P.S. Elsie sends you her love; she thinks you might be interested to learn that she has had her hair cut.

Hôtel de L'Ours
Cairo
18. 7. 28

My dear Tommy,

If you ask Daddy for the atlas and turn up the map of France and study the top part of it attentively you may find that Cairo is in N. France, that as I am at Cairo I am near in Normandy also. I therefore take a couple of hours off from broadening my mind to deliver a short bulletin of the latest news, lest I should forget. I think it was from Dinan that I wrote last. At Dinan the principal adventure seems to have been when the cork came out of a bottle of cider we had carried all the way from St. Malo, with the most astonishing explosion, it legislators to room with a fountains, more astonishing than a wilderness of fountainbleu. But there must have been more to it than that. Then, after I had written my letter by you we walked forth of town, the picturesque part of the town, a very picturesque it was - principally a very steep street running right down to the river full of old 16th century houses, still inhabited, generally thrown open to the gaze of the world in the Parisian French way, with the family dining inside. There were other old streets also, of varying degrees of picturesque, so when I stand...
out my postcard collection you will be able to see them all. A very good omelette we had for lunch, but if I remember aright. Curious, but we had an omelette at every meal for the first two or three days, stamped one too, but now we don’t seem to have had one for a month or so. It may be that they are a speciality here. Anyhow, as we go along meals are getting a bit cheaper. I must suspect we were being stingy and in some of these places, but you can never tell, having nothing really to go on; 10 or 12 francs was the best we could get a meal for — 1/5 or 2. Still, compared to what you would get in England for the same money it was dirt cheap. In Paris you can get a meal for 8 or 8.50. In Paris I hope it will be a bit cheaper still. Prices have risen a bit in the last year, with the stabilization of the franc to one. Still, it is cheap enough. I generally get a room for 12 francs (franc = about 2d), and the girls one dollar so that a night’s lodging costs me only up to them if each which is not too bad. Of course we haven’t had a bath yet, and running water only once; but then we are used to do things on the cheap. There are pubs where you can get every drink you like if you pay through the nose for it. If I were rich, though, I should certainly turn out the French with a few more ideas on elementary sanitation. They are
worse even than the Irish. However, they can certainly make beds of samllites, which are two very great drawbacks. They cannot make cider. The French cider is the richest stuff I ever drank in my life; you generally get it at meals instead of water, if the Frenchman bag it up like whisky. This seems to me to be a very unpalatable. On the other hand you can get wine so cheap as to make it quite a small matter—especially if you buy it at the source. Every second night we lay in a store of provisions to go for a picnic—well you get a bottle holding about a quart of quite good wine; for free. What more do you want? I'll bet that if you could do this in N.Y. you cut out the pubs you would hear the least if prohibition in a week. If you want to be really extravagant you can spend twice or three times as much, as you would enjoy yourself properly. For instance, if I lived in France or lived elsewhere as a millionaire I would start a cellar. But you go back to England and have to fork out six for a minute glass of stuff you would hardly notice in the bottom of the bottle here. It is very dispiriting. So there you have to confine yourself to water, tea, coffee, or cocoa, all of which are very dangerous drugs, the drinking of which is attended with grave risks to health. Another thing on which I could reflect at considerable length is cheese. All sorts of cheese, all cheap. I think you might do a service to your
country by starting a campaign in the Port to import a few experts from France or Switzerland, to teach the farmers a bit about cheese-making as distinct from turning-out cheese. — no reason why they shouldn’t make something else decent beside butter & lamb. Fair division; but I think what N. 2 is what it might be, even in such a matter as the production of cheese. I think for the divine process we lag behind the lesser nations. I think that is all I have to say at present on the subject of food; on the whole you don’t get enough vegetables or fruit; but the salads are generally excellent.

I must get back to my travels. We had a good look round Dijon, I bought a very charming tea-caddy in Breton pottery. I should have liked to have got a lot of stuff of this sort, plates & cups & things — it is very cheap, & I should have liked to send you a lot of it. But there is no way to carry it, & it would be too risky to send it out to N. 2. — I think to all I bought was this tea-caddy & two cups & saucers. The only thing about the caddy is that I’m afraid it won’t go with my Japanese tea-pot; but perhaps one could keep them at opposite ends of the room. It really gives a man a pain to go away & leave such wonderfully good & cheap things behind him; mais que faire. I may be there again someday, anyhow, with an extra trunk or a hiding to carry.
things for me. Well, anyhow - I wanted to stay at Dinan
in days or so longer, to hear it battle on in the rain,
but I was argued down on various points, none of them
convincing, so we left for Wall St. Michael. But we
did not know that we had to change at St-Dol, & the French
railway cows are quite uncommunicative on subjects like
that, so after an hour's pleasant ride - very charming the
Norman country side is - while we were leaning back
comfortably in the carriage waiting for the train to start
again we were hailed out by a cow & found we were
back at the Terminus at St-Malo again. Most extraordinary.
However we got out & had a bathing trip & went for a
bath there, & marvellous beaches they have too. Unfortunately
the Normandy coast is now in the full flood of develop-
ment it is being with casinos & flash hotels & long
lines of reitreer places all along the snakehills, a very
degressing sight. We got a very excellent meal of here
for 150 francs too. I remember, Q hot & cold water in
our rooms. Next morning we took over to the station
early with beer in one hand & the otherчётting a
large price & head stuffer, quite à la the ship
last year. Of course the train was late, so every train
we have been in in France so far has been late. They
have special notice boards up in the stations to be
pulled in with chalk, saying why there much the trains
are in retard; but it never seems to be worth while filling
them in. The train generally gets there in the end, but accidents. Anyhow this time we arrived at about 11 Michel in the course - a wonderful place, now organised with the greatest energy & efficiency for fleecing the tourist. It is an abbey built on a rock, as I suppose you know, with one street consisting exclusively of restaurants & souvenir sellers. They won't put you up for the night unless you have dined with them, i.e. on the forth. Most of the place seems to belong to the name Portsea, a middle lady on with an apparent genius for cutting out competition - so we had lunch there & went all over the abbey & the fortifications & bought a few things - I got a birthday present for Harry & a bit of cloth for you - in the evening hopped back to a little place called Pontoise, which is the jumping off place for Mont St Michel. This has a church with one or two nice things about it, so we had charming people to stay with - had quite a lot of conversation with the daughter of the house. It was interesting to see a little provincial French place too, of no particular importance in any way - very dirty, very cheerless, not quite so noisy as the bigger places. The town band was practicing for the 14th July though, which was more comic than annoying. But the noise in a place like Caen is hideous annoying. I'm dead certain the French are not in the least sensitive to unpleasant, or they'd stop the fright.
full, shrieks ofدرس and shatter that
jumps across clean well into the dark. And then
they might go on to cut and a little bit of smoke of
just let alone the poison gases of dirt. But this,
as I have remarked in another connection, it is an
excursion.

From Pantelleria, on the strength of a glowing descrip-
tion in one guide-book, we went to Contances, but
and not think of much of it. I mean the town itself.
It is on a hill & the surroundings are beautiful. Every-
things about the Norman countryside indeed is beau-
tiful. The Cathedral looks give up on the top of the
hill dominating the town & there is an avenue of lines
most of the way round it. We had a lovely breakfast;
then went down to the sea for a bathe or a swim bath-
I am going desperately to thrown up a bit again
missed the only train back & started to walk the
12 kilometres. After about 5 miles a cave in a little
thin soil en stopped on the way, so we cudged
a lift from him for the rest of the way, arriving
just in time to see the rockets jump up, all blue &
yellow or red in stars or streaks, for the 10th of
the Hotel de Ville illuminated in candles, all very
splendid & flash; also there was a performance by
the single band & drums. Oh! we wasn't in Paris for
these celebrations, but it couldn't be helped. That was
Saturday. Next day we looked in at the Cathedral + one or two other churches to listen to the services but were broke + left in about 5 minutes – fearful full organ in the cathedral, completely out of time had an early lunch, spent the rest of the day + evening bathing in the river + sunbathing in adjacent paddocks. I really should like to see this country side in spring – it must be magnificent. In the absence of coconut oil I had to cajole some olive oil off our landlord to help in the training process you would be surprised to hear how expert I am becoming in calypso things in French. We left early next morning, 10 o’clock in fact (though it was late) + landed at Bayeux already. Bayeux is notable mainly for four things – cathedral, tapestry, fleas + smells. All of these are of a kind very fine. I shall send you postcards of the cathedral + the tapestry; the other things would probably distort in transit so you’ll have to take them on board. The tapestry is really very interesting, I far better than I thought it could be; it is really embroidery full of life + colour, some of the masses of horses + men really extraordinarily skillful. Bayeux has also some interesting old houses, a very bad collection of pictures, some good 18th century tapestries + a lace factory, but the lace is very expensive. Day intensely hot.
Been good. The weather is holding out miraculously; I see that in England several people have passed out of the heat wave, so that some of those who have gone into the water to escape it have been drowned. As it seems an unfortunate country, in a way, of course, the heat wave doesn’t happen till I get out of the country; when I get back it will be raining again if the winter will have set in, I suppose.

In the evening of our Regence day we came on to Caen. For noise and dirt this is the equal of any French town I have been in, a beats anything in any other country — until you have been in France year have no conception what noise and dirt can be. There go a collection of dogs backing uproariously now, an engine has just shrieked, a horn clanged, in a minute a motor car will climb up the hill and a sporting car with the throttle on, here comes in train with appropriate piercing whistle, it soon there will be a street car, let alone the perpetual motor horns, used with enthusiasm, a persistence on every possible occasion. We went down to the sea again this afternoon, for a final bathe before turning completely inland; it was by steam train to a picturesque made of convenience I have never tried. A most extraordinary race. There go the dogs again. It a bone cycle rattling
over cobbles. Camel has some fine churches, the Abbey and Henness, the Abbey and Henness, two founded by Wm the Conqueror. Matilda his wife, to appease the papal wrath at their having married within the forbidden degrees as the pride books repeat ad nauseam. St. Pierre, & Lord knows what else. The abbey are mostly fine plain Norman work, the main very dignified, the women's full of a delicate & beautiful soliety, which manages to make its impression even over the efforts of the Thibs to ruin it. Really these Thibs do not deserve to have fine churches, they have a positive genius for vulgar which can be rpelled by few man-seminist sects, however half-witted. And the way these two abbeys are built in! Compare the English cathedrals! - the C.C. may be only fit for the dust-bin, but at least it has some dignity in its dissolution. But the Catholics go wallowing in the degradation of beauty to the world's end. - St. Pierre's has some fine Renaissance work, & there are some good secular buildings scattered about the town. There is a good river also, up which I rowed the party last night. We disembarked bread rolls & cream cheese & cakes & grapes & wine under a haystack - a meal of the premier's classe for about 9d each. Then rowed down again in the sunset. A great country, apart from the disadvantage retailed above, so much to date. With much love to you both. From Jack.