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American Embassy,  
Berlin, Germany,  
Oct. 30, 1936.

*Dear Henry  
Read it and weep -*

To date, I have spared my friends at home from a narrative of my wanderings abroad, because, in my race with Time toward some acceptable degree of performance of duty as Foreign Buildings Inspector for the State Department, I have not found the opportunity heretofore to indulge in the pleasure of correspondence. Now, however, I am preparing this circular letter for distribution to many friends to let you know that I have thought of all of you very often during my travels, and to give you a brief account of my sojourn in the turbulent European countries these ten months past, during which my entire effort has been expended toward official objectives.

This account is a composite narrative, piecing together various excerpts from my journal, which, however, (unfortunately for both of us), contains nothing as indiscreet or as interesting as the episodes in the Hollywood Diary so recently in the public eye. So its style should not bring forth too harsh a judgment upon me, nor ~~it~~ should its superficiality offend the dignity of anyone of high or low degree to whom it may be sent.

First, I will say that I have not made my trip alone. Having found long ago that European travel was not soothing to a lonely spirit, and European cities were no balm to a soul which preferred the wide, open spaces, I brought along a Ford Touring Sedan, so as to see something of the country enroute between duty posts, and I induced my friend, "Babe" Hiehle, of Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to accompany me and bear the brunt of the operation of the car. Babe had helped me in numerous personal undertakings at Fort Belvoir -- in my construction activities, my organ-building, my garden development, etc -- and knew he "could take it", and since my disposition on this trip has not been of the best, he has indeed had to take it. And although we have both berated each other unmercifully upon many occasions, with a vocabulary more picturesque than refined, each has managed to stand the other for ten months, which is more than even Admiral Byrd did at the South Pole.

So, although unsung as heroes, we departed together from Washington last December 27th for New York, to catch the S.S. Manhattan sailing January 3rd. The rear seat of our car and the locker compartment were piled high with trunks, suitcases, cameras, and various odds and ends including two army cots and mosquito nets, and we doubtless presented a ludicrous picture, for the Fatos laughed at us unceasingly -- laughed till

their tears fell thick and fast from their heavenly abodes, and, crystallizing as they fell, they blanketed the roads with a heavy carpet of snow, which concealed the treacherous nature of the roads we traversed, and muffled our progress into the increasing difficulties which we encountered.

Avoiding the ferry route to New York in the hope that the roads through the cities might be better cleared for traffic, we reached Wilmington as darkness fell upon us, and pushed on toward Philadelphia. Our breath froze upon the windows and windshield, and, in this opaque veil of ice, we kept clear, only by continuous effort, a hole large enough to look through and to observe the fury of the blizzard which attacked us.

Every car coming toward us or passing us threw up a blinding cloud of snow, which completely obscured the strongest headlights of approaching cars, and shut out in the flash of a second all visibility of the cars immediately ahead. At last, however, about 10:30 at night, we reached Governors Island, where we stopped several days till our boat sailed, and parked our car outside in welcome relief from the strain of driving through that night's blizzard. Thus we abandoned the car to the mercy of the Fates which mocked us.

The continuous snow that night and the next day, which buried our car, did not complete the gesture of the gods. Rain was added. And through the rain and icy streets, we made the final arrangements for our departure. I stored my household effects in New York (where I had been stationed until ordered on this new duty), procured numerous technical reference manuals and builders' catalogs, secured the documents necessary for international driver's license, permit, insurance, customs carnet, etc., and invested in color film and black-and-white film for the movie cameras we brought along. Then we delivered our car empty at the pier the day before sailing, and in the rain of the following day, we transported our heterogeneous collection of baggage and parcels to the boat, dumped them in our stateroom, and, amid the hubbub and excitement of departure, we bade goodbye to the friends kind enough to see us off, slipped our moorings at the dock, and finally sailed away.

Daily rains, heavy seas and gales marked our crossing, which gave us no sunshining, prevented any exercise on the sun-decks, and made the trip quite monotonous. I found myself not as good a sailor as I had been in a passage across years ago, so I kept to my bed the second day out and didn't rise till about noon the other days. We had a nice stateroom with twin beds and bath -- too comfortable to discard for rainy docks or stuffy public lounges, so arising in time for the noon meal, walking around the decks, trying to play deck tennis or shuffleboard in the rain, or ping-pong in a gale, seeing an antiquated ship's movie in the afternoon, then reading till time to get ready for dinner, were about all there was to do, and I was glad to see the Bay of Plymouth, even though the gale there was so terrific that passengers could not board the waiting tender from midday until 9:00 o'clock at night, and twice the hawsers of the tender broke while it was tied alongside.

At last we reached Havre, however, loaded our baggage into our automobile and set forth for Paris, still pursued by a rain which let no day pass for at least 60 out of 70 days without putting in its watery appearance. But there was intermittent sun-shine on that first day, and the clouds, floating through the grey sky, made a pretty background for rolling fields lit by streaks of yellow sunlight, and for the quaint little farmhouses with thatched roofs green with moss.

Stopping at Rouen to find a place to eat lunch, we walked around in the rain through an old market place alive with vendors at their dripping canvas stalls, and so up to the cathedral, black in the accumulated grime of the centuries. We took some pictures, but none in color, for there was not enough light, and, after looking in at the most conspicuous hotel placarded with royal touring club insignia, and finding not even a place to wash, we flounced out in a huff, gave up the thought of eating, and went on to Paris -- hungry. In the late afternoon we reached Paris, parked our car in the sub-basement of our Embassy office building, and put up at a hotel a couple of doors from our building, and then my trials and tribulations began.

I had intended going immediately to Seville, Spain, and to Tangier, Morocco, then working back to Paris later during better weather. But I stopped at Paris to arrange with the Army Finance Officer about my pay, and with the State Department Disbursing Office about settling my travel expense accounts. After studying the travel regulations of the State Dept, and negotiating with the disbursing personnel, I found that the form of voucher required by State Dept regulations was not even used by the State Dept disbursing office, and, having been unable in a week

to collect any reimbursement for travel expenses from New York to Washington and back to New York and thence to Paris, and with the shadow of the Comptroller General of the U. S. hovering over me, I simply had to make my inspection of the Paris office building and of the Embassy residence at once, which would give the disbursing office time to settle my account to date, and would give me some time to grasp the book-keeping necessities required of those who travel through European countries on duty for our Government. For the uninitiated, I will explain that such book-keeping must show the time of departure and arrival; the time one crosses a border into another country; the dollar exchange rate in the country of sojourn as of the last day for which payment accrues in that country; such rate being established by bank statements or purchase slips which must be procured as one passes through; speedometer readings to show the actual miles travelled, which must be checked in the vouchers against some standard distance tables, and obviously require notation at departure and arrival and at each border crossing; costs of travel by train as compared with mileage claimed for travel by one's own automobile, to show that automobile travel is cheaper, which requires that rate quotations from some travel agency be procured; and so on, ad infinitum.

Thus I discovered that, instead of thinking in terms of days in the matter of reimbursement for travel expenses, in Europe they think in terms of weeks; and whereas I had tentatively arranged an itinerary based on taking only weeks for each inspection, I had to readjust my itinerary to inspections in terms of months.

I had thought that our new \$1,250,000 Paris office building on a site costing another \$1,250,000 would offer little to report, since it was practically new, and that it would therefore take me only several weeks, but so many developed defects and unsatisfactory conditions were pointed out to me that I could not conscientiously neglect to go into a thorough inspection and to develop in my report a presentation involving a discussion of some fundamentals of planning ignored in this structure. My study started with an inquiry into the duties of personnel and the organization of personnel occupying the building, so as to note whether the layout was planned with a space relation corresponding to the functional relation and functional sequence of operations of organized elements. And right there I butted against a stone wall wherever I turned. My efforts were met by a diplomatic filibuster and word barrage, and by being shunted here and there, which put to shame our much-vaunted "bucking-passing" in the Army, and simply evolved the fact that the 15 elements occupying the Paris building were not yet

organized into related elements, but were for the most part independent agencies duplicating each other's effort, and that such re-organization was then in the process of development, with proponents and antagonists for every question involved. Thus, obviously, while the architect of the building could not plan for an organization not yet effected, certain matters bearing on this subject had to be discussed in my report.

I was given a desk in an office on the Mezzanine floor, which floor is practically unused because it gets no daylight. The artificial light was likewise entirely inadequate, and the eye-strain which developed after a week's work in this darkness emphasized, by my own personal experience, the complaints from the personnel occupying several floors of the building. So I made a light survey with light-measuring equipment to show the amount of daylight and of artificial light in each room of the building and charted the results to emphasize the gravity of the existing condition, which showed from zero to one candle-power of daylight in the interior Mezzanine offices, and from a fraction of a candle-power to slightly over 3 candle-power at desk positions in many of the outside offices on the dark side street. Such details continued to crop up and demand special investigation, which then required constructive recommendations to remedy the defect, and these involved the preparation of plans, charts and cost estimates.

For instance, unable to work in darkness, I sought vacant desk space in offices of other floors and tried several different rooms, only to discover that the rear offices of lower floors were rendered untenable by the noise of circulation pumps of the oil-burning heating plant and by the air-supply blowers in the basement; and offices higher up were subjected to the noise from half a dozen large power-exhausters (one as large as 20 horsepower) adjoining offices on the third floor, and from the AC hum of rheostat starters. To report these conditions and recommend a remedy required that the source of each noise be isolated, and, obviously, all such special investigations of mechanical installations simply added to the weeks already spent in noting developed structural defects, in writing specifications to remedy them, and in drafting a discussion of fundamentals of planning which should be met in future buildings.

In the case of the Paris Embassy residence, and most of the buildings inspected subsequently, I had to go into the Embassy accounts to see what the building had cost us in first cost, repairs and modifications, to determine whether further expenditure was justified.

I mention the above details because friends

have complained that I haven't told them what my work involved. Actually, every inspection has presented an entirely different and distinct problem, and, since I have been requested to present any data which seems desirable as a basis for action by the Foreign Buildings Office in Washington, without any specific definition or limitation of the scope of my work, I have had to cover the whole field of human endeavor in some of my reports, as justification for my existence these ten months past.

Paris was the first job I faced, and it was the biggest job and worst problem. No French contractors could (or would) give a reasonable estimate of the cost of contemplated work items without detailed measurements and calculations, and they expected to be paid even for giving us a rough idea of what we'd have to pay them to do the actual work. A typical example of their methods is shown by my experience with a plumbing and heating contractor whom we called in one day to ask for a rough estimate on the replacement of old bathroom piping in the Embassy residence. I told him we'd like an estimate arrived at very quickly by multiplying the cost of doing the work in one bathroom by the number of bathrooms. He would not give me any estimate at all on such a basis. So I said, "Can you tell me whether the whole installation would cost 100,000 or 200,000 francs?" No, he couldn't even estimate withing that wide a margin. So I said, "Can you tell me whether it would cost 1,000,000 or 2,000,000 francs?" The contractor gathered that these fool Americans might possibly throw away such a large amount, so, after making a great show of measuring everything and of discussing it with his partner overnight, he phoned next day that it would cost 1,000,000 francs (\$66,000)! With a figure no more useful than that, I simply put into my estimate an item of \$5,000 as being all that was justified for that particular work.

Thus, the well-known French national policy of "soaking the Americans" was exemplified in my official dealings. It was the same in personal dealings. I tried to purchase some metal stampings for future use in making a house-model, and I took with me one of our Embassy men from the commercial section to help me make the deal. One of the partners of the firm quoted to us prices posted up on sample display boards. I made my selection accordingly. The same prices were also quoted by the clerk at the counter. They were cheap, and I therefore ordered them in quantities most convenient to count out. During the process, the other partner came out and had a very quiet earnest conference with those who had dealt with us. When I asked for the bill, they then told me that the

prices on display were old prices, and that present prices were six times those quoted! (They didn't make the sale.)

At Paris, my work was further complicated, as it has been also at every inspection so far, by lack of stenographic assistance to take dictation on the spot as I make the inspection, and to enter the defects in short-hand directly on the form on which I show defects grouped according to the work divisions of contract specifications. The Paris Consular Executive "could not possibly spare a stenographer". The Embassy administrative element could not give me the assistance even in typing "until next week". So I scribbled my drafts, and typed some myself, assisted by a door-keeper who, on his night-watch shifts, typed up my first draft. The revised draft in final form was handed to somebody's private stenographer. She did one page a day until I pointed out that there were fifty pages. Then the job was parcelled out among numerous typists, and the typographical result, when combined, was marvelous to behold.

Thus, my labors in Paris on both the \$2,500,000 Office Building and the Embassy residence (on which we've already spent \$350,000) dragged on into months--months during which it rained daily with only a few days of intermittent sunshine, and during which I simply worked, ate and slept.

What a Life! And Oh how I missed American food! For convenience, we ate breakfast at a restaurant on the top floor of our office building, run by an American negro man who had two French white-girl assistants! But the food was un-American, greasy, and unappetizing. Lunches were obtained at various tea rooms, cafés, bars; and dinners at restaurants, cafés, hotels. We found that people who recommended places were not very careful in their consideration of our needs. So we ran into all sorts of places--amusing in the observance of French life and customs, but exasperating when we found that our expected meal would have to consist of beverages (for we had been recommended merely to a fashionable bar!)

We were recommended to one place by an ex-patriot American, who said that it served American food. Shades of Mrs Roosevelt! The first item on the menu was Hot Dog, and the second was Super Hot Dog! Here is the French description of this delicacy: --



1. HOT DOG.....

Savoureux saucisse de Strasbourg  
sur petit pain grillé.

2. SUPER-HOT-DOG Géant.....

Un petit repas composé de saucisses alsaciennes, grillées, servies dans un petit pain rond, sur un lit de celeri et cornichons émincés, couronné d'un buisson de pommes allumettes et accompagné d'une garniture d'une fraicheur printanière.

A hot dog and a gigantic super-hot-dog! If Mrs Roosevelt had doctored those she served at the White House luncheons with all the descriptive camouflage above, surely her guests would not have criticised their hostess' menu.

Thus we tasted of the French customs and foods, ordering many delicacies of unknown nature to improve our french, usually with disastrous results -- such as pissenlit salad (which I am prevented from translating literally by conventions of delicacy), and abbatis de volailles (which, after eating, we translated literally as "foul garbage"), and my companion endured the disposition which developed from unsatisfactory feeding in strange places. Eventually, after leaving Paris, we learned that taking all meals at our hotel was a more satisfactory arrangement than browsing around at various restaurants.

Toward the end of our sojourn in Paris, the sun came out for moody intervals. So we "did the Louvre" in 30 minutes, strolled through the Tuilleries Gardens, browsed at the bookstalls, visited the usual sights, and tried to take some color-movies. Our efforts were not a howling success. The camera was an old one without speed adjustment and the instructions as to timing were not applicable to the color film. Nor did this film even serve as a test film. For -- all Kodachrome advertising to the contrary notwithstanding -- the Paris office could not process the color films. To send them to London involved customs duties and red tape, so we waited till we got to Rome. There, again, they could not develop the film, and they were not on speaking terms with London in those days of "sanctions", so I mailed the half dozen reels to London myself, to discover finally that they were mostly underlined. In Berlin, too, they are not yet equipped to process the color film. Oh for a penalty for dishonest advertising!



At length we fled from Paris to Spain. We got on the Orleans road, so went on through the Chateaux along the Loire, taking a look at Blois, Amboise, Loches, etc; then on to Bordeaux and to Biarritz, where the season had not opened, and we couldn't even find a place to eat lunch; on into Spain through Irun and San Sebastian, which are now probably in ruins, to Burgos. At Burgos, we viewed the cathedral and a few other landmarks, and next morning went on to Madrid, where we arrived at dusk amid the clanging of traffic and the hectic crowds leaving the stores for the day.

Madrid was just another city to us, and, other than to walk a bit along the streets at night in the crowds out for their evening stroll, and to be impressed with the jazzy atmosphere and blaring ~~music~~ radios of the place, we saw nothing of it, for we left next morning for Cordoba and Seville.

Arrived at Seville about 9:30 at night, we hunted around for a hotel more suitable than the one recommended, and finally located a very nice one a few blocks from our consulate and overlooking a park. Mayday then came upon us with its Communist demonstration. The hotel staff quit for the day, and the doors were barred, but aside from the pulling up of flowers and trees in the parks, there was no apparent disorder. Police had been withdrawn for the day, so there was no one to oppose, and the demonstrations of the day were well organized. In our trip through Spain, we observed numerous demonstrations, either fascist or communist according to the local persuasion, and encountered patrols of the Civil Guard on the highways, but there were no clashing elements in our path, so our progress was uneventful.

To be fed on Mayday, I lunched with the Consul. Our Consulate is a \$200,000 residence designed for its present purpose, but originally constructed as one of the buildings in the American Group of exhibition buildings for the Iberian-American Exposition. It is of permanent construction, situated among old fair buildings of temporary wood, tar paper, and plaster construction now crumbled to ruins. All these left over buildings from the fair were presented in a magnificent gesture to the city of Seville by the various foreign countries which built them, but the city was bankrupt after the fair, and too poor to tear them down, so they are still located in an otherwise beautiful park in a dilapidated condition, and the destitute people had invaded them and were living in them together with their animals in a squalor and filth unimaginable.

My work in Seville was comparatively simple, and having itemized defects, specified remedies, and obtained bids, we went on to Tangier to my next job.

In Morocco we actually got a bit of sunshine. Heihle frequented the beach of the Bay of Tangier and got as brown as a native from daily exposure; but, aside from bathing a couple of times in the rolling surf on the interminable sands of the West African shore, my work inside gave me little opportunity to get any healthy color.

From our hotel we overlooked the bay and the old walled city of Tangier, across the bluest of waters to the coast of Spain with its misty mountains. At times, we could see the entire coast of Spain and the Rock of Gibraltar, some thirty-three miles away, and the water looked calm and placid; but in our crossing of this same water from the Bay of Gibraltar to Tangier on the day we arrived, we were tossed about in a little boat by a storm which had pursued us through the mountains from Seville for 147 miles, and our four-hour passage of the straits completed my utter annihilation.

Tangier is an international city where foreigners of many nationalities rub elbows with the Moorish and Berber peoples. With the many different religions, each with its own Sabbath, every day seems to be market-day. Women bearing heavy loads of faggots, walk for miles into town, bringing with them a string of asses saddled with double wicker baskets like saddle-bags which contain goats, chickens, charcoal or grass, which seem to be their only produce. The people gather in crowds and squat around the open market-place with their wares spread before them, and at the end of the day, they have a few coins in their possession to show for their effort. In the midst of the jabbering crowds, we found fakirs who tweedled little reed pipes and made snakes come out of baskets and passed as snake charmers. If we walked down among them, we were besieged by boys who had acquired a smattering of English and these attempted to persuade us to use them as guides. Or, at other times small children would walk along in front of us begging for a penny. The poverty of the people seemed to be indicated by their filthy appearance, but with the exception of the professional beggars, they seemed to be satisfied with their situation in life, and only the dregs of European humanity which drifted to their shores constituted a discontented element which fomented trouble.

Our hotel was on a hillside surrounded by extensive gardens profuse with flowers. From our window we could look down into the gatherings of the people a block away, and, consequently we had always with us the braying of animals, the jabbering of the populace, the barking of dogs, the tinkling of bells, the blowing of trumpets by the French-Moroccan gendarmerie in some ceremony like guard mount, the monotonous chant of the

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beggars, the piercing notes of automobile horns, the tweedling music of snake charmers, the beating of drums, the crowing of roosters, and finally, the call of the muezzins to prayer from the mosque towers. At 3:30 a.m. one night I was awakened by this prayer call from one tower to another in a peculiar twang of voice which seems to carry for a remarkable distance. The mosques here were not like the splendid edifices of Turkey, and their towers did not resemble the Turkish minarets, but a transition toward the Turkish conception was noticeable as we proceeded Eastward through Northern Africa.

So you see we observed some of the customs of the country, even though we lacked the time to penetrate deeper into the various noises we heard and the smells that we smelled. We found it interesting, of course, and came across some curious incidents of the local life--such as funeral processions with the corpse carried on a plank on the shoulders of several men who marched through the streets chanting music to the weird noise of drums and reed pipes; and again, a wedding ceremony, with the bride concealed in an enclosed howdah on the back of an ass, escorted through the streets by candle-bearers led by the groom and followed by the mother-in-law.

The architectural features of our Legation at Tangier render this building undoubtedly unique among the foreign properties of the United States. Acquired originally by gift of the Sultan, the desirability of preventing the establishment of a house of ill repute on adjoining property inspired our further acquisition of that additional property by gift of a prominent Moor, and later another adjoining property was acquired and developed as a guest house to protect our light and air supply to a tiny little court garden. The property occupies both sides of a street seven feet wide, which simply becomes a covered arched passageway passing under the upper floors of our Minister's residence.

If one approaches our Legation from the interior of the old city, he must walk through twisting streets sometimes 5 feet wide, sometimes 6 to 8 feet, but seldom more. If he seeks our Legation from outside the old city walls, where the newer city has been developed, he will probably start out to walk upon a sidewalk, but will find that this occidental custom is unsuited to the life of Tangier. The sidewalks are obstructed by people taking naps upon them, by wars of the shops displayed upon them, and by asses, donkeys, and horses, upon them, tied against the buildings and walls to keep them off the street. Thus at various places the sidewalks of the newer portion of the city have become stable floors on which the animals and the accumulated filth present a definite barrier to further progress, and the pungent

odor of neglected stables hastens the pedestrian, who now necessarily picks his way down the middle of the street.

Arrived at the corner of the old walls, the visitor pursues his way toward the only gateway in the Southern wall to the old city. His way lies between high walls which seem to constitute an irresistible invitation to local inhabitants to commit a nuisance and thus add a human stench to that of the animals, despite the fact that close by is a French urinoir of equal public exposure. A few yards farther on one ascends steps up the foundation walls leading through a Moorish-arched gateway, and at the top he finds himself in a narrow street surrounded by entrances to houses and apartments, where the "bouquet d'Orient" is equally offensive, although barbed wire has been stretched in an ineffectual attempt to bar the use of a particularly alluring corner. This street turns abruptly to the left and then right, and from a width of five feet, where overhead projecting corners of opposite houses are only one-eighth of an inch apart, one enters an 8-foot street which becomes an arched covered way whose exterior wall-face bears the coat of arms of the United States. A heavy iron-studded wooden door to the left opens into an interior patio leading to the Consulate, around which a paved and arched portico leads to wide brick-paved steps mounting to the Minister's apartments.

To the right, a door from the covered way leads into the guard room with native guards in attendance, and to the Minister's office, and another gateway opens into a tiny court garden on which the office faces. Iron-grilled windows with solid wood-pannelled shutters, peep out from the brilliant bouganvillea foliage climbing the walls of this garden, and from its formalized walks around an antique carved stone fountain one ascends stone steps to balustraded terraces above, onto which the small guest house faces. This guest house and a loggia opposite are constructed in Hispano-Arabic style lending a very interesting and colorful note to the architectural composition. And while the Minister's residence proper also opens onto this upper terrace of the court garden, and the details of the residence do not adhere rigidly to any single architectural style, nevertheless in obtaining American comfort, light and ventilation, our Minister has produced results affording innumerable surprises, quaint angles, unexpected niches, and charming retreats with the use of Spanish tiles, antique Spanish doors, wrought iron grills, carved marble mantels, sculptured stone and marble fountains, wrought iron light fixtures and crystal chandeliers, which, together with interior antique furnishings of great intrinsic value, have continually evoked expressions of appreciation from our own nationals, as well as from foreign visitors.

The approach to our property is quaint and picturesque, and obviously lacks nothing of local ~~the~~ color,

so it is a distinct pleasure to come unexpectedly upon the vistas of our clean, attractive patio and tiny court garden seen through the open gateways of an oriental street.

My work in Morocco completed, I proceeded to Rome, at, seemingly, an over-increasing pace to catch up with time:--

Departure from Tangier via auto through Africa; a day at Fez, hagglng in the quaint, Moorish shops over alluring purchases of hand-tooled, hand-illuminated Moroccan leather, and rambling through the narrow twisted, tortuous streets of that old walled city -- untouched by time or civilization; then on through Algeria and Tunisia with stops at several old towns reminiscent of the struggle between Ancient Carthage and Rome, whose ruins breathe the atmosphere of those past centuries; lunch with our Consul at Tunis; then across the Mediterranean to Palermo, Sicily, by overnight boat aboard which were 600 Balilla boys tooting their horns and sleeping on deck under our stateroom windows; arrival in Italy where I was met by one of our Consuls, whose assistance helped us through customs procedure; lunch with the Consul General, then on through Sicily to Messina, and through clustered towns of tile-roofed pink stone-houses perched high on the hill-tops of mountainous Southern Italy; a night on the hillside far from any hotel accommodations, where our Army cots and mosquito nets were pitched under the canopy of the open sky and we bathed in moonlit waters; through Pompeii, with a quick inspection of that ruined city; a night in Naples, whose well-publicized view of distant Vesuvius across the blue waters of the bay was enjoyed by us from the conventional vantage point of the Grand Hotel dining terrace; then to Rome -- the Eternal City -- vaunting her dead Glories of the past as merit of the present; a swim with a Secretary of Embassy at a distant beach of the sea; a dinner at the villa of the Charge d'Affaires, with numerous Royal Hignesses, Hignesses, and lesser lights among the guests; an inspection of the Farnese Palace, of the Queen Mother's Palace, and of the villa of our former Ambassador; an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the fog in which an old deaf finance clerk works so as to get reimbursed for travel expenses; a commencement of my inspection of our twin villa property at Rome interrupted by a State Dept telegram asking me to visit Ankara, Turkey, at once and report on available sites, construction and labor costs at that new Turkish capital; and so a departure from Rome for Turkey; a Saturday night stop in Florence to see friends; a personally-conducted tour of everything in Florence on Sunday, including churches, museums, monks' cells, etc., etc; tea at a lovely old 12th-century villa, and a cocktail at a later-built more ostentatious place with elaborate Italian gardens; a night in Venice with a gondola-ride

to our hotel on the Grand Canal; then to Trieste, and through delightful mountainous country (formerly Austrian) which soon became simply an arduous problem of negotiating twisting roads of horse-and-buggy days, dusty and rocky, which cut our tires unmercifully, causing many punctures and one blowout; through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria where road signs were either entirely lacking or else they were in Russian lettering and we couldn't read them; finally into Edirne, Turkey, (Adrianople), with no spare tire left, and one or two which we'd patched on the road becoming flat; where we found that no tires could be purchased, so abandoned the auto in the grounds of a boys' training school, whose director came to our rescue; then proceeded to force our way by carriage through streets filled with torch processions of uniformed Turks and throngs of the populace celebrating the Montreux Concessions, and just made the night train to Istanbul (Constantinople), held waiting by the police while they examined our tickets and passports; a dirty all-night ride in what appeared to be a third-class compartment, but we were told by the conductor that it was first-class; arrival at Istanbul next morning; purchase of two Ford tires for the heart-rending price of 80 Turkish Pounds (\$64.00); and the return of my companion back by train with the tires to bring the car down over roads even worse than we had already encountered; lunch with the Ambassador's family at their out-of-town place; a trip across the Bosphorus in our swift, high-powered Government boat; an overnight trip by train to Ankara (Angora, the new Turkish capital) with the Ambassador; an inspection of possible sites and of building costs; return to Istanbul, with its mosques and minarets towering in oriental mysticism among red-tile-footed wooden houses, rising tier upon tier from the water's edge; then the detailed work of preparing sketch plans for an Embassy group at Ankara, of completing my report, and of inspecting and reporting on the property we own in Istanbul.

All these things crowded themselves upon me, and there I was in Turkey in the heat of August, and after the day's work, seeking the welcome breeze from the sea, gazing across the water to the towns and hills of the opposite Asiatic shores from the private porch to my room, high up in a modernistic hotel, enduring a rasping voice screeching an oriental song at high radio amplification from a beer garden in the distance. Our hotel, however, had a very nice orchestra of Jewish musicians escaped from Germany; and, from the open-air dining room at night, its sentimental strains lent a romantic atmosphere to the blue waters, the distant lights, and the silent boats gliding through the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus.



A swim in the sea of Marmora; a swim in the Black Sea; a tour of the mosques; numerous walks through the dilapidated cobble-stone streets, unkempt and filthy; a visit to the bazaars where I bought me a Turkish costume, including a pair of great baggy trousers (designed, they say, so as to catch Mohammed when he is re-born to a man); and a tour of the former Sultan's palace and harem, with its museum of treasures containing jewelled thrones and loose jewels of such enormous size and in such quantities that one thinks no more of them than if they were imitation stones -- these things I managed to get in during my stay in Istanbul.

With my work in Turkey nearing completion, I was thinking that the reasonable thing to do would be to go from there direct to Persia and cover my inspection at Teheran, when my attention was called to a Department press release which designated me as one of the American delegates to the International Congress on Bridges and Structures in Berlin, meeting October 1st to 8th, so we picked up our belongings and headed toward Prague, where I expected to find some instructions concerning this additional duty.

In an effort to avoid the terrible roads we had found in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey, we loaded our car onto an American export freighter, and, as passengers aboard her, we sailed up the Black Sea to Constanza, Roumania. On that boat was a happy crew of Americans, and it was solace to our souls to be among American-speaking people and get some American food again. The sea was calm, and the hours spent in a deck chair in the sun gave me a healthy color and the first relaxation for many months.

After a night aboard ship enroute, and another anchored at Constanza awaiting customs inspection, during which night we saw something of Constanza with members of the boat crew, we hit the road again, and, after crossing the Danube, we found roads of ever-improving quality as we neared civilization. Overnight stops at Bucarest -- "the gayest capital of Europe" -- and at Brasov and Cluj in Roumania, at Budapest, at Vienna, and Prague, brought us to the instructions which I sought, and necessitated my proceeding to Berlin, where we arrived October 1st.

Here, aside from contacting the other members of the delegation and participation in that activity, I have drafted my report on our Blücher Palace property in the heart of Berlin, and am struggling now to complete plans showing ~~what~~ the property as it exists -- which is quite different from the only plans available and filed at the Department -- and plans showing alternative ways to use the property. Before we bought it (for \$1,705,000), it was gutted by fire, and later, a cave-in of the subway which was built some 6 feet from the corner of our foundations and far below them, ripped



our building from basement to roof by cracks. The building itself is considered as being a national monument -- not because it is a product of one of the worst periods of German architecture, but because it was built for Marshal Blücher -- and while the desirable use of it is to demolish it and build to fit our needs (and my report must suggest plans on such a basis), this may be impossible without permission of the German Government, and so my report must also consider how best to use the existing structure and show sketch plans for such a development.

Thus "Time marches on", and ahead of me lies the necessity of inspecting our property at Teheran, Persia, before (or after) winter snows close the routes of communication, of completing my inspection at Rome, of covering Tirana, Albania, of inspecting our Legation property at Prague, Czechoslovakia, and then remains London and Oslo, Norway, which I am determined to cover in good weather in the spring. I have spent months in Paris during the rainy season, and am now in Germany in the rainy season. It affects the mind. After seeing Europe in the rain, I cannot blame Germany for wanting a place "in the sun", but and I am equally convinced that she has no reason to want France, since I have seen France in the rain. With such experiences behind me, I may be expected to return home a more useful citizen, with a much broader horizon, but narrower in this respect: -- I am convinced that the "Good Old U. S. A." is the only place on earth worth living in for an American.

Our Foreign Service personnel may enjoy international life, for a great many of them whom I have met have acquired foreign wives of one nationality or another, but for my part, give me a wife who has travelled enough to have acquired the "provincial" mind sufficiently to know there is no place like home.

And while I'm on that subject, the following should be made known: -- I have thrown money into the fountain of the harem of the Sultan of Turkey, with its promise ~~xxxxxx~~ that the donor ~~will~~ will give birth to a son; I have sat under the sacred fig trees of Morocco, with their traditional guarantee of a son born to the sifter; I have purchased me a pair of Mohammedan trousers; I have beguiled every stork which we encountered in the fields and on the chimney tops. What more can I lack toward winning the trust fund established by Queen Victoria (2,000,000 Pounds) for the first man who gives birth to a child? Echo answers, What more?

So, my friends, you, who think I've been detailed on a soft job, should know from the account herein that it is a job which has demanded everything I had in time and effort, to the exclusion of personal activities, in an atmosphere far from my friends, and that touring from place to place was a means of transportation between duty posts. Touring has been a nuisance. So I am now about to send the car home or store it till spring, and travel like a gentleman instead of a tourist.

My travels have not made me an international financier, although it almost takes a financier to keep track of the foreign currencies and the exchange rates and regulations which one encounters in crossing the many borders over here. It has, of course, made me conversant with conditions which our Foreign Service endures and with certain needs of our Government in the organization and housing of our Foreign Service missions. If that information is made of use in the future, or if any of my recommendations are acceptable to the Powers--that--Be, my trip will have been of some use. If not, I shall simply have for my effort the expressed appreciation of the Heads of our Missions, whether Consul or Minister or Ambassador, and it will doubtless be written up in Cullum's Register (if I furnish a draft) when I am dead.

In the mean time, I am not yet dead, and now that I've finally broken down and proved that fact by this epistle -- mimeographed to cover its wide distribution -- if you have not succumbed from the effect of reading it, you owe me a letter.

With best personal regards,

*H. M. Underwood*

H. M. Underwood,

Capt., C.E., U. S. Army,

Care Foreign Buildings Office,

State Department,

Washington.

*Regards to your family -*