

Dec. 5. 1918.

My dearest Ruth, I had five letters - or was it six from you yesterday & two to-day - of which one was addressed to Paris. It is somewhat of a task to answer so many at once so I will begin by talking about myself. I'm sorry not to have written yesterday - it was a very full day & a good one.

I must tell you first that I have - as I led you to expect - made some purchases; all in one shop - I spent hours over them, pulling out stuffs & putting aside that - that before I made a final choice; after all I only bought 4 pieces one of which is of no great importance & may come in as a Xmas present; and another is a brocade which is a to be a present to you if you like it, for a cloak or whatever you like; & if you don't we can return it, or I can't help thinking that if you can't use it it would be the right thing for Margyorie. I will tell you in advance that it is not old, & you'll have no difficulty in recognizing its origin. The other two pieces are embroideries & if you don't think they're

Just lovely - just the thing for the Holt, I shall  
weep - weep bitter tears. In all I spent almost  
£18. I have also been buying books. I'm sure  
that's right. It is an opportunity not to be missed  
& I must have certain French books. It has  
been a very very arduous job, but I had a great  
stroke of luck yesterday when a young Frenchman  
came to my residence in a book shop where I couldn't  
find what I wanted - took me off to the most  
lovely shop where I at once found a beautiful  
little 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Beaumarchais (Théâtre) quite  
complete at 5 fr! And many other things  
besides. And from there I found another shop,  
~~for~~ the biggest book shop I have ever seen, con-  
taining I should say at - guess about 15 times  
as many books as Charterhouse library. I haven't  
naturally been buying rare books, merely the  
classics - my chief endeavour has been to  
find 11<sup>th</sup> editions cheaper than the new ones, which  
besides are mostly badly printed & incomplete.

In all I shall have spent about £10 on books  
or they will be forwarded to England by A.M.F.2  
as 'Surplus Kit', which indeed they are.

I hope you won't think I'm being extravagant.  
My current expenses are limited to £1 a day.  
All this has been more than amusing - I  
have learnt a lot about French books & literature,  
which will stand me in good stead. It would  
be ridiculous for one with any pretensions to  
English literature not to know something of  
the vast - wonderful French literature.

I had also a very good afternoon yesterday in  
the library, after lunching there with a  
charming man, un peu servant & librarian  
in some sort, whom I had met there on the  
previous day. And, oh! great fortune, I  
actually did with indescribable emotion  
the M.S. of Digard - from which Beaumarchais  
had read out his play before it appeared  
at the Comédie Française to a group of  
intellectuals at some no doubt elegant

Salon — as a preface written expressly for this purpose with many corrections sufficiently attests. I suppose I have a *démodé* romantic sentiment about MSS, but it seems a genuine source of wonder & enthusiasm with me to hold in my hand a document like that or more than interesting to observe that the trials of authorship can be such as they are for me, même chez les grands — a word crossed out for a better one, a more pointed phrase for the commonplace, an indirect hit substituted for what seemed too fat & even half a dozen lines crossed out in favour of a single simple sentence.

Regarding your question about Opéra, it is all founded upon stories more or less well known as for instance the Wagnerian Opera is founded upon German folklore. The 'libretto' is sometimes written by the composer but more often collaborated. The Magic Flute is an Aladdin story I could almost swear though I've never heard say that it is so.

I went to the Comédie Française last night — it was a good piece though not one of the very

not a certainly very well acted in the classical style - one would almost never find such good acting on the English stage; - & yet it gave me a little the feeling of a triumph more of technique than of emotion; however I must admit that I could follow every word by any means, particularly in the more excited parts, so I can't pretend to judge. I think I haven't yet said anything about my night at the Opéra the previous evening - and I shan't say more than just that I enjoyed it very much in spite of extreme discomfort & was impressed not only by the performance but by the interior of the building - all the parts where one wanders beautifully during the entractes.

I feel quite sorry that I haven't another fortnight to spend in Paris - more an account of the Library than anything else & my liaison with my acquaintance there; also I'm really learning a good deal about Paris & greatly improving my French; -

Told me he had been wounded four times & he hadn't been wounded at all  
All love to your parents, including George.

but I regret still more that I haven't received  
a telegram giving me leave to go to England.  
I can't tell you my darling how I look forward  
to that event. It is going to be more than  
blissful; if it doesn't come before Xmas I  
shall weep.

I am very glad to  
learn from your letters & also from a further  
communication from David that your  
recovery has been so splendid - even though  
you won't be able to saw wood with me.  
There will be plenty of things we shall be  
able to do together.

I will write more at length anon in answer  
to all your letters - it is late now. I went  
out in the middle of this to find the young  
man of whom I spoke & who was to have  
called here for me to-day - a most disappointing  
expedition to a distant part of Paris; indeed  
I didn't see his parents who had apparently  
gone early to bed, for I learnt in a conversation  
with the concierge that he hadn't seen them  
for many months & was not only an embusqué  
but a besester - besides being - was for he