

Geneva, December 13, 1914. (1)

Dear Father,

I am going to ask your advice for my present problem. I have found a very interesting subject for historical research - the father-in-law of Clovis. Some of his building is still to be seen at Geneva. But my question is - have I the time to take up this work? To begin with, all six weekdays are cut up by university lectures, sprinkled through morning and afternoon. I have only eleven hours of lectures, but they come in the middle of mornings and afternoons. The time which is left I have been giving to French lessons and Foyer - mostly to Foyer. The Foyer work takes a lot of time! And now my question is, have I the right to cut down on this Y. W. C. A. work? There is so very much to be done for these eastern-European students, and I feel that this is the time to set them going right, and their home communities with them. It seems as if I ought to give every bit of my energy to them. On the other hand, "Gondebaud" is a great chance for a beginning in writing history. I should prefer to give my life to people, and not to books - and yet, if I do not accomplish something definite in adding to knowledge, that is, understanding, I am afraid of passing my life as a mere dilettante.

Perhaps you can help me to a decision. (2)

We are all looking forward to the weeks of vacation in the mountains. We are wishing for snow - these last few weeks have been so very warm. All the snow has melted from Salève - and Salève is higher than Chesières, so we watch it every day.

If Pen wants to call on Estelle while he is in Pittsburgh, her address is: Estelle Kimp, care of C. F. Holdship, 422, 1st Avenue.

The secret passage in the walls was not opened this year, as the town council has forbidden any celebration of the Escalade. They seem to forbid everything except mourning this year, instead of urging Genevans to cheer up, and make one bright spot in Europe! Soldiers are no longer guarding the stations or the railway bridges, but the élite are still languishing along the frontier. They are horribly bored, write home that they are tired of wasting their time in saluting and ^{such} petites Bêtises. There are also no Swiss left at the university - just theologs, who don't have to go.

I am glad Mrs. Gautier called. I did not see her, but Mother says she is very pleasant. Love to all, Jean.

"Bon jour, Madame."

"Bon jour, Madame, vous avez de la laine?"

"Oui, Madame. Quelle triste chose que la guerre! — C'est bien ceci qu'il vous faut, Madame?" —

There is the customary conversation on entering a shop!

I have been looking up "atrocities addresses" for you. I wrote a letter to one address, in Germany. I went to see one lady who had the nastiest story of all, but she was in bed and I could not see her. I'll go back later. I wish I had thought ^{to ask for tale "on galls"} when I saw the soldier who told of the woman's hand at Lyons. I do not know whether he is still here. But until after New Years I'll have no time. I am quite taken up at the Foyer. I do about run things there now, and it's exacting work. Every moment you must be on hand. Mother is going down tomorrow morning to help sort out men's shirts and shoes which have been sent us for the destitute students. I am glad she will help us — the most volunteer work is more better than it's help, it is so patchy. People come in for an hour, or half an hour, and ask for work, and we waste all our time explaining things to them. I feel like saying "Get out from under our feet, you're more helpful that way!"

(3) I have just received the most curious letter.⁽⁴⁾
It is post-marked, quite properly, Bryn Mawr,
November 21, but on the back is stamped:

ΑΘΗΝΑ,
-2. ΔΕΚ. 14. 10. Ε
ΤΕΝΤΡΙΚΟΝ

When I took my pen in hand this evening it
was really to talk to you about Mother. She seems
very tired. I wish I could persuade her to go with
Lois, or with Lois and Marjorie, for a month, at
the Riviera. Geneva is damp. I see that the Riviera
hotels are offering reduced rates during the war,
she could live there well for what she pays
here. There is a quiet place beyond Nice
where Idelette went last year to rest up.
Mother shirks the expense of the journey—
tho' it is short compared with even the trip
New York to Philadelphia. I am sure it would
do her lots of good. I wish you could suggest
it to her. There is nothing keeping her here,
Philip and I would be perfectly well with
the Miles. long. ~~So~~ I feel as if she ought to
profit by this year free from housekeeping
to take a really good rest. She complains
of rheumatism. The sunshine of southern
France ought to be good for her. Don't tell
her I wrote, but tell her you think she

ought to profit by the unusual rates, and build up. I think money matters worry her this year, and she won't think even of an excursion to Chamonix. She feels very tight. But since we can't go to Paris, we ought to do the next best, and raw, dreary Geneva is not the next best for her.

Geneva is good for Philip with his schools and me, with foyer work, but there is nothing here for her. She mopes and talks about her exile. Really, except for work at the foyer, and the historical interest of the old town, Geneva is an awful hole. There may be intellectual life in a small circle, into which strangers are not admitted — but the general run of things is deadly. If I weren't anchored by university and foyer, I'd go on to Paris tomorrow. Things are perfectly normal there. I talk with people who go back and forth to Paris quite freely, student life is in full swing there, and all other life, except theatres and cafés. We ought to be there. But since we're not, there's no use thinking about it. I think will go on in March — then Mother will have Miss Hart at least. Here she has no real friend.

We had a letter from Alice today. She

② has rented a farm in Ireland. ⑥

Did Mother tell you that I am teaching English to a Russian Jew & his wife? He is teacher of Physics at the university here, and wants to teach at the Boston Tech. He has rather strange ideas about America, because he has read the Jungle. My friends are chiefly Russian. When we are at the concerts I spot one after another in the peanut gallery - "There's a Russian I know!" Then Mother catches me exchanging nods with a member of the orchestra, and asks what I'm doing - "Oh, a Russian I know" - "You seem to be in thick with the Russians," she remarks, and indeed, one of my accomplishments is to speak French with a Russian accent. I can manage the German accent, too - unfortunately I haven't ^{not} caught the French one, yet. Even the shampooer ^{asks} demands - "Mademoiselle cause anglais?" The same shampooer called to one of the other girls - "The cranium is in bloom." I grew suspicious about the state of my head, until the other girl corrected her - "You mean the geranium!" It's as bad the breaks I make about mon nom and mon honneur.

On Saturday evening was the Christmas reception of the X M Association. It was very agreeable, and charitably international. I think the first wave of hate between nations is dying down. A German woman is giving a Christmas tree to a village in Savoy, and she is helping a poor Russian family.