

Hotel du Saumon
Verneuil, France -
August 20th, 1927 -

My Precious Laurie:

You've been much in the hearts
and on the tongues of at least three
people in France, during the past
four days. It was four days ago that
I came back from Belgium (where I
saw Mother aboard the "Belgenland",
bound for Shirley and her Nancy) -
and joined the Herveys. "My word!" but
it was good to see them again! It
can't be for any great length of time,
for I'm going back to Florence very
soon, but it may be the sweetest for
that. We have wandered into Normandy,
West & North-West of Paris. Little
towns we'd none of us seen before -
first Evreux, then little Conches, and
now this dear, wonderful Verneuil,
where we'd stay indefinitely, I believe,
if Chartres did not call so insistently.
There are two extraordinary churches
here which have us completely hypnotized.
Such a weird mixture of Norman

I'll hope to find a letter from
what are you doing there?
perhaps at Chartres. Are you in Santa Fe, &
all my love - darling - Brenda

foundation, Gothic development, and a jumble
of 17th & 18th Century additions (mostly awful),
as you never did see. But the architects
of our own day are re-assembling & re-
creating order out of chaos — restoring
faint old carvings to their rightful
niches, uncovering the noble & massive
Norman (Romanesque) columns & capitals,
clearing out 18th century pink & tawdriness,
and generally leading us back into the
true path. Curious, & mightily encouraging.
The way the 20th Century has learnt
the value of the 14th, and is doing
its best to mitigate the damage done
by the bad taste of the 18th & 19th —
Eva & I found it everywhere, and
were immensely heartened thereby.

However, here in sleepy little Versailles,
except for the restorations in the churches,
and one or two quite up to date shops
on the Grand' Place, we might just
as well be in the Middle Ages, for
every little crooked back street has
its queer old top-heavy ^{timbered} houses (like
Vitry), and most everybody wears blouse
& sabots, and the tourist passes by
without stopping. But on Monday we
are off to Chartres, and O, if you were

only have to complete the circle! Mrs. H.
has a small camera & tripod, & has
been working busily, but it's not as if
you were doing it. The weather, for out-
of-door work, has been quite hopeless.
Raining, cold, damp & windy practically
all the time, & one does need sun,
both for photography & for sketching.

I've been drawing all along the
line from Bourges to Caen, and in
adorable Bruges. But drawing takes
so long that it is almost out of
the question unless one stays at least
three days in a place.

As a matter of fact, I've been seeing &
too much. I've absorbed & absorbed
until I'm like a dripping sponge, - I
must get back to work & pour some
of it out in legitimate channels.

Haven't an idea yet as to what I'm
going to do, but I do know pretty
well now how I'm going to do it. So
perhaps that is something. Why is
growing always such a painful job?
I have suffered, this past year. But
if it only leads to something, I shan't

they speak of you with glowing affection. Maybe he's written you since you said you were going to. They're gone to bed, but I know they send their love with mine - we meet? We

judge the pain. I'm delighted to find that the Herwys, especially W.L., appreciate the greatness of my future master-Andreotti. I have a little booklet on him with me. If I can get another in Paris, will send you one, for I know some of his work would appeal to you tremendously.

I left Veil Birch working in my studio, & told her I wouldn't need it again until October 1st or thereabouts. But I guess she won't mind if I come back & work in a corner on some new crops.

Eva is back in London, & has found a studio out in St John's Wood. Remember our call on Sir Bertram McKennal? She has a few possible commissions to fulfill, & has gotten in touch with at least one big architect, so I guess she won't starve. I miss that beautiful spirit & mentality. It will be very empty in Florence without her.

I doubt now if Shirley & Eliot will get over in the fall, as they had hoped, for a premature baby like Nancy will hardly be up to travelling for the first year. But I'm hoping Eliot may come over alone & start on his artistic career, & let them follow later. He can't afford to waste any time beginning.

Dearest - this is no kind of a letter, but I'm curiously tired. Will do better next time. Have showed the Herwys your Messia book, & they are carried away by it. Think it wonderful.