

a set of odors all its own. I entered the Medina Saturday morning for the first time in Mes with an official guide. Though I am usually against going along with guides I felt it might be advisable in this instance until I got to know the way around and wouldn't get myself inextricably lost.

It is now a little after 9 pm. I have been listening to Radio Nacional de Janeiro, Brasil - PLR-6, on 11,710 kilocycles. It has been coming in as strong as a whip and as clear as a whistle, not the slightest bit of static or distortion. This evening they played a good assortment of Brazilian records, which is all I really want them to do. There was "Belandrinha", "Serrana" and "Jeu Louco". So far I haven't yet heard "Brasil" during my moments at the receiver, but I presume they have played it many times during the times when I am unable to listen.

But let's see if we can't get ourselves into and out of the Medina.

The Medina as I was saying is a very strange place indeed. I entered it in the morning. Narrow cobble-streets along which shoved and pushed, laden donkeys, mules, Arab men in their dirty babouches, horses, Arab women, barefoot children and just mobs of people moving with and against you. In spite of the filth which is everywhere and the poverty which too is almost everywhere to be seen, there is a charm about the Medina. I got the biggest thrill just wandering about the different shops, watching the artisans practising their art out in their open stalls, or the open food markets and the crowds that gather to get a good price. When you walk into one of the bazaars, the Arab shop-keepers' eyes light up and twinkle and before he gives you his hand his hands close together briskly in happy anticipation. The American uniform seems to have remarkable transformations on them. They will spread big thick rugs before you, then you every piece of embroidery they have, display their leather goods before you, their bags, their babouches, their jewelry and quote fantastic prices. People who have been to Morocco before we arrived say that prices have risen here in all Africa, at least 100%. An article that formerly sold for 10 francs is now well priced at 100 or often 1.0 and 2.0 fr. While I was in Mes I scoured a little, buying a few things which I think you may like. I am sending them to you as soon as I can pack them properly. I also got my sisters some little things and my brother and father. By the time I had left Mes I had a fairly large sized package and a fairly empty purse. But there was a real joy in buying these little things.

I went shopping Saturday afternoon with an Arab friend and in one of the shops the owner invited me to have tea with him which I gratefully accepted and while he exposed his beautiful objects we sipped tea with mintleaves. My friend also took out the long Arab hashish pipe and puffed a little and passed it on to the others in the shop, made us think of our American Indians and the peace-pipe.

Reminding me of the American Indians has brought Levi Strauss to mind. I often wonder what he is doing, and where he has gotten by his courses on Les relations des parents. I really miss the Ecole Libre and the law school. Who knows whether I'll ever get the chance to go back to my studies. Here in Africa I have no time to do anything but work all the time. Studying of course is absolutely out of the question. My just reading a novel takes up. I still haven't finished L'Amour de Dieu, though I have gotten almost to the end. I should say that the novel assumes stature as it proceeds. At this stage I look forward eagerly to the few moments in the evening when I can continue my reading.

It is now 11:30 pm I should go home. London is on the air now to Brasil with their concert. I see that this letter really rumbles. Do you find it boring?

Here it is the 19th already and I still haven't mailed this letter. I'd better throw this into the letter box and start another one tomorrow or the day after. In that way you'll keep getting my letters.

So long sweetheart, keep writing to me. I have now received a whole pile of your letters.

And then on August 8th, 1940 the Battle of Britain began. Day after day, the Nazis hurled their fleets of bombers and planes against England in concentrated series of day attacks. The aim of the enemy was to achieve a quick death blow and thus bring a rapid decision and the end of the war in the Autumn or early winter of 1940. This was to be the big knockout blow of all. Squadrons of Junkers, Heinkels, Dorniers flew off to the attack convoys at sea and the Southeast ports of Portland, Weymouth, Dover and other strategic points. This was to prepare for the land offensive and invasion of Britain itself. The RAF went up to meet the Germans and the enemy recoiled back from the stinging blows. The Germans threw in more air fleets and the more that came over England the more the Spitfire and Hurricane crews knocked down. "Achtung, Schpitfeuer!" came to be a terrifying signal to the German air crews to prepare for their doom....On September 15th, 1940, the Royal Air Force blasted down 175 Nazi planes. A plane shot down every two or three kilometers. Between August 8th and October 31st, at least 2375 German planes were destroyed..

I did not know all this then, but there was hope still, though very little, in my heart as I prepared to leave Nazi-occupied France and return to the United States. Across Spain I flitted quickly. The pitiful poverty of the country appalled me - who had just come from France. Spain still in ruins, its buildings still nothing but hollow shells years after the war. And then I crossed into Portugal, where for the first time in my life I began to hear Portuguese spoken. I understand not a word of it. The little bit of Spanish I then knew was hopeless. But the bread was white, there was fish, and meat and eggs aplenty. There was light here and relative freedom. In Lisbon, I came across my first issue of the free French newspaper printed in London by DeGaulle. A chill of joy ran across my whole body. But the Portuguese intrigued me. Their language was totally foreign to me - to me who considered myself a Romance language and Litterature expert. And as my boat sailed from the docks of the Tejo and I waved goodbye to the Rocio, Cascais, and the few friends that I had made during my short stay in Lisbon, I swore that my second letter to Portugal would be written in the lingua de Camoes.

All these fantastic ideas raced through my head as I sat on the terrace of the Jaziri in Foz, oblivious of my newbulletins, of flashes, of letters to write, of the war of everything but this past that I was suddenly reliving. Isn't the human mind strange indeed? I thought of you then, afterwards, somewhere in Sao Paulo (it was late afternoon or early afternoon where you were) and I wondered what you were doing at that very moment....

The next day I went into the Medina to do some shopping and wander around the Arab souks and gaze at their merchandize and see what they wanted for the things they displayed on sale. An Arab Medina is a strange place indeed. It is unique in itself and has



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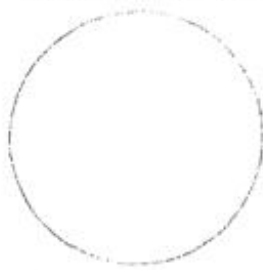
February 13, 1944

PAGE ONE

My Dearest Amrita, I have returned today from a most wonderful trip into the interior of Morocco and when I arrived at my office I found another one of your letters waiting for me. It was dated 17th of January, which is relatively recent. I hope by this time you have found my estrellita and my previous letters as well. Your enclosed made me smile, with jealous eyes. But let me use the few lines of this letter to tell you of my trip. As I've written before I have had very little time to myself since I have come here and have been working day and night the most fantastic hours on stretch you could imagine. Well I needed a rest. And the other day an occasion presented itself. The Deputy Director of the PWB in Morocco and a British Captain named Keates who works with us were both going into Morocco to Fes and Meknes on a trip and I went along with them. I had prepared a special feature story on Lincoln for the next day & so felt a little more secure in leaving the whole operation in my assistant's hands. Anyway I left this town with a clear conscience and sat back and breathed freely for the first time in many many weeks. I did think of you spending your "summer vacation" doing nothing all day and I laughed inwardly as I realized that I too was free for at least two days. (It is now 11:45 pm (7:45 in Brazil) and the BBC is giving the news in Brazilian for you. I wonder if you are listening at this very moment. I usually stick around in my office and listen to the Brazilian programs since it makes me feel better, even tho, I don't get as much sleep that way. But to get back to my trip. I have written to you of my impressions of the land in which I now live and its effect on me. The landscape, however, that sped by us on Friday afternoon was different. There was still the red earth, but this time the greens were dominating, for we passed mile after mile of rolling green tablelands, hills that are ideal pasturelands and on which sheep, cows, horses and goats bounce around while an Arab reclines nonchalantly beneath a tree in the shade. Perhaps I am a child, but getting out into the open again, not surrounded by houses and streets and buildings on all sides seemed to free my body and soul & I felt like singing. I actually did begin to hum loudly, until I was told to shut up. I did, with regret. Capt Keates and Parker had already been to Fes and Meknes before so that this trip was one more of business than of pleasure. I was the only tourist in this little party. Suddenly the flat, green land disappeared and I found we were climbing rapidly. We spun around and twirled up steep hills, with razor back edges; a slip of the wheel and we were over the side. We didn't though. And then when we had just reached the top I stopped short, or so it seemed, for in front of us, rising high high loomed a mountain chain - the Atlas and the peaks show the smooth, clean whiteness of fresh snow. My first snow since I had come to Africa. I felt transformed with joy and freedom. To our left loomed another mountain chain, the Rif, less imposing, but more pregnant of Morocco's history. The Rif recalled to my mind a group of Arab riders, armed with long rifles riding against the Spanish, the Portuguese and the French afterwards in their interminable war against domination. But we kept speeding onward toward Fes and Meknes. The road we were using was beautiful in itself, at times it would be shaded by foliage hanging very thickly over the route, rich leafy branches that reminded one of the straight well tended roads of France.... other times some strange reason which I have not yet been able to discover prompted the authorities or the Arabs to mutilate the branches, leaving only a naked trunk, with sawed-off branches, which extended lanky, stub-like fingers toward the heavens. It was a sad picture, and a little awesome too at times on us sped. We were going somewhere. And I kept twirling in my mind some fantastic picture of Fes that my friends back home had given me before I had left for Africa, a vision of a land they had known more than I. I looked forward anxiously, like a child to our arrival.

V. MAIL

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(CENSOR'S STAMP)

To
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c/o Postmaster, N.Y.

February 14, 1944
(13-11)

Dearest Paul,

A number of your letters have come rolling in and I haven't had a chance to reply at all, what with work and things. But your poems and chitchat is very entertaining. Keep it up. I like the series idea of your V-mails. But one of these days I'm going to get letter three before two as I did with some woman's letters. She had the brilliant idea of writing a twelve page letter on V-mails. Well I got number 7 first and the whole thing all mixed up. In addition she scribbled in tiny print. It was impossible to read after being folded. Our letters are not folded because we don't have any apparatus.

I keep getting a pile of letters from Ann





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AFO-759 c/o Postmaster NY

February 13, 1944

PAGE TWO

Cabrila, It is now February 14th, since it is past midnight. But let us continue from my previous letter. Let's get to FES.

Finally after several hours riding we finally turned a curve and there in front of us rose a strange city, with numerous minarets sticking upwards like so many peppermint sticks. This was FES, the religious capital of Morocco and one of the centers of Moorish culture. There was something about Fes which fascinated me. This was not the first Arabic city I was seeing and yet something within me seemed to sense a different a more strange setting here, surrounded by mountains. As we approached the cities (there of course two - the Medina and the European, only the former really worthy of interest), the walls which surrounded the Medina loomed before us. The wide spaces that opened before them, the whiteness that gleamed in the sun, the arched, zig-zag like carvings along the edges all recalled pictures of Beau Geste and visions of ancient battles on the parapets flooded into my awakened imagination. Our car swung around another curve, and this time a gasp came from my lungs. Fes was sheltered between two massive chains of mountains. On the right the Atlas range and far in the distance, something was gleaming on its peaks - yes it was snow again. We had lost sight of the Mts. for some time. This new view, set amongs the jewel of Fes gave it a new light and splendor. I was sitting on the edge of my seat, and craning my neck for all kinds of different angles to view the surroundings from. And then, our horn honking loudly we rolled into the Grande Place before Fes itself. Huge portals richly decorated, carved and worn from ages of sunning and windburning were the frame for a seething mass of Arab men and women walking, running and limping through its gates into that mystery which its Medina holds. We didn't enter with our car. Rather we skirted the parapets, we rode past the open market places, where camels are sold in packs, where ~~small~~ horses and goats are put up for sale, where the mountaineers come down from their hills to trade and bargain. Here it must have been, too, that the harem women were auctioned off to the best bidder. We rode on. Our first goal was our hotel. Again we seemed to leave the city. I asked: "Aren't we at Fes? Why are we leaving?" I was hushed into silence and told to look at the city as it began to unfold itself from another view. Now we were rolling uphill, curving around a sharp mountain road as if we were headed for the Tower of Babel Hotel. At every turn, a different panorama of the city presented itself. Slow down, I shouted. We slowed down. We stopped. I jumped out of the car and breathing in a fresh draught of clean pure air peered down on a mosaic of white cube-shaped little houses, all of which seemed to be intertwined with one another. A jungle of the Kasbah, impenetrable, secret, hiding who knows what intrigue, and secretive practices. Get back into the car, the boys yelled before we push you over the cliff. With that terrible warning I leaped back to my seat. The motor gave a few choking turns and caught and on we rolled again. Up we climbed until after a good dozen hair-pin turns we scooped out before a arched walled dootie. This was our hotel. Le PALAIS DE JAMAË, former home of an Arab Sultan and his numerous and well tried harem women. We had arrived at Fes. We tumbled out dragging our musette bags, our mufflebags, and trenchcoats and, somewhat dazed followed by two comrades as they descended a row of winding steps (everything winds here it seems) and finally we came out upon a patio or garden of some kind. The floors we walked on were richly tiled, and mosaiced (I suppose Rio is better but I don't know), an oriental marble receptacle filled with water, gave living space to a group of placid-looking goldfish, paddling their way around. It was shady enough to be cool, the leaves of the palms that swayed here took good care of that. We immediately
I'll

V-MAIL

February 14, 1944

Dear Irv:

Your letter dated January 22nd came yesterday. Another letter which I had addressed to you at 545-5th Avenue came back as you predicted. I had sent it to you before your letter telling me not to. It certainly feels good to exist and turn to try to make out your handwriting, practically makes me feel I'm back home again. How the hell are you making out by now. Hope that your next letter will tell another story about Coatrice. She sounds swell. Thanks for the note about Brazil and the Nat. Geographic Mag. I've written to Schwed and asked for the issue as well as other books and stuff which I need very much for our operation on the events of Spain and Portugal. I asked him to supply me with any books which have appeared on the Spanish situation or stuff on Brazil etc. If you're still around the office when you get this, drop in and see Sam and tell what I want and see if he can arrange to supply me regularly via diplomatic pouch with what of the material I need.

When in your letter you spoke of planning to get married, I thought that at long last you had become sensible. But apparently the indecision is both sided. Because if I really wanted to get married with a woman and she hesitated I would make it a business to get her married to me. But there I go butting in a side. I have been receiving many letters from Anita in Sao Paulo, wonderful letters. She has of a course won the first prize in that competition she took part in last year, and her own got sent back and the Chair of Psychology. Anita also has sent me a number of books to keep me up with the "joneses" in the latest of Brazilian literature. I have fallen horribly behind however, in spite of all that and in many ways I feel that my staying here is going to retard my work on Brazil if I ever do manage to get back to it at all.

I'm still working pretty hard, and the most tiring part. Anyway, I have managed to tone myself down a little but the other day I decided I needed a rest and so rode out for a couple of days to two cities in the interior of Morocco, Fez and Meknes. I had a swell time there and spent a pretty heavy and if I could had I really had a good time and it was worth it. Fez is quite different from the city I'm in now and I thoroughly enjoyed wandering around the Arab section, for hours, going into the different souks and shops and buying all kinds of little and big things which I thought Anita or my sisters might like. Prices are not inexpensive but so much of what is sold is so good that it is hard to resist spending everything you have in these shops. Ordinarily if you go alone, the very fact that you have an American uniform so as not to raise the price of the objects at least two or three times. I was a little fortunate in that I had people in these towns and had some Arab friends go with me and usually felt I had got more fairly good buys.

Bill McGaughey and I separated soon after we both arrived in Africa. He is now with our Oran office of the P&E and I understand doing a pretty useful and interesting job. Little Sammy Goldstein, returned to the States soon after we got here. His wife it appears did not really recover from that accident. Remember Woolley? Boy what a card he turned out to be! Jolly Jockey they call him. He was sent to Italy and got himself kicked around there he was always complaining. The last I heard of him he was back at our main Medit. office. Lou Klotz is still as bubbly as ever. He was here for a while and we had a little fun together. Then he got himself shipped into Italy I think, but I'm not sure. Anyway he's not here anymore.

There is not much more I have time to write in this letter. You should see me winding around in my car. I don't have a jeep but I do have a Ford Coupe and a tiny Simca or Italian Fiat, the vest-pocket size kind. I get a big kick driving it around.

Well you nag, I'll sign off here, and hope to hear from you soon again. I'll try to drop you another letter, soon.

March 1st, 1944

My Dearest Aunita,

This has been an eventful week of war news, and things have also happened here in North Africa and in Morocco. First of all it has rained - as I have rarely seen it rain. Day after day this week, it poured, and came down in veritable buckets and sheets - tropical rain. As it poured here, I thought of you in Brazil, and your dry summer, and I thought of your vacation and wondered how you had spent it. You are probably preparing to return to your work now that your summer is drawing to a close.

For some time now, I haven't received any letters from you - but your previous ones tell me of packages and things which are on their way, so that I am patient and hopeful.

This week too, I instituted a change in my living ways. Instead of eating in the French restaurants here, I have decided to eat at least one of my meals with the American Army mess. This means that I have to leave the office at 5 pm every day to have dinner (the Army eats much earlier than the French or even the Brazilians, if I remember correctly) in the little clump of woods where the camp is located just outside of town. It means leaving the office in the afternoon, but I prefer to do this and have a really good American meal, and then come back in about half-hour. This enables me to catch up with my work. But it gives me a very important other advantage. I don't have to go out to dinner at 7:30 or 8 pm. This permits me to tune in on Radio Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. Every day I have been picking up PLR-8 on 11,720 kilocycles in its broadcast to Portugal. It makes me feel wonderful to be able to listen to Brazil every evening - and naturally my thoughts are with you. Just now it is 8:15, and as you might expect, I'm tuned in to Rio de Janeiro. They've just finished playing "VIDA APARTADA" - and the singer means "Trabalho nao tenho nada.." wish I could say the same thing. They've also played a couple of real Brazilian sambas which make me very sad and happy at the same time. When I hear those songs, I feel a terrible "saudade" for Brazil and wonder when I'll be there. The station has suddenly switched to Cuban rumbas - "PARAMPAMPAM" and "UNO DOS TRES, UMPH". At 8:30 the English portion of the program begins, directed toward the British Isles. The first number which has just begun is entitled: "Coracao que bateu demais". But enough of music for the while.

As I told you this week it rained, and this is very good for the crops and the food situation of Morocco. But it made me pretty wet. To make things more interesting for me, my car broke down. The valve of the inner tube snapped off & I almost ruined the tire. As it is my car is still not running. Some water must have gotten into the wires or something. Anyway it's back in the garage. That car practically lives there. ?

We have been having some trials here in North Africa. Before the arrival of the Americans, and during the reign (of terror) of Vichy, the Fascist underdogs of Hitler and Vichy decided to repay those anti-fascists who had dared to fight for freedom and liberty, either in France (with the Foreign Legion) or in Spain on the side of the legitimate Republican ^{by flinging them into concentration} camps in the Sahara Desert. And so the name of Colonel Bocher became a symbol of French fascism active in North Africa. The butcher-leaders of the camps and their intendents - the Colonels Lopy, Vicite, and the thug-faced Finidoris, Santucci, Dourmanoff, Riepp, Treese, Dotti, Mossa and Eslier, enjoyed themselves by brutal beatings of Spaniards and other anti-fascists. But beatings were not enough, they were not satisfied, in true Nazi fashion, with the mere sight of a badly broken body. More was necessary. The "disciplinary camps" were set up. When a man went in he never walked out.. he was carried out - dead. As the judge of the proceedings declared in his summing up: "Au nom de la societe comme au nom de la France martyre et resistente, ce procès depasse les terribles. Il doit être la condamnation de doctrines barbares"