

December 10th

1926
Pensione Fioenza,
Via del Presto di San Martino, 7,
Firenze, Italy.

Laurie dear:

Each day lately I've started to write & then stayed my hand, thinking, "There'll surely be a letter from her today at the American Express? But there never is, & here I shall miss your Christmas and New Year, too, if I wait one day more. But Goodness, it does seem a long time since the 8th of October. I think of all that you've been doing & thinking & experiencing in two whole months. Surely, something worth writing about.

Am wondering if some, or all, of my letters have gone astray, & you're waiting, in hushed silence, until you hear from me? It's a fact that practically our only correspondent is Thibley, who writes every few days, & who seems to receive our letters. But of all the host of friends I've written to since we landed in France, only Mr. Hervey has responded, and the three small

a note from Mrs. K. yesterday. She's broken a blood-vessel in one eye & is almost blind. Let's hope it's temporary.

packages I sent to three different people from Paris, have never been acknowledged. So we'll cross the mails & leave it at that.

But I rather hope you'll have received an Alinari print I sent you from here about two weeks ago. It's a scene from Boccaccio, by an unknown painter, and goes in three sections. Sorry the colors of the three don't quite match. You'll see where the pieces overlap to fit together. They give a generous margin. I did so love the pattern of it, I hoped you would, too. Maybe you can mount it on a wooden panel, leaving a border on which you could trace some gold & red & blue pattern. That's the way it's mounted here.

O there are so many things I want to send you, dear! Or better still, to have you see, and choose, and acquire for your very own. The iron work, for instance.

There are innumerable little shops, or rather, studios, in this neighborhood, where they design & forge the most exquisite grille-work, & lanterns, and candlesticks,

and great dragony chandeliers for the old palazzi. ~~At~~ Such sights as one sees in the late afternoons, when the street is dark & the glare from the forges & sparks from anvils pick out the brown, eager faces of the craftsmen!

There's so much I want to sketch here, but it's grown so beastly cold that standing about on street-corners is out of the question. We trot briskly out to our little studio-in-a-garden, cradling through the dry leaves of the plane trees on the Viale Machiavelli, and making clouds of steam with our breath. Then, once we're inside, milk-can, bread, & cheese for lunch safely stowed, we dash for the little stufa & stuff-ies full of kindling & funny little round balls of charcoal! Keep warm enough, too, especially now that we're both beginning to cut in stone. That's hot work! Eva's doing her nativity relief, and I a seated figure I just modelled for practise before starting the Bauer bust. That is due to arrive in a few days. Please pray that it won't be smashed to bits. I couldn't

get insurance against breakage. We are taking carving lessons every Sunday morning from the master-carver at the Art Institute, who is also Andreotti's best man. Andreotti being the most distinguished sculptor hereabouts. He has promised to give Eva some criticisms & she's been waiting with bated breath, for his appearance. He keeps putting it off, in an exasperating way, but now promises to come tomorrow.

I shall go and visit the Accademia, or the Uffizzi, for I've no intention of letting in on her lessons. Poor child is feeling dreadfully rushed as she's a rather slow worker, & her time is pretty limited as she feels she must be back in London by March. I'm hoping I can persuade her to stay on longer, though. There will be so many places we want to visit together later in May or June, if we can only wend our way northward together.

I'm slowly beginning to get the hang of this language, but one's gray matter is certainly hard to dent when one's thirty six. I think I've got a verb all pinned down,

and Presto! It's vanished again. Have
an awfully nice teacher, a young Italian
girl, pretty and friendly & full of character.
I've discovered she has a very good voice,
so after my tri-weekly lesson, which is
the last in her full day, we play hockey
& work over some Brahms songs she
doesn't know. It's awfully hard to find
any Brahms, or Franz, or Wolf, translated
into Italian. And she knows no German.
But we've found a few gems, & have
a lovely time with my rather tin-penny
upright. And occasionally she's of immense
value, for she kindly offers to go to shops
etc, with me, and that helps ~~at~~ a lot.
For instance, the other day I had a rather
unexpected & not wholly welcome letter
from Mrs. Hervey's sister, Miss Bryant, asking
me to go & collect over a thousand lire
from a dealer she's ^{done} ~~had~~ business with
& who owes her that amount & apparently
refuse to pay up. Even in English, this
would not be a job to my taste, but
imagine tackling him in Italian! Signorina
Gabrielli went with me yesterday to beard

the lion in his den, & he admitted in her presence that he owed the amount. I am to call for it today. Here's hoping!

Have I told you about Mother's & my flying trip to Siena last week? Just for two days. A quaint & fascinating spot, tucked up on its high hill with the ground dropping away sheer on all sides. The wonderful Campo with the Mangia tower, like a great sword cutting the sky, the hideous Duomo, spotted all over with colored & striped marbles, & pimpled with horrible sculptured excrescences, and yet, some old parts of it so wonderfully beautiful! And the views, over the hills with their aspiring cypresses, their clusters of creamy farm houses, & perhaps a pair of great slow oxen plowing on a nearly slope! Wow! The railroad trip was almost more delectable than the city itself.

Mother is still here, as Mrs. Perkins' plans fluctuate from day to day, & she can't decide when or where she wants to go. She's in Munich now, but may come down to Italy sometime this month. However nothing is certain.

I try to get over to see mother at least a half an hour every day, or more, but it's a bit difficult & I fear she's lonely. I wish I knew what I ought to do. Am afraid I'm being awfully selfish in coming over to live with Eva.

Well, dear, I could go on & on at this rate, but what

I want is to hear about you. Do write long & fully. want you? your Grandma.