Paris
8. 8. 28

My dear Thelma,

I bring you up to date with my travels with a last letter written from France. I go back to London at the end of this week, but whether I shall catch the next N.E. mail from here I do not know, so don’t expect anything till you get it. No time for anything else to come from you, so nothing to answer, unless I comb out your last letter for debatable points, so I don’t propose to do this. Therefore I proceed at once to Charles, whether Elsie & Kathleen & I & Thelma or a customer of his called Taylor went last Wednesday. We went on a Wednesday to avoid the week-end crush, as well as being the day on which hard working eves like 1 & I would naturally take off; but we arrived at the station to find it almost hidden in surging crowds & the whole train service apparently hopelessly disorganized — a sign board telling you one thing, at every portal or other official you asked telling you others, some of them unaccountable with anything else. We then realized that it was the 1st August, that the French as well as the English were accustomed to making themselves acutely uncomfortable on this occasion.
Also there were other confusing factors. In this connec-
tion you often cannot know red unless for a journey
over a certain distance, or on certain trains. We
carefully booked out an early train which both red
class passengers, performed the hare of rising
in time to catch it, yet to the station I find
that nobody has heard of the train, or that the
time-table has been suspended, or that the train
has gone, or something has changed its platform—
you can take your choice of all these possibilities,
as we had to — but that there is another train
not down in any time-table going to have
late. So now carefully enquire—is this train
really going to Chichester? or where? does it actually
take the class passengers in the 3rd class car-
riages? even to Chichester? Everybody at last
agrees that all these things are so one hop
that nowhere to be had — notices that stand-
ing in the carriages strictly forbidden — carri-
ages filled with a flying mass — feel frenzies
continually getting in with large sentences — feel
monotony — push you off your feet at deposit
suitcases where you were standing. Train at
last so full that even the conductors can
hardly get on, but they do it close all the
doors once move off. After standing in this
conditions for 1½ hours, reach Chartres. Produce tickets at gate. Where's your supplement? Which supplement? There are 3rd class ticket - you can't travel 2nd on this train. By Jingo! we travelled 2nd all right.

Off goes ticket-collector to interview station master. Off go we after him. Real flow of language on chief de police's part, likewise Jennings' or Royce's, hands waving all over the place. 'No, quite impossible! no 2nd class passengers taken to Chartres on that train.' Yes, you may have been told that in Paris, but that's nothing to do with us! Oh yes, I quite believe all you say. But you pay the supplements, then write in a full account of the circumstances to the State so you may get reimbursed.' Well, we can't stay on the station all day, if even the French of the agents having proved unanswerable, we decide to pay up our 2nd class fare. But each to pay our own with a 100 franc note. No good - the note has to go all over the station to change the first note, so it looks as if they will have to open the bank to change any more. So we let it go at that, take it all and of the same note, enquire very carefully what train goes to Paris, which of them take 2nd class passengers.
move off ticket-collectors having had immense difficulty in counting out the change - having said "5 x 20" - 20" ! So often in times of increasing despair that we thought he would go straight way out his throat. We relented us at last in Charles.

It was a terrifically hot day, but we managed to see the cathedral & one or two other things, which is about all that Charles consists of. The cathedral is a fine place, thus the distinction of being built almost entirely in the same style, 13th century. Also that they had the useful rule that as it was the church of the Lady, it was far too sacred to bury anyone in it. So there is a welcome absence of tombs, etc. and one able to see the place practically unimpeded. The cathedrals here, though badly looked after in comparison with the English ones, seem on the whole to be less obstructed with junk. Certain none of them have been turned into a stone-quarry, without any of a stone-quarry's effect, like Westminster Abbey. Notre-Dame in Paris seems even fuller of tourists than the Abbey, but at least the tourists can be cleared out periodically. But the tombs of our distinguished English dead seem futile as outshining the Abbey itself. Well, anyhow Charles is a
Very beautiful dignified place. It has almost a complete set of stained glass windows, all of its own period, except for 8 which the canons took down and threw away in the 19th century to let in a bit of light. It dates from the time of the good old revolution, slightly less destructive than the church, smashed up in sheer high spirits. Otherwise the penetration is almost as perfect as anything could be, though I don't think they have any individual window to touch two or three of those at Rouen. However opinions may differ.

My old corset brick Adams wrote a book on Plant & Methods of Charles, as an attempt to interpret the Middle Ages (which I must read some day) in which he reckoned that one of the Charles windows was the most perfect expression of medieval art in existence, at which I can only express my surprise. Of course he was an American, and as is well known, the Yankees have no culture. (Coastal aphorism of Hemingway: "Culture means raising the Yankees above just any""). The 8th Charles is mainly wondrouscript modern, with the usual superabundance of restaurants and appalling odours. They all seem to do their washing in the river in these small towns in France; the river is generally full
two train Delay days. And yet, from the way they keep away at the clothes with bits of board and go over it with scrubbing brushes, you wonder at their being any washing left at all. It's a wonderful place, indeed.

We had a long chat also with an old copper working on the towns' lines (no tram in sight) who had found a couple of old coins & sold them to Taylor for francs; a huge varied amount of information we got from him, including the fact that the Roman's use of gun-powder was very imperfect, and that modern guns could shoot as far as 200 yards, that times were hard, that the town was insanitary. He then moved off with a couple of cobblers who claimed tools as soon as the frances changed hands & chucked it in at the nearest cafe. We managed to catch a train to Paris which took 3rd class passengers, still more wonderful, left at the latest time: being entertained in heaven by the conversation of that Yunker who occupied the rest of the compartment. Recipe to be amused in this way - stick your head into a French paper & listen hard. You can hear anything from what their brothers think of cathedrals (What the use of all this dead stone anyway?) to the comparison of prices paid for meals in Vancouver & Chicago. A wonderful
Since then we have been on one or two other expeditions - to a play "Vient de Paradise" (Last Out), a very funny satire on the French literary prize system & the antics of publishers, but in which the dialogue went so rapidly that it was impossible to catch more than a bit of it. It has been running for a year here, but the prices still seem to be handed out. I heard one come with a thirst for literary distinction who put up the money for a prize, chose his own prize, & arranged that it should be awarded to him as it was. I dare say the passion will work itself out; any how the play was good. There are other things running, as well as opera, but it seems so hard to write in anything in the evening these days, except arguments. However we went to see the Gold Rush again last night - the French are mad on Charleston, have him running in different things all over the place. And two or three nights ago we went up to Montparnasse to a hybrid movie place called Studio 28, where they put on some old-fashioned magic lantern slides, a low-class film of Love & Passion, some misty pictures of ordinary things taken sideways & upside down (not on the proper screen,
but on both side walls of the theatre simultaneously! Some scenes in light, shade with cubes, triangles, cylinders continually in motion, an ancient Roman theatre comedy, a new French film of Poe's Fall of the House of Usher — a first-rate thing, the best shot interesting film I have seen since the \[ \text{first film name] \] came out. First-rate photography to just one or two palpable fakes among. If this ever comes out your way, be sure to see it — plenty of thrills too, a nightmare atmosphere about it.

So you see you get a lot for your money at Studio 28.

Let's see where else we have been — the girls were out with a cousin who owns a silver mine or something, dining things in style on Sunday. So hearing it was a family called \[ \text{last name] \] a very decent time I went to Plaisance, one of Napoleon's country houses, now used as a museum of the great man. A fearful place! What an urchin vulgarian he was! The more I see of palaces, the less the remains impress the more I despise them. You could think that the Empire could be summed up in three words: Gold Paint Plush. The rooms are very small, 

\[ \text{last sentence cut off] \]
not properly. Everything there from the rosettes the Emperor wore at his coronation to the handkerchief he held in his hand when he died. There was another thing there that amazed me—a BATH belonging to Josephine—one of the first in France, said the guide. The first we saw later, at Fontainebleau, this belonged to Marie Antoinette. And the state of preservation of both seems so good, after so many years, that it seems doubtful if either was used much. However, Palmarium has possibilities— if all the shrubbery were painted green, the inside was cleaned out and thoroughly re-decorated, it would make quite a good country house. If a country house could be so near Paris. Paris tends like London, dully and increasingly hideously. The gardens would have to be done up too—the tennis, plant magnificent avenues, or lay out magnificent parks, and they don't know the first thing about lawns. Palmarium is like a dense meadow. That is the direction where the English, with all their faults, are supreme—I must admit this. (Comment from Daddy unnecessary). And the gardens here, apart from general layout, are pretty poor. Still, the general layout, the fountains, the trees, are superb.

On Monday we went to Fontainebleau, the
woods there are fine, the palace is another museum
of jewels of all periods, with one or two good
things that seem to have crept in by accident. It
reminded me of Schönbrunn last year—why
is royalty always so horribly over-decorated?
why don't we reach such abysmal depths?
Napoleon wasn't the only one, though
perhaps the most orientalizingly ugly. The rest of
the stuff is almost as uniformly bad. There are
one or two fine rooms at Fontainebleau—but
smothered in jellies & admiration. A terrible
place. I suppose I must go to Versailles to complete
my impressions; but that I leave is just piddling
of mimicry—an even more frightful supplementation.
At Fontainebleau the combination of the worst of
an restaurant & the Fontainebleau chateau is to
my taste. As we had a good walk through
the woods for 5 or 6 miles to the
station, though it
was three o'clock in the
dark. Certainly in the
world of natural scenery, the
landscape of France did
themselves well.

In between these expeditions we have been to
museums, workshops of the town. Notre Dame
to see the tapestries. Rodin museum, etc. on the
first—
Good heavens! it just occurs to me
that I have not answered your last letter at all!
Later, I may proceed to do so. Thank you for some. For instance: re Bates College v. V.S.C. I have impressions. I read these in the N.Y. News in the days when they sent it to me free in the hope of getting me for a subscriber. Debating times seem to be becoming a disease, but I suppose they’re all right as long as Bates Collegeo foot the bill. As answer to your question whether I had ever felt homesick upon I have, but what’s the use of talking about that? The world is full of things to feel sick about. I wouldn’t mind coming back now that I’m under the town. I must get a job soon, I suppose. Before injuring myself. It was two years ago precisely on Sunday at midnight since I left home, there I was in the woods at Fontainebleau that afternoon. However I will not go into any philosophical digressions on this subject. As my soapies, they have only had about four accidents since left I do not wish to provoke a fresh argument on another subject, but I may point out that your average has probably been fair higher. No, I don’t want photographs of myself in early youth. I remember the picture of Daddy at Balham. However a friend of that young man came to take up with a conductor like that I don’t know. Someone said that there hasn’t been a progressive movement of my kind in Balham’s political life that he hasn’t been against, or a reactionary one
which he hasn't favoured; while I always thought that Daddy in those days was a bloody revolutionary, or at least a Yenan socialist. F.W. Maurice & A.F. Salton, a funny combination. Or perhaps not so funny. I gather that 1931 was a bit of a middlehead. The flower girls in London do sell fresias, & most other flowers. A pity you can't see them sometimes. It is very cheering to learn that you can now walk as far as St. Mary's Bishops Church. Funny how these half-wits flourish. So Alice Brown has settled on a boy at last. Hope suitably handsome. Have duly conveyed your message to those others.

Everything else noted but does not seem to call for special remark, except that (a) it seems to have habit

these psychotogical birds. Mr. Fortune is the real to exploit their theses to a remarkably degree. At an 11 A.M.

it delivers a lecture on it, article in Evening Post, did so in Bess. Boych. Journal, so then Strip.

its will be published entire in England & that two lines of patronage in the city. Appe. Nothing

like writing your ideas for all they are worth.

(b) Prudence Daddy is in to another streaking again. I hope it is over by now, or that he can get some help. It worries me to think of his being at the same old nightly price again. And why do you think me for my letters?
They are surely pretty good too, on the whole to get all that appreciation. As a matter of fact, I have come to the conclusion that writing letters is a whole-time job. If I had more Halley's time off, I might do a bit of it, to revise them periodically for publication. The easiest way of writing a book, any how.

Talking of which, Captain Heston has at last arrived, at least, I have got one copy. It doesn't look bad, although there are one or two misprints, still some very stupid alterations by fly. Still it is not as bad as it was. If I could give it another thorough revision it would be able to stand up on its legs fairly well. I shall be able to send you one and see by the next English mail. I can catch, I shall try to send it corrected. Or I may possibly leave you to pick out the editorial alterations, as an exercise in criticism. I shall be interested to see if my copies reach W2 independently of the ones Edward sent. If they get any favourable reviews, it might get 60 or 80 in the Dominion. I hope that the Spike at least will come out strong, especially as I have dedicated the thing to V.E.C. I reckon my first list will be at least 5 times as long as this thing probably a good deal more. So you can see it will be a
family left things. I shall be back in London next week packing away at that, if according to schedule.

I had one or two more odd things to say, but I have forgotten what they were. We went to a very interesting museum I Chinese art this afternoon - some beautiful pottery there - also some early stuff about 5000 years old with hier patterns on them in red black for decoration. Perhaps Daddy, as a student of anthropology, may be able to explain this. They are also like early Greek stuff. I am getting somewhat interested in eastern art. - The British Museum is another very interesting place here, full of all sorts. Yum! old top boots, doors, chiming pieces, china, armor, spoons, like, etc. etc. Not a patch on the Victoria & Albert though. We never still unexcited but exceedingly exhausting.

A very fine sunset tonight up the Thames. At Neasding 0 I stood on a bridge, the road in Cambridge, and admired a philosopher. Afterwards to a café for café. The café are a marvellous institution. I got £10 the other day for the Empire Scholarship scheme. Not bad, though not over generous. And so on. And so on.

I conclude with very much love to you both.

And all aminals.

Jack.