

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
January 6, 1941

Dear Folks:

First, I have to thank you all for your solicitude in cabling me in December, once for my health and once for good wishes. The reason why you didn't hear from me for such a long time was that I was waiting to hear from you before writing, and since your letters were all delayed in the mail, I didn't receive them. The last one to arrive was Sarah's of November 20th; that came on December 20th, just after I had written my letter to send with Nick, which I hope you have received by this time. Meanwhile, I hope to hear soon that you all had a very pleasant Christmas.

My own Christmas was very quiet, as befits the serious times in which we live. I went to the home of Bob Pallucca, one of our American clerks, where I had dinner with Bob and his wife. Phil Hubbard, a consul, was also there. After dinner, we went into the other room and played with the babies and the babies' toys. The older is a boy of two and a half years, who is just as pretty as he can be. He has very blond hair and an almost transparent complexion, and he is full of the old Nick. He was so excited with the tree and the presents that he just couldn't hold still for a minute. The other baby is only seven months old, and so is not running around much yet. However, he has already reached the stage where he can fall out of bed if they don't watch him, thus adding another item to Helen's troubles. After a little, we went out [to] one of Bob's friend's, where there was a large Christmas tree. There we had to take tea, whether we wanted it or not. About six o'clock, Phil and I left, and I spent the rest of the evening at home.

New Year's Eve was a little livelier. Phil and I attended the first opera of the season on our season tickets. It was "Madam Butterfly", and was rather well done. I must confess that I am as much interested in the technical end of the Production as I am with the singing. I still think that the wedding of singing and acting is an unfortunate one for both. Since the plot of most operas can be condensed into a very few words, there are long spaces in which no action takes place, just singing. The stage direction tries valiantly to fill up the gap with all sorts of useless and futile movements. In "Butterfly", for instance, in the first Act, the servant girl opens and closes the sliding panels which serve as doors about 20 times, to no purpose whatsoever except to pass the time away. Not being musically literate, I notice these little things, and they annoy me very much. However, the singing was good, and parts of it I enjoyed very much.

As a special attraction, they also producted [sic] a ballet called "La Botega Fantastica", a conventional toy store number. The music, however, was very interesting, the settings bright, and the dancing amusing. To be truthful, I think I enjoyed it more than the opera

After the performance, I went to a party to which I had been invited at the home of some friends. Although they were mostly older people whom I didn't know, I had a fairly good time. They had a good buffet supper with champagne, and an effort was made to pop the corks precisely at midnight. Afterwards, I "kibitized" on a poker game, and amused myself by bringing bad luck to everyone behind whom I sat. I certainly proved to be a first class jinx, but one lady had such tremendous good luck that I was unable to break it, and needless to say, she swept everything before her. I left about 5:15 and had to walk home through a nasty, fine rain. I arrived safely after almost walking straight into an iron pole in the dark.

January 8, 1941

Short pause for refreshments. I'm in a pretty fix tonight . I invited some people to come to dinner tonight. Then, this morning, an acquaintance pulled in from out of town and asked me to have dinner with him and his wife tonight. Just at that moment, I was talking to two other people at the same time; I was anxious to accept, because I had previously declined several invitations from this chap. I searched my mind and found it, at the moment, blank, and said, "O.K." Now I've been trying all afternoon to get hold of him, but nobody knows where he stays when in town. Now I am hoping to find him and take him home with me to join the other guests. It certainly doesn't pay to be absent minded.

I have made plans twice recently to go to Switzerland for a couple of days, but each time something has come up. I planned to go the Saturday between Christmas and New Year's to visit a friend and his wife, but he wrote and said they had decided to remain in Zurich over the holidays. I then planned to go the Saturday after New Year's, and once again I was stopped by a wire saying that he had once again prolonged his stay in Zurich. I gather from all that that they must be having a fine time there, which is fine, but makes it rather hard for me to arrange things. I have threatened that, if he can't set a date when both are in Lugano, I will go up sometime and see his wife when he isn't there.

I enjoyed Sarah's letter very much, telling about all the social events to which you have been going. I'm very glad to know that you are having a good time; some of the clubs sound very interesting, especially that for the cultivation of rustic dancing. I would like very much to see Daddy doing a square dance - or any other kind, for that matter. It should be a good "reducer" for him.

Much love and happy days to all,

William

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American Consulate
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Mr. & Mrs. L. M. Krieg

197 Hudson Ave.

Newark, OHIO

S.U.A.

Feb 7

PER VIA AEREA
PAR AVION

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PAR AVION

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