

Hotel Cecelia.

July 17<sup>th</sup>/31

My dearest Beloved

We have had a simply wonderful week, and have seen and done so much, that it feels like a year, we certainly have made "whoopie" around France -

I think in my last letter I finished off at a place called Château Gontier, where we were marooned, on account of the car magneto refusing to work - we hoped to be able to start early in the morning, but did not leave eventually till 2 o'clock in the afternoon. So we filled in our time in the morning walking about the town we saw a fine funeral which was interesting as well as part of a wedding - Roger was all smiles when eventually we started off. After about an hour we came to Angers where we stopped to see the most colossal old fort you have ever imagined, with a fine old drawbridge + moat, soon after this we had our first view of the Loire river a broad river with many sand flats in it, + traversed every so many miles by

bridges of this type usually made of light coloured stone - a very windy road runs on a fairly high embankment beside the river and here and there you ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> spots of scarlet poppies - before long we espied a chateau on the opposite side of the river, but we did not stop to see this one as we were headed for Chinon - Chinon is a very old chateau and most of it in ruins, but the old landscape garden on top of the ramparts remains, it was at this chateau where Joan of Arc was first brought before the King to ask his consent to lead the troops. Richard Cour de Lion spent his last days here - I picked some spikes of lavender from the garden - + Alice + John descended down dozens of steps to a dark dungeon, Alice suddenly imagined she was an escaping prisoner and ran from John flying up the steps, it being very dark + damp below it did not take long for John to pursue her - We each brought a pretty little lace

handkerchie at the <sup>3</sup> door.

We then had only about 20 minutes to get to the next chateau we wanted to see before closing time, so the driver took us at a terrific speed along a perfectly straight road with many marvelously graded hills, lonely trees on either side. We arrived just in time to join the last tour through "Ayay Le Rideau".

Ayay Le Rideau is a beautiful <sup>more</sup> ~~most~~ peaceful looking chateau square with a tower and pinnacle at each corner, it is surrounded on three sides by water artificial pools which come right to the base of the structure. From these pools flow streams with little cascades here and there, the streams meander all through the lovely old gardens, and you find old bridges to cross the water at intervals, water lilies in the bush pools, flowers in the gardens, & ivy growing on the trees, such a beautiful spot. — —  
Inside the rooms on view are beautifully

Rept up, and we <sup>4 saw</sup> some ~~some~~ exquisite old  
carved furniture, We find here a room that  
was used by Katharine de Medici, it contains  
her bed, + dressing table with the sweetest  
little blue china jug + wash basin - also  
the little desk ~~at~~ at which she knelt to  
pray + the the bible she used all written by  
hand on fine parchment -

We hated to leave this spot it was so  
lovely + so full of romance -

Our objective now was Tours where we  
meant to spend the night. . . . .

Arrived Tours and found a nice little  
hotel made gay with flower boxes. We had  
what they called a suite, 1 large room  
with two double beds, a bath room off one  
side, + a small room for the bébé off the  
other side, this we gave John for a dressing  
room, he occupied one bed + Alice + I had  
the other. The bath room was very french  
pink roses on the walls + blue + white tiled  
floor - - - - We went out in the evening  
+ saw throngs of people gathered for the  
National Procession, which consisted of soldiers  
carrying high things with 12 little <sup>lit</sup> lanterns on each

the procession terminated <sup>5:</sup> in front of the Palais de Justice, where "Le marseillaise" was played.

From here we drove to Chateau Amboise. The small chapel there contains the bones of Leonard de Vinci - We saw two most interesting towers in connection with this chateau. Both towers strongly built, inside of one was a spiral drive way for the cavalry to ascend to the chateau, + in the other a drive for the royal carriages, the latter was a wider spiral + not quite so steep - both towers were 300 metres high - there was some very bloody fighting which took place here below the chateau between R.C's + protestants. We saw a high up balcony from which dozens of prisoners were hung.

The Chateau at Chaumont was the next we visited, we walked up a long drive way to it, a bank covered with ivy on one side + fine shade trees over head. The garden was large and every where you seemed to see some odd kind of tree. They looked some of them like people Alice + I thought that were longing to tell you of the past,

This Chateau is in a very commanding position with a marvelous view both up & down the Loire - There is a very deep well in the court yard down which you may drop pebbles, you pop the pebble through the grate & then stand & listen for a long time before it splashes -

From here to Blois where we paid a short visit to Alice's school mistress, she was delighted to see us, & we met both her father & mother -

This Chateau here is very large & probably the most historical - the whole place makes you creepy & savours of intrigue - We

Saw Katherine de Medicis private suite, a bedroom small chapel, her work room with many secret cupboards & her "cabinet" (bath room) - just beyond her suite was a tower where prisoners were held, in the centre of the tower was an oubliette - - - It was here where the Duke of Guise's brother was imprisoned - We also saw where the Duke of Guise was murdered - poor chap! - - -

Towards evening we arrived at Chartres where we had come to see the Cathedral - we can not say much, it was unspeakably beautiful it quite overawes you - The stained glass is

utterly gorgeous & so much of it, like hundreds  
of yards of gorgeous precious stones set in the  
mysterious grey back ground of stone -

My original plan was to let the driver &  
car leave here, but he offered to take us to  
Paris for less than our train fares cost so off  
we went, arriving there at about 10 P.M. - We  
looked at one ~~or~~ or two hotels but did not  
like them - then finally decided to stay here  
and we have been very comfortable - We arrived  
Tuesday night and are leaving tonight (Saturday <sup>18<sup>th</sup></sup>)

We have seen & done a great deal in four  
days - . . . . .

Palais des  
Picture Galleries. The Louvre & Les Beaux Arts. -  
Shops. La Fayette & Le Printemps.

Versailles, the Paris Colonial Exposition  
Les Invalides where Napoleons Tomb is -

Les ~~Dr~~ Le Madelon, The Opera Rigoletto &  
the Spanish Ballet -

The Bois de Boulogne, The Trocadero, the gardens  
the bird market, the Quays, & the Eiffel tower  
also the Saint Chapelle - & Notre Dame.

The Colonial Exposition was wonderful  
the illuminations at night were gorgeous.

John & Alice went up to the top of the Eiffel tower, but not for me thank you. I think that they were rather scared — I forgot to say that while we were visiting the Egyptian part of the Exposition Alice & John had a ride on a camel, they looked to ~~sway~~ hump along, while an arab led them. They also went in a scenic & fly in boats etc. it was all most interesting & lots of fun — —

We have hardly spoken any English since we arrived, Alice & I have understood everything & have been able to make ourselves quite well understood. Even John dares a few sentences now —

We saw the hall at Versailles where the peace treaty of the last war was signed, the door where the allies came in & the door where the Germans entered as well as much more of great interest — —

Well the great adventure in France has come to an end, and we leave for Harve tonight — we arrive there at 11 o'clock & then cross the channel to Southampton by night — it seemed to be the only way to do it — ~~but~~ but rather a nuisance —



We will stay in Southampton & recuperate  
for a day on Monday morning we will rearrange  
our luggage & perhaps visit Mrs Scrimgeour  
& then go to St Leonards —

I will try & make up an expense card  
of the past two weeks for you soon, so you  
can see where we stand —

Love for Lois —

I have not time for any more letter  
writing now, so please give my news to  
any one interested — I trust that this  
has not been too long an epistle & not  
too disjointed, Alice & John have made  
many interruptions.