't go as far as some of the reviewers and say they are the final word on the war, they certainly are up to the author's high standard. The man is an encyclopedia in fictional form.

¹ Probably not the present-day Hotel Trianon Palace, which is in the town of Versailles, 13 miles from the center of Paris. More likely what is now the Best Western Trianon Rive Gauche Hôtel, 1 Rue de Vaugirard in the center of Paris.

² The French edition of this film, released January 19, 1940, was actually titled *Monsieur Smith au Sénat*. The American original, which premiered October 19, 1939, was *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. It was based on a novel by Lewis R. Foster, produced by Frank Capra, directed by Lionel Banks, and featured James Stewart and Jean Arthur.

³ Neuilly-sur-Seine is a suburb of Paris about five miles from the center.

⁴ **Jules Romains**, born Louis Henri Jean Farigoule (August 26, 1885 – August 14, 1972), was a French poet and writer and the founder of the Unanimism literary movement. His works include the play *Knock ou le Triomphe de la médecine*, and a cycle of works called *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* (*Men of Good Will*). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jules_Romains, accessed 2015-03-01.

Whoever told you clothes had gone down in price in France is a liar. It was probably the newspapers: somebody short of copy thought that would make a good story sure to pass the censor.

James says there is a letter from pop waiting at the office, so I'll finish this tomorrow.

Next day

The letter was from Jan. 29 and was a very nice one, poppa. Jimmie & I did all the puzzle-games. James got 40 on the Literary I.Q. thing, which beat you by five. I didn't do it, thus preserving a deep silence in re my literary I.Q. But he thought Elsie Dinsmore⁵ was a character in some Russian novel, which proves something. James thought that Reno was the capital of Nevada⁶, because he didn't have you for a father, poor thing.

I was so relieved to know you had received notice from the U.S. Lines⁷. So was the U.S. Lines office in Paris, which was being hounded by me & us. I felt that the money would probably come in handy for you in some obscure way.

We haven't read Wind Sand & Stars⁸. It seems to have made less stir here than in the U.S. The main purpose of quite a few French novelists, etc. is to get their works translated into English so as to make money. But books are much cheaper here than at home, where they are artificially high, it seems to me.

I will enclose a letter which was supposed to have been on its way long ago to mother.

Lovingly

Me

⁵ **Elsie Dinsmore** is a children's book series written by Martha Finley (1828–1909) between 1867 and 1905. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsie_Dinsmore accessed 2015-03-01.

⁶ The capital of Nevada is Carson City.

⁷ **U.S. Lines** had agreed to refund to her father in New York the price of Philinda's ticket from France to the U.S. on the *Roosevelt*, which she did not use when she decided to stay in France and marry Jimmie Jones. The saga of this ticket and refund begins in her letter of 1939-09-25 (F-09).

⁸ ***Wind, Sand and Stars*** (French title: *Terre des hommes*) is a memoir by the French aristocrat aviator-writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and a winner of several literary awards. It was first published in France in February 1939, and was then translated by Lewis Galantière and published in English by Reynal and Hitchcock in the United States later the same year. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind,_Sand_and_Stars accessed 2015-03-01.

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