

Aug. 15, 1940.
(Day of the Assumption¹)

Dear Daddy & Momma & everyone,

Since you refuse to do as I suggested & write to us % the State Dep't., I suppose I'll have to work off my frustrations by writing to you. Also I promise faithfully not² even to suggest a word of politics in all the letter: There now, aren't you immensely relieved?

We wonder if you are getting most or all of our mail. I do so hope you received my first long one, because it was such a fine and complete letter.

Last night we were thinking about the changes in life here in Paris. I'm sure we did not think of all the differences that exist now, for the reason that one's mind becomes so quickly adjusted to new situations these days that it is most difficult to remember the conditions of life only six months ago. Here is a partial list of the things which would come back or go out if normal conditions were restored.

(1) Taxis, buses and all the metro stations would be in service once more. A large city without taxis & buses with only three modes of transportation other than the most ancient and honorable – the foot! We never can avail ourselves of the reduced metro, or if we are lucky, our faithful bicycle or if we chance to have one, our horse.

(2) Private cars would circulate once more. Now only doctors, midwives, and people hauling food may run their cars.

(3) The city and country-side would be lit up at nite. It is almost a year now since I have seen the lights of the city.

(4) One would see croissants on the breakfast table. Imagine Paris without croissants.

(5) One could stay out after 11 p.m. What's more, there would be something to stay out for.

(6) There would be no meatless days, no strong-liquorless days. No sugar cards. Plenty of coffee, oil, salt, pepper, butter, eggs, alcohol, gasoline, soap, potatoes, cigarettes, chocolate, milk and pages in the news-papers! All these are lacking to a greater or lesser degree. Oh! and cheese and vin rouge ordinaire and lemons and oranges and sardines and tuna fish, too! There would be dried lentils and beans and jam, spaghetti & noodles, and no line-ups!

(7) there would be new movies to see.

(8) the big art galleries would reopen (some museums are already open Natural history and such like)

(9) People would be away on vacation.³

(10) Everyone wouldn't be broke.

(11) The classified ads wouldn't be filled with names of people "unheard of since June – Reward for information"

¹ Assumption: French spelling of the name of the Catholic feast-day held on August 15. The English spelling is Assumption.

² A hand-written and a typed version of this letter exist. Several minor spelling, punctuation, and usage differences between the two have been ignored in this transcription, which is based on the typed version. Where there are more significant differences, the handwritten version is shown in {braces} while the typed version is enclosed in <angle brackets>.

³ Note that this was written in August, when normally French people go on vacation.

(12) We would have to pay our Telephone bill, not to mention the gas, electric, water bills. Also perhaps a fine imposed May 20th for having alight showing thru at nite---There advantages, too.

(13) There would be more than 400 Americans in Paris, more company.

(14) One could travel.

(15) Letters could be written to anywhere, & received from anywhere.

(16) All the men would come home.

(17) One could find good stockings cheap.

(18) There would be less airplanes in the sky.

(19) There would be hot water! What a thing to be without!

(20) We would be willing to face the fact that winter is drawing near.

Well, there are my 20 points. The amazing thing is that they make so little difference. Hot water and letters are what I miss most. I could stand a little more money, too, when it comes to that. So many things go on as usual, however, and one is accustomed to doing without {certain} "necessities". I have gotten used to strong French tobacco, for instance and walking long distances: Wish we had bicycles but they cost 1000 francs.

There will inevitably be a period of great inflation here in France. We want to buy while things are still cheap. The Gov't is showering printed money far and wide in the unoccupied zone, and here the German Army has to spend something like 25 million francs a day of their occupation marks, so pretty soon the franc will be doing a dive-bombing stunt.

Oh by the way, did I tell you that Jones has switched to the permanent class of employé at the Embassy? Well, he has. He knew he was going to. Now he's restless because he's been there 4 months and isn't Ambassador yet.

My soups and stuffed tomatoes are becoming world famous. I love to make soup, and put the cat and the kitchen stove in 'em. They turn out delectable!! ---- ADV'T.

We must be saving huge sums of dollars, because after all this time we only owe 5000 frs. or so. That's fine, we can buy ourselves some red {flannel} shawls for the coming winter. You must have received the June, July, & Aug. money by now—ça fait⁴ 150 dollars with the ten dollarses [sic] for Mrs. Jones Sr. removed. We are holding the 50 dollars you so terribly kindly sent for such time as the exchange is fixed. If it isn't within a month, the Embassy will send the money back to the State Dep't as "uncalled for", and the State Dep't will give it back to you.

No one knows if there will be coal & wood this winter or not. If it is as cold as it was last winter, the lack of chauffage centrale⁵ will be a calamity. As our ap't. has a tendency to be very cold in any case, we are looking around for heating apparati & wood for our fire-place, right now. The large area, the domed ceiling, and two big studio windows make the heating of our living room difficult, and the little bedroom was perpetually glacial last winter. I used to spend the afternoon in the bathroom taking hot baths {last winter} in order to keep warm. Now that's out. We might break up a few chairs & tables for firewood. France manages to be the chilliest country I know of without being cheerfully snowy. Let us pray for a mild short winter, and thank goodness for my fur coat!

⁴ Ça fait: French, 'that makes'

⁵ Chauffage centrale: French, 'central heating'

Tonite we are going to visit our neighbors. They have just got permission to use their car for Public service, i.e. for carrying food into Paris. They are very glad because they are broke and can find good use for the money they earn in that way. Jones is enjoying the lessons he exchanges with M. Minet, and is profiting there-by. So is M. Minet, who is now speaking halting English. I listen in, but it annoys Jones to have me around because he gets shy & stammers out his French in my presence.

The representative of our proprietor, M. Dadéskeliani⁶, is a Georgian Prince. It appears that the only family in Georgia below the rank of barons is Stalins. Dadeskelioni is very nice, however, well educated and gentlemanly.

James and I would like to spend this winter at home in the U. S. A., all among the hot baths and central heating! We would have steak every day, even Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and have orange juice for breakfast when we were feeling in a gay, mad mood! I would eat canned peaches without a qualm, and waste matches and smoke nothing but American cigarettes, recklessly. We would ride in cars! Go to the Five & 10! Eat candy *every day!* Cook in butter! Ah, the promised land. ... We were thinking yesterday that if we ever get to the U.S.A. we will probably be looked at sideways as screwballs or mise[r]s, because it would take us some time to remember that matches are not objects to be treasured up and used till they burn your finger, costing 1/5 of a bottle of milk for a box of 40. We are getting into such economical habits that we shall probably end up just as Hetty Green did, and will all our money to a Society for the Preservation of the Almighty Match.

Tom Esten just came in, and was invited for Lunch. He has on a new suit, and brought a fine fat melon as a peace offering. He is a nice, quiet Boston boy without an "r" in the wuld.

[Missing: in the handwritten version (F-65) pages 8-26]

him for his money. Well I'll have him write to you anyway.

Mother's farm gets better and better. I wish we had a farm. We'd grow potatoes and butter and milk and coffee and eggs and chocolate and tea and rice and lentils and nice juicy steaks six inches thick. Also we'd have a coal mine and piles of logs twenty feet high. And canned peach trees and canned pea vines would abound. Ah me--

It is raining, but then it always is..

Did I tell you about Fred.. he comes from Seattle, talks with a western twang, tells about lumber earnings in British Columbia, comes to the dome of an evening to have a drink and talks to the Americans there, He is good natured in the traditional western "high, wide and handsome" way, so every time he comes to the Dome he is the center of a throng at the bar. Pam Edwards, the English girl whose mother witnessed our wedding, discovered Fred one day a month or so ago, and has been showing him off ever since then. He is a German soldier. There is another

⁶ Nino **Dadeshkeliani** (June 17, 1890 – 1931), a Georgian author, was the daughter of General Prince Alexander Dadeshkeliani and Princess Eristavi. ... Dadeshkeliani lived in Georgia and served in the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. However, when Soviet Russia took control of the country in March 1921, **the family moved to Paris**. An account of Dadeshkeliani's wartime [World War I] experiences, *Princess in Uniform*, was published in 1934. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nino_Dadeshkeliani, accessed 2017-03-19). *Princess in Uniform* – 1934 by Ekateriina Aleksandrovna Dadeshkelianii 301 pages; Publisher: G. Bell & Sons (1934). Language: English. ASIN: B00087ZQYo

German soldier here with whom I speak Spanish, because he lives in Barcelona. So: the only Germans we know are American, or Spanish respectively.

We collected the hundred dollars at the Amexco⁷, thank you. As you know by now, we sent the fifty dollars back via the State Dept, because we could only get 43 to the dollar on it. We can't afford to take such losses.

We have coffee. What an amazing thing! No one else has that delicious beverage. They are making what they call "café national" now, which is reputed to contain two coffee beans per pound and roast barley. I've not tasted it yet, but those who have say it tastes exactly like --- roast barley. French women now spend about two hours a day waiting in line for this or that product, It's so amusing; I had to stand in line an hour yesterday for my coal card.; but one becomes very patient.

I hope to send this via a U.P. boy who is going home. Do write via the pouch or as I suggested.

How is Donna coming on? Love to all, Me

⁷ American Express Co[mpany]

(2-7)
Aug. 15, 1940.
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80-77

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