

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Klaus

Rom, 1945-09-30

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THE STARS AND STRIPES

UNIT No. 1

MEDITERRANEAN

APO 512

Rome, September 30

Chère Mamoisele,

And so I am an ordinary, vulgar civilian once again -- thanks God! It went all rather fast and painless. This is how it happened:

About ten days ago, my overdue orders for the German trip came surprisingly through. I rushed to Paris, which I found depressing (although I spent a pleasant half-hour with politically more or less rehabilitated Jean Cocteau and had dinner with old Stoisy and middle-aged Mops -- the latter comparatively well-preserved after 18 months in a German concentration camp, where all her teeth were knocked out by an impatient SS man). From Paris I flew to Berlin, where I spent exactly 36 hours -- visiting Johannes R. Becher who is in charge of German cultural life (under Russian auspices) and attending the performance of an extremely poor propaganda play at the Deutsches Theater. Berlin is bad enough, but not QUITE so bad as other German cities. All the Germans I talked to insist that it would be Dad's sacred duty to return to the Fatherland without any further delay. I still feel that all the

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Germans are wrong -- in this respect as in many others. Besides most of them are probably about as respectable as Walter von Molo who, as Becher told me, was in the habit of sending his books with personal dedications to Rosenberg, in whose library the copies were recently discovered. But even though I am as much AGAINST Dad's triumphal return as ever -- I was kind of touched to find walls in Berlin plastered with posters announcing lectures on "Joseph" -- as a belated birthday celebration --, recitals from "Lotte in Weimar," and so forth. And again, one shouldn't be overly touched by these manifestations of veneration and sympathy. After all, the same professors and critics who are now so very Th.M.-conscious, got along without him very nicely during those twelve years of German greatness...

To return to my report: 24 hours after my arrival at the Reichshauptstadt, I was ordered back to Rome in order to get discharged. Hasty trip, via Wiesbaden-Paris. In Paris I met brilliant Curt (Riess); but as for Erika -- no such luck! Whereever I went, she was expected "in a few days or weeks;" but, alas, I was ^{not} in a position to wait for her. So we missed each other again. Nor do I have any news from her. However, people who have been

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in contact with her tell me that she is all right. (And Golo? No word from him, either! What a peculiar family!)

From Rome I rushed on to Naples, where my discharge was effectuated in the most convenient manner. Now I am back at Rome -- still staying at our Stars-and-Stripes albergo, but ready to move (tomorrow) to a Swiss pension where I was lucky enough to find a clean and pleasant room. I am still wearing uniform, for the want of any civilian clothes. (To buy anything here would indeed be the silliest waste of money.) It seems that Monika, of all people, busies herself in New York with sending me some of the stuff I left behind at the Bedford. Besides I am looking forward to a package of shirts and shoes for which I asked my Mummy. I am sure she will do a swell job, as usual. By the way, what I found here, to my delight, on my return from Naples, was your package containing watch and cigarettes. ...

EVER SO MUCH. Couldn't be nicer. Tickled to death. ENORMOUSLY pleased.

I am not yet accredited as a correspondent, and am not TOO much in a hurry as my film job keeps me busy, for the time being. I trust, however, that I shall manage to get myself accredited before long. I suppose

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4) P.S. I shall stay in Europe for about six months. Until early December I shall probably be busy in Rome. Then I would like to spend a month in Switzerland, and then proceed to Germany -- from where I hope to make excursions to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Denmark, Holland, and other countries. ... What are your travel plans? When do you intend to visit Uncle Opi and la chère tante Korrodi? If I knew that you are planning for a spring or summer trip to Switzerland -- that might affect my own plans. Naturally, I don't want to return to the States just at the moment when you are taking off for Europe. So please don't forget to tell me just what you two have in mind.

(Incidentally, it seems that the tempo of trans-Atlantic mail connections has suddenly slowed down to an alarming extent. Important messages I sent to New York more than four weeks ago have not been acknowledged as yet -- and as for our correspondence, I suspect your unusually long silence, too, may be due to postal capriciousness.)

(Just was interrupted by an Italian ^{girl} student ~~girl~~ who is laboring on a doctor thesis about the "Todesgedanke" in Th.M.'s work: so of course she wanted some facts and figures from a usually well-informed source. A stupid little thing, but full of good intentions.)

As always, forever K.