Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence

Section 1, Pages 1 - 30

This series of fifteen letters was sent by Henry J. Allen to his wife Elsie Jane Allen and his daughter Henrietta Allen. Subjects broached in the letters concern family, friends, Wichita community news, the Allens' new home at 225 Roosevelt, the horrors of war, innocence of youth, France and Italy. Allen was strongly affected by the horrors of the battlefields of World War I.

Creator: Allen, Henry Justin, 1868-1950

Date: September 20, 1917 - October 11, 1918

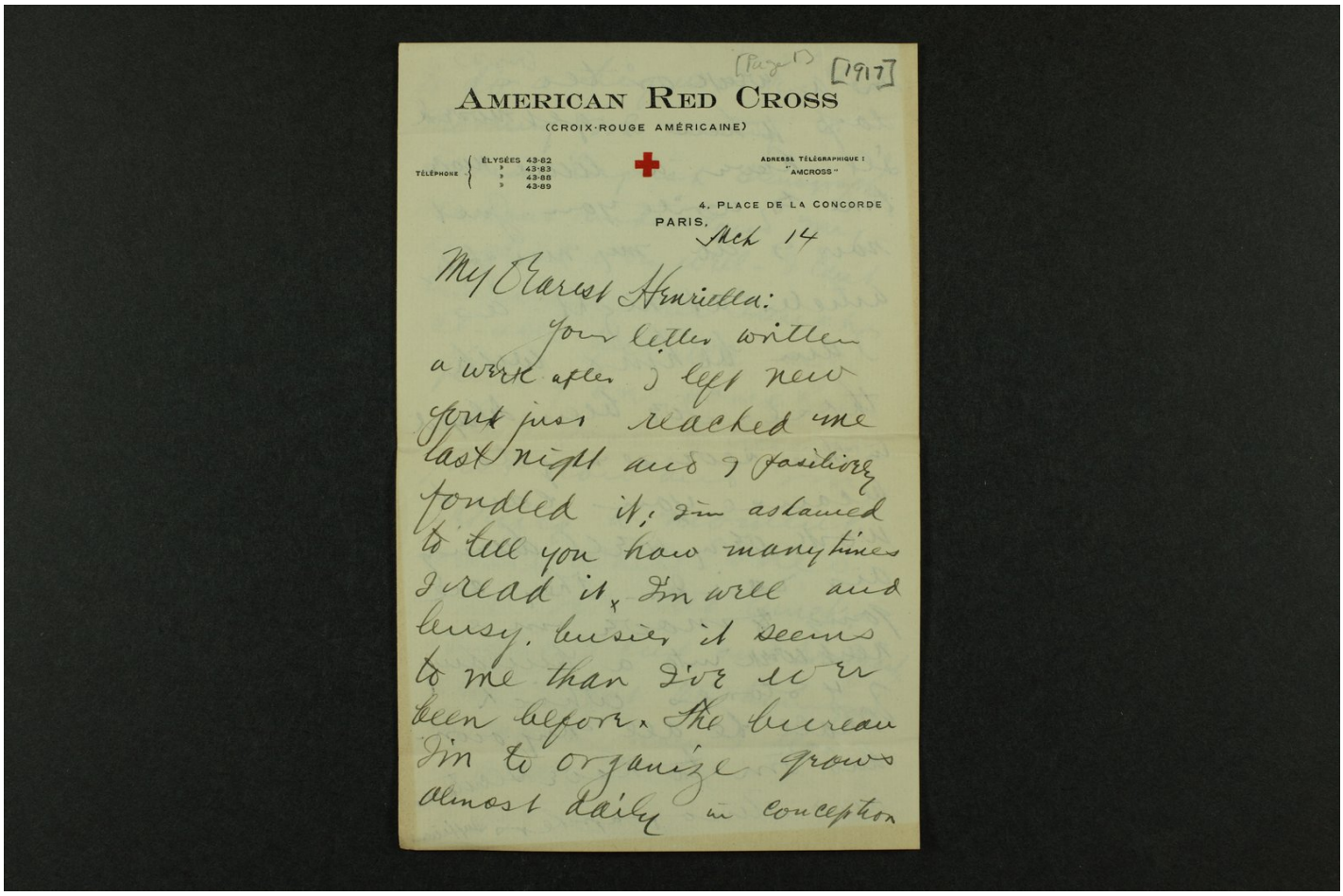
Callnumber: Holmes-Allen Coll. #883, World War I correspondence

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 305997

Item Identifier: 305997

www.kansasmemory.org/item/305997

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



[Page 1] [1917]

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(CROIX-ROUGE AMÉRICAINE)

TÉLÉPHONE { ÉLYSÉES 43-82 / » 43-83 / » 43-88 / » 43-89

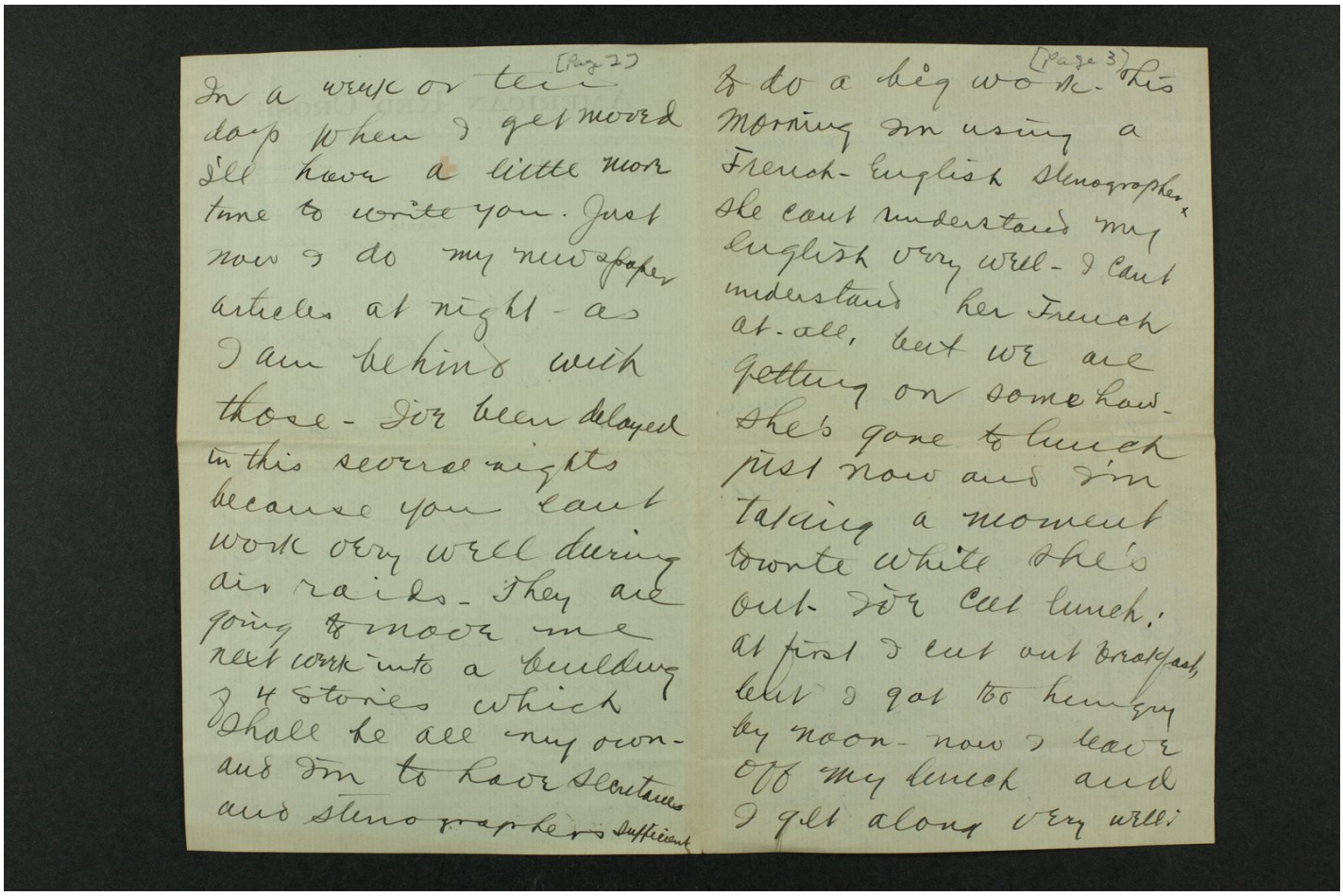
ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : "AMCROSS"

4, PLACE DE LA CONCORDE
PARIS,

Mch 14

My Dearest Henrietta:

Your letter written a week after I left New York just reached me last night and I fairly fondled it; I'm ashamed to tell you how many times I read it. I'm well and busy, busier it seems to me than I've ever been before. The bureau I'm to organize grows almost daily in conception

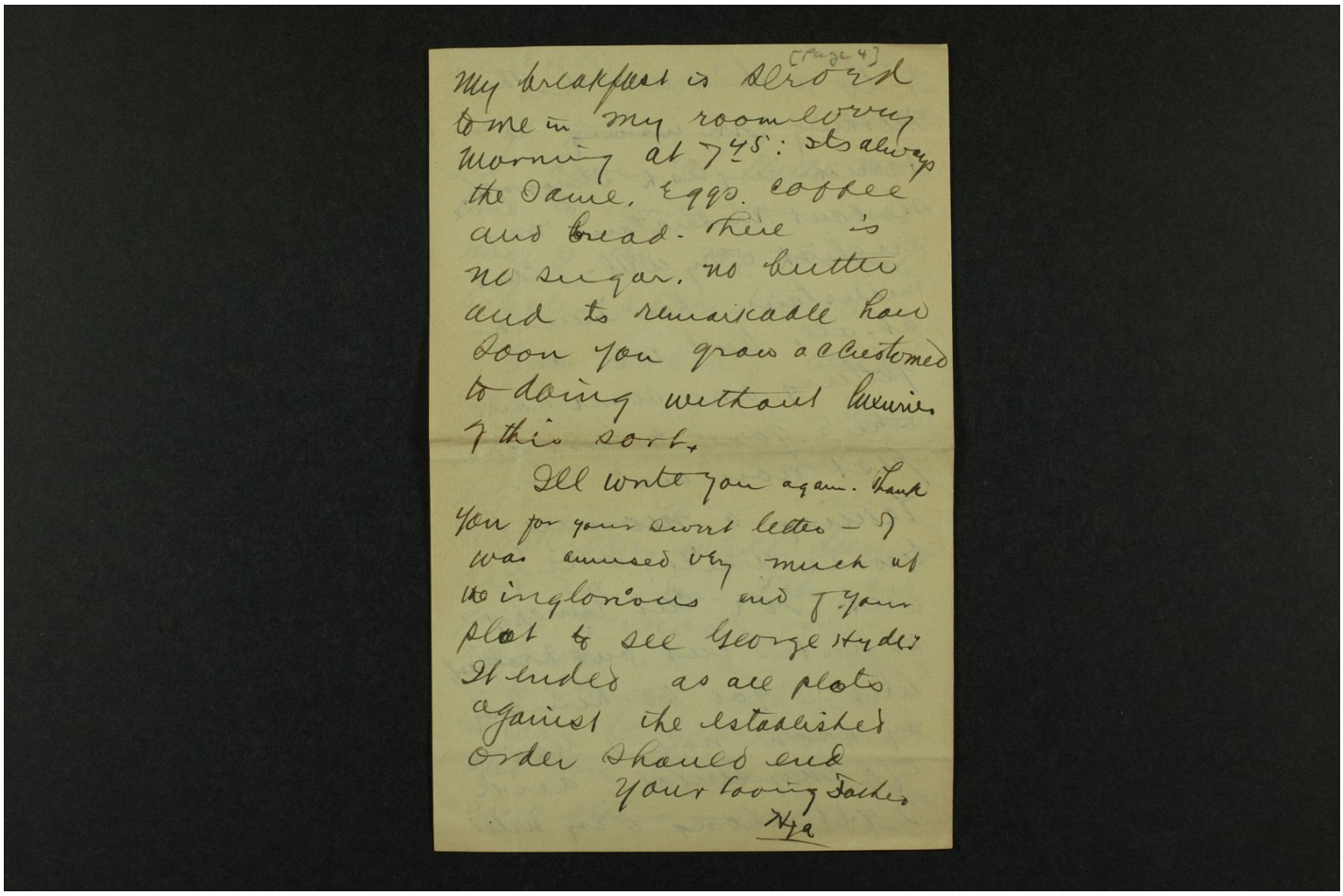


[Page 2]

In a week or ten days when I get moved I'll have a little more time to write you. Just now I do my newspaper articles at night - as I am behind with those - I've been delayed in this several nights because you can't work very well during air raids - They are going to move me next week into a building 4 stories which I shall be all my own - and I'm to have secretaries and stenographers sufficient

[Page 3]

to do a big work. This morning I'm using a French-English stenographer she can't understand my English very well - I can't understand her French at all, but we are getting on somehow. She's gone to lunch just now and I'm taking a moment to write while she's out. I've eat lunch: at first I eat out breakfast, but I got too hungry by noon - now I leave off my lunch and I get along very well:

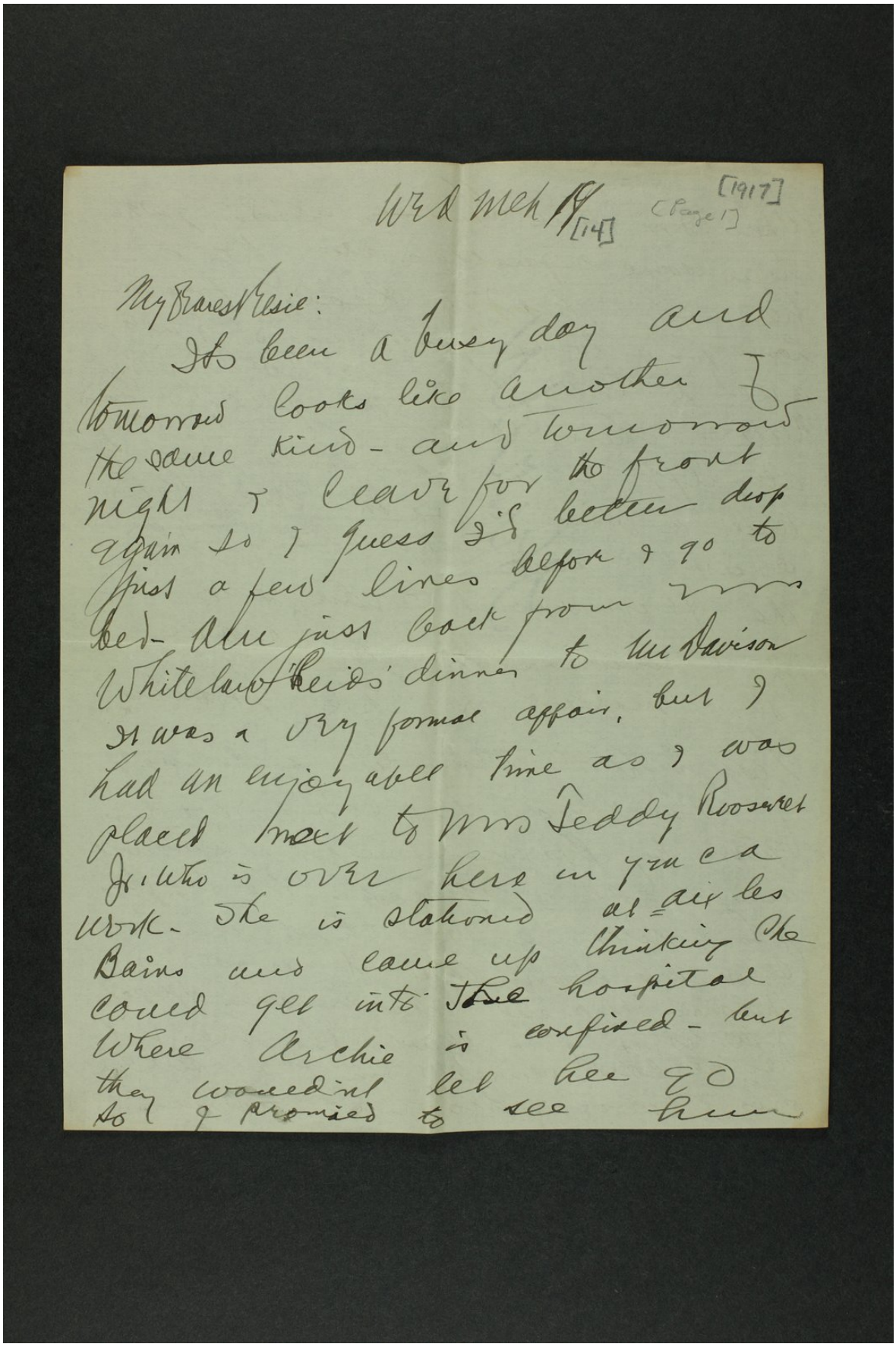


[Page 4]

My breakfast is served
to me in my room every
morning at 7.45: its always
the same. Eggs. coffee
and bread. There is
no sugar, no butter
and to remarkable how
soon you grow accustomed
to doing without luxuries
of this sort.

Ill write you again. Thank
you for your sweet letter – I
was amused very much at
the inglorious end of your
plot to see George Hyde.
It ended as all plots
against the established
order should end.

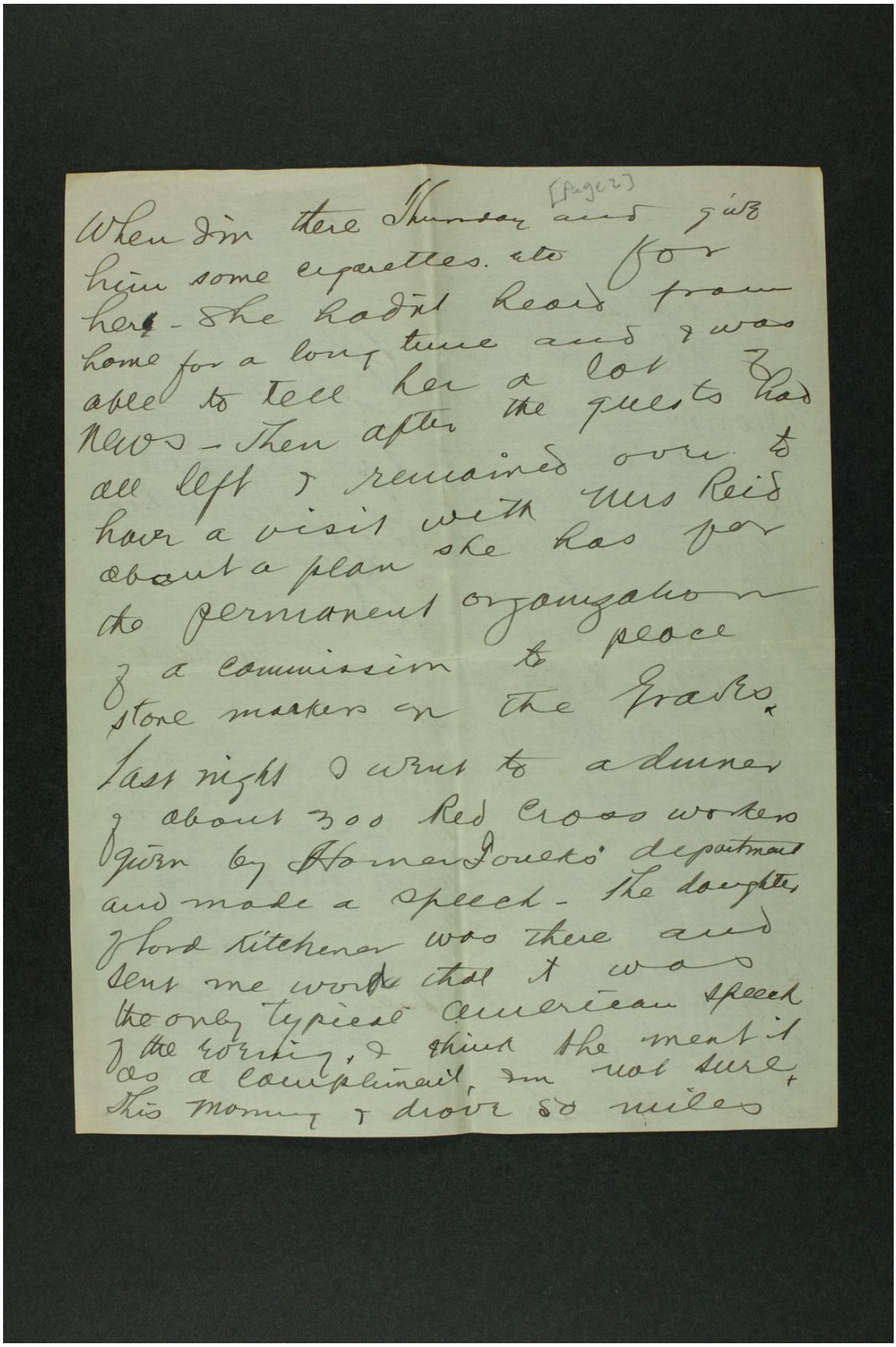
Your loving Father
HJA



Wed Mch 14 [1917] (Page 1)

My Dearest Cesie:

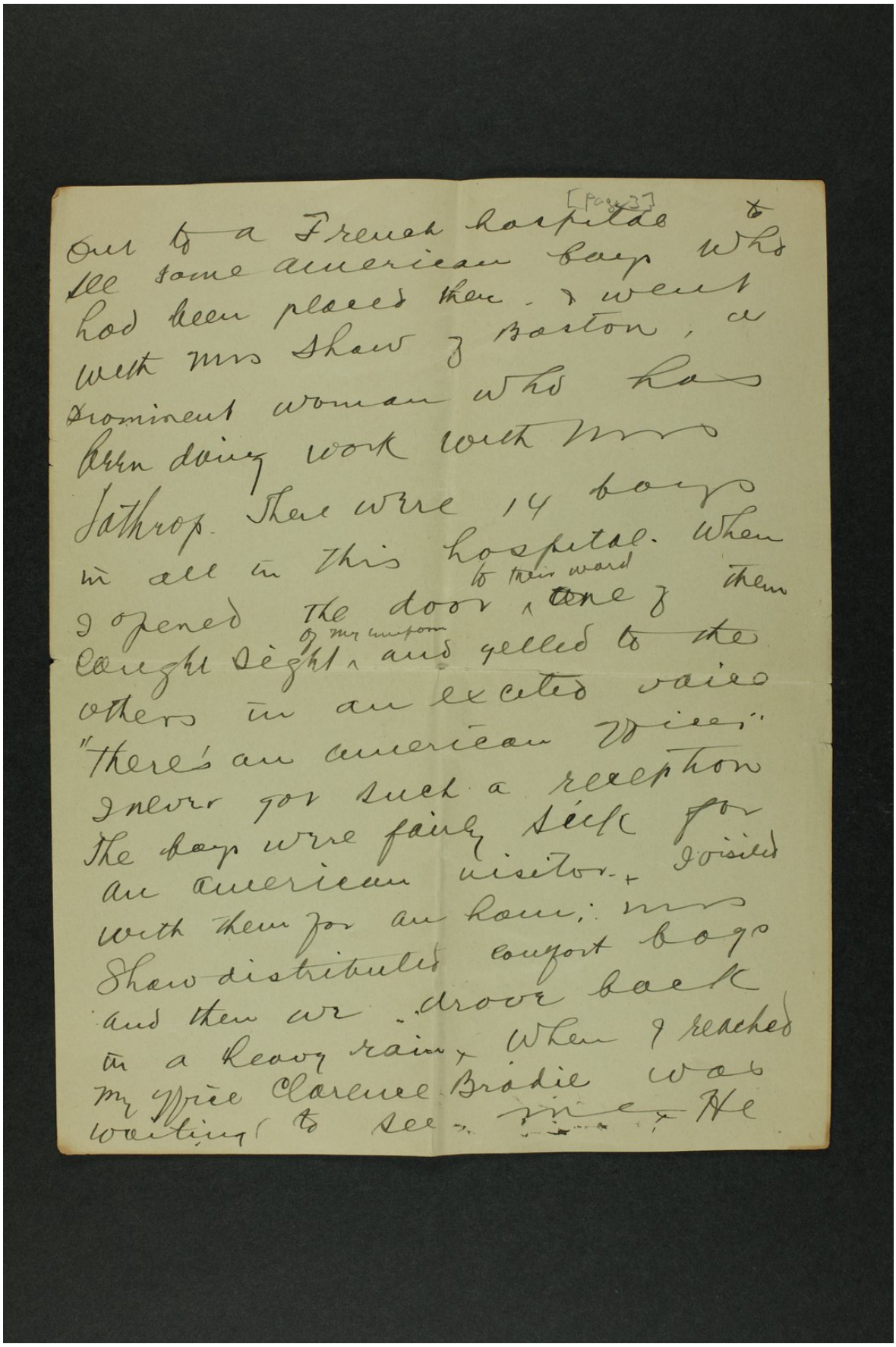
It's been a busy day and tomorrow looks like another the same kind - and tomorrow night I leave for the front again so I guess it's better drop just a few lines before I go to bed - Alice just back from Whitelaw Reids' dinner to the Davison It was a very formal affair, but I had an enjoyable time as I was placed next to Mrs Teddy Roosevelt Jr. who is over here in Y.M.C.A. work - She is stationed at Aix les Bains and came up thinking she could get into the hospital where Archie is confined - but they wouldn't let her so I promised to see them



When I'm there Thursday [August] and give him some cigarettes. etc for her. She had it read from home for a long time and I was able to tell her a lot of news - Then after the guests had all left I remained over to have a visit with Mrs Reid about a plan she has for the permanent organization of a commission to place stone markers on the graves.

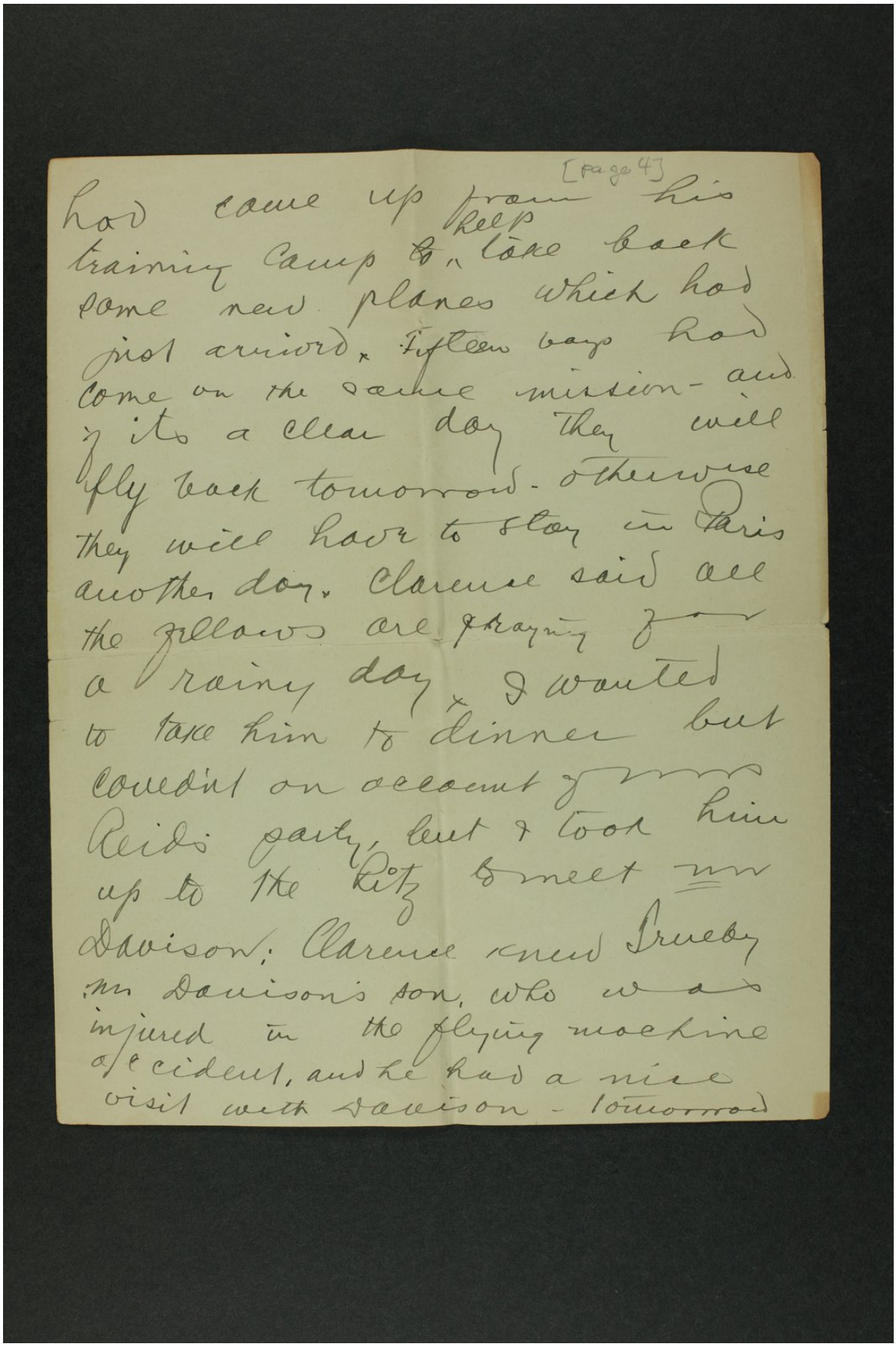
Last night I went to a dinner given by Homer Jones' department and made a speech - The daughter of Lord Kitchener was there and sent me words that it was the only typical American speech of the evening, I think she meant it as a compliment, I'm not sure.

This morning I drove 80 miles



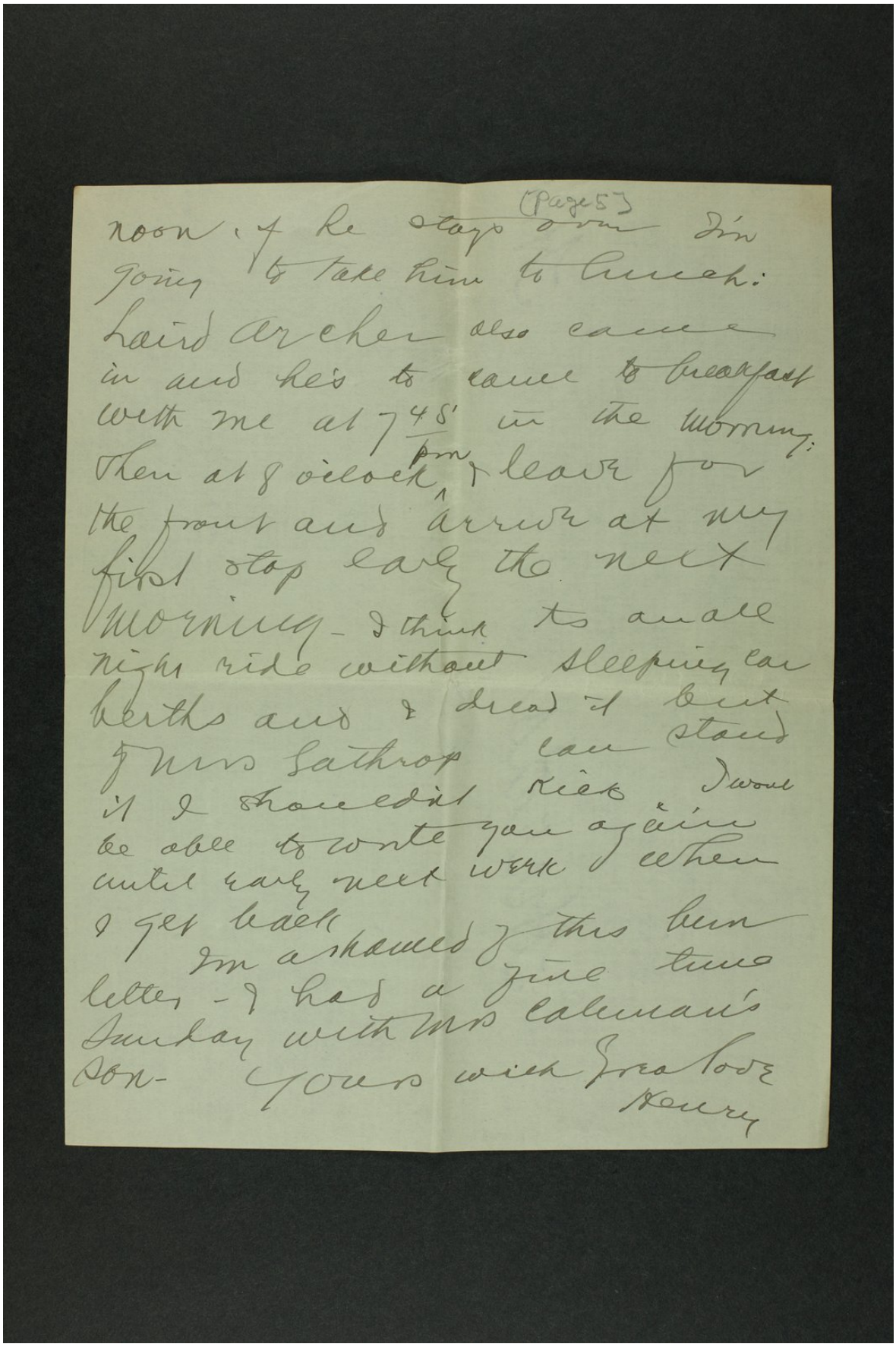
[Page 3]

Out to a French hospital & to
see some american boys who
had been placed there. I went
with mrs Shaw & Barton, a
prominent woman who has
been doing work with mrs
Sathrop. There were 14 boys
in all in this hospital. When
I opened the door to this ward & them
caught sight of my uniform, and yelled to the
others in an excited voice
"there's an american Miss."
I never got such a reception
the boys were fairly sick for
an american visitor. I visited
with them for an hour; mrs
Shaw distributed comfort bags
and then we drove back
in a heavy rain. When I reached
my Wife Clarence Brodie was
waiting to see me. He



[page 4]

had come up from his
training camp to help take back
some new planes which had
just arrived. Fifteen bays had
come on the same mission - and
if its a clear day they will
fly back tomorrow. otherwise
they will have to stay in Paris
another day. Clarence said all
the fellows are praying for
a rainy day. I wanted
to take him to dinner but
couldnt on account of Mrs
Reids party, but I took him
up to the Ritz to meet Mr
Davison. Clarence met Trueby
Mr Davison's son, who was
injured in the flying machine
accident, and he had a nice
visit with Davison - tomorrow

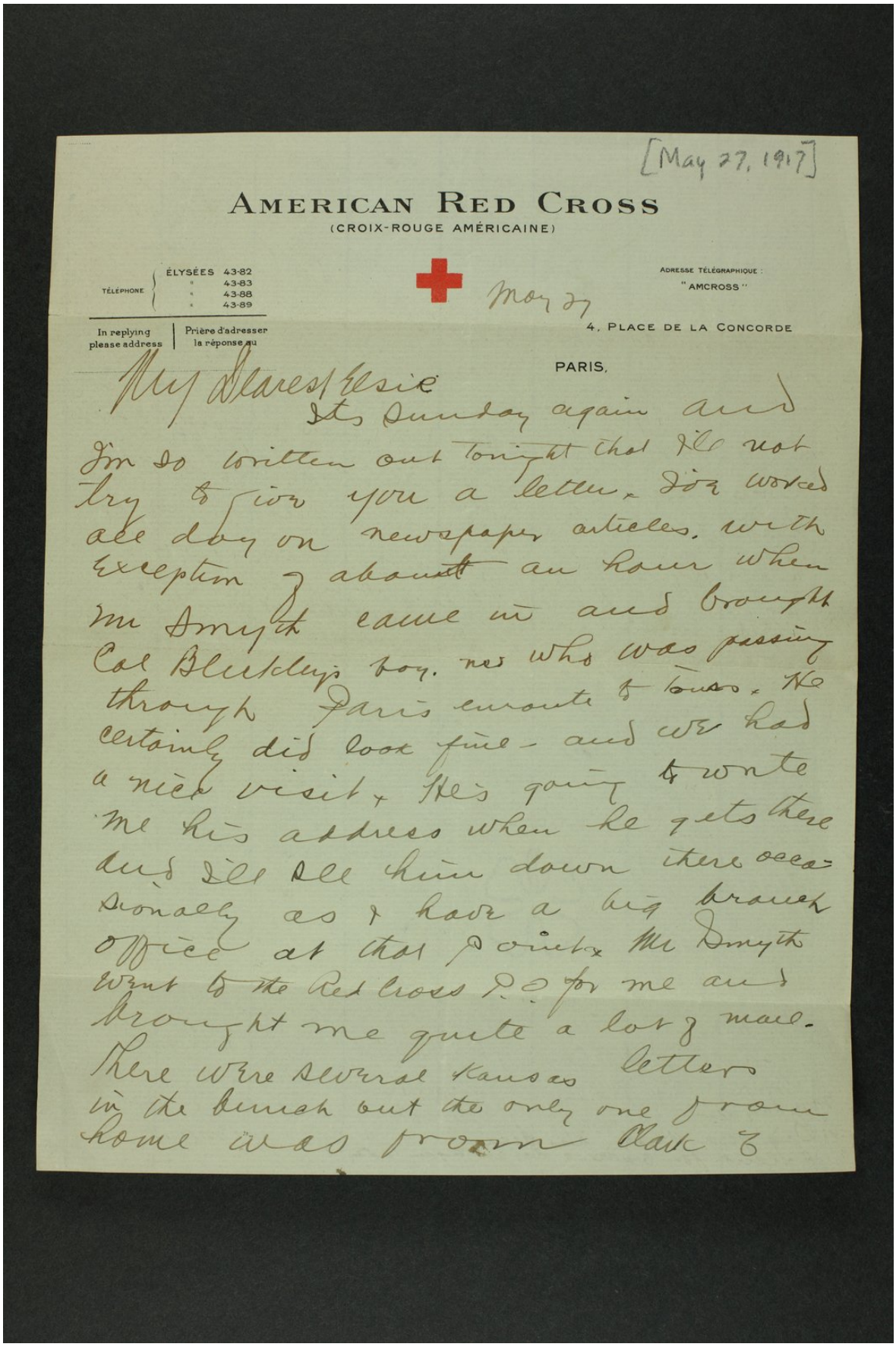


(Page 5)

noon. If he stays down I'm
going to take him to lunch.
Laird Archer also came
in and he's to come to breakfast
with me at 7 45' in the morning.
Then at 8 o'clock pm I leave for
the front and arrive at my
first stop early the next
morning - I think to avoid
night ride without sleeping car
berths and I dread it but
Mrs Lathrop can stand
it I should risk. I won't
be able to write you again
until early next week when
I get back

I'm ashamed of this hum
letter - I had a fine time
Sunday with Mrs Coleman's
son - Yours with [illegible]

Henry



[May 27, 1917]

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(CROIX-ROUGE AMÉRICAINE)

TÉLÉPHONE { ÉLYSÉES 43-82 / " 43-83 / " 43-88 / " 43-89

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : "AMCROSS"

In replying please address | Prière d'adresser la réponse au

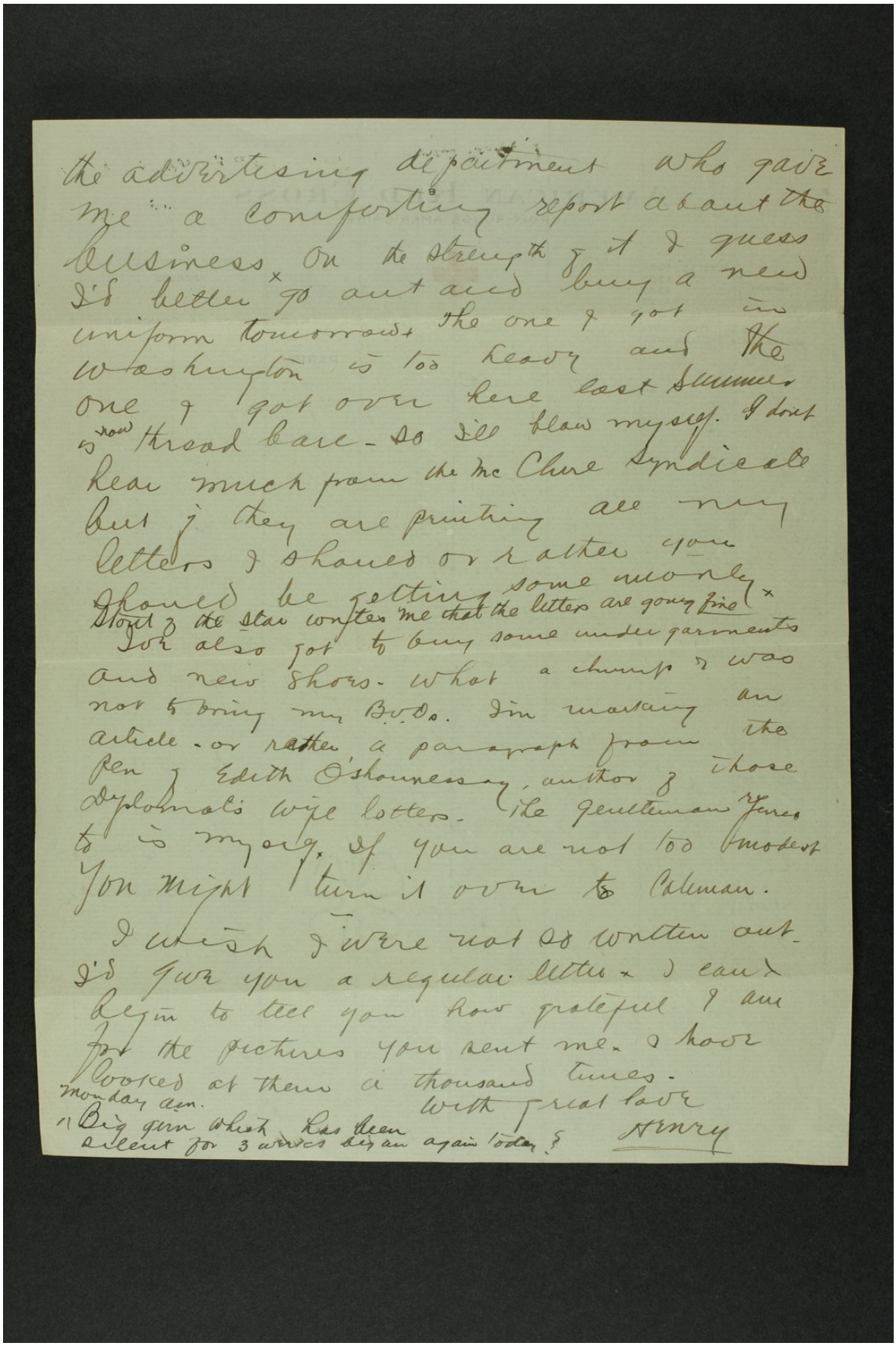
4, PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

PARIS,

May 27

My Dearest Elsie

Its Sunday again and Im so written out tonight that Ill not try to [illegible] you a letter. I've worked ake dog on newspaper articles, with exception of about an hour when Mr Smyth came in and brought Col Bleckley's boy. nes who was passing through Paris enroute to Russia. He certainly did look fine - and we had a nice visit. He's going to write me his address when he gets there and Ill tell him down there occasionally as I have a big branch office at that point. Mr Smyth went to the Red Cross P.O. for me and brought me quite a lot of mail. There were several Kansas letters in the bunch but the only one from home was from Clark T



the advertising department who gave me a comforting report about the business. On the strength of it I guess I'd better go out and buy a new uniform tomorrow. The one I got in Washington is too heavy and the one I got over here last summer is now thread bare - so ill blow myself. I dont hear much from the McClure Syndicate but they are printing all my letters I should or rather you should be getting some money. Stout's the star writes me that the letters are going fine.

I've also got to buy some underwarments and new shoes. What a chump I was not to bring my B.D.s. Jim marking an article - or rather a paragraph from the pen of Edith O'Shaunessy, author of those diplomat's wife letters. The gentleman seems to be smitten. If you are not too modest you might turn it over to Coleman.

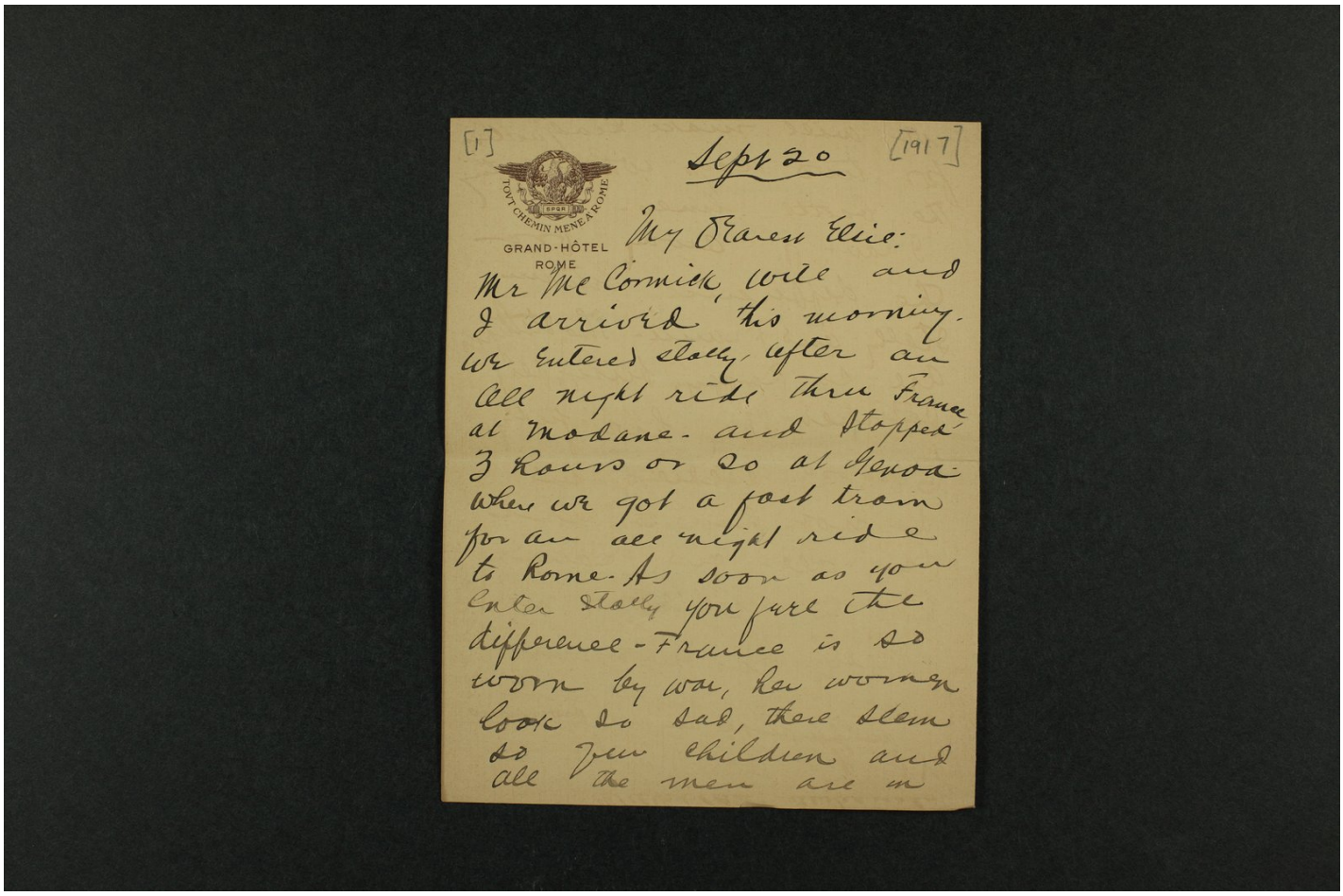
I wish I were not so confined out. I'd give you a regular letter. I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am for the pictures you sent me. I have looked at them a thousand times.

With great love

HENRY

Monday a.m.
Big gun which has been silent for 3 weeks began again today.

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



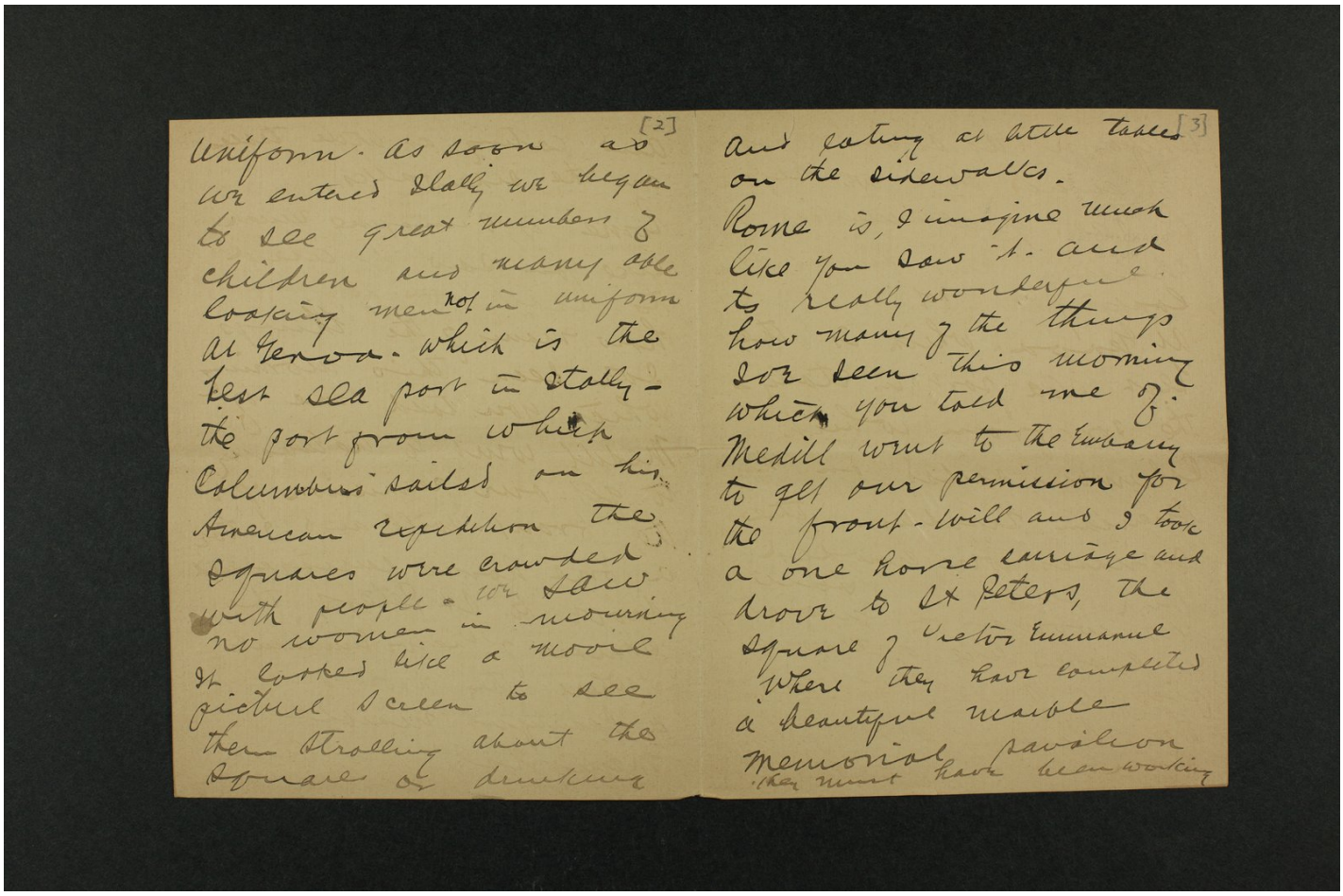
[1]

GRAND-HÔTEL
ROME

Sept 20 [1917]

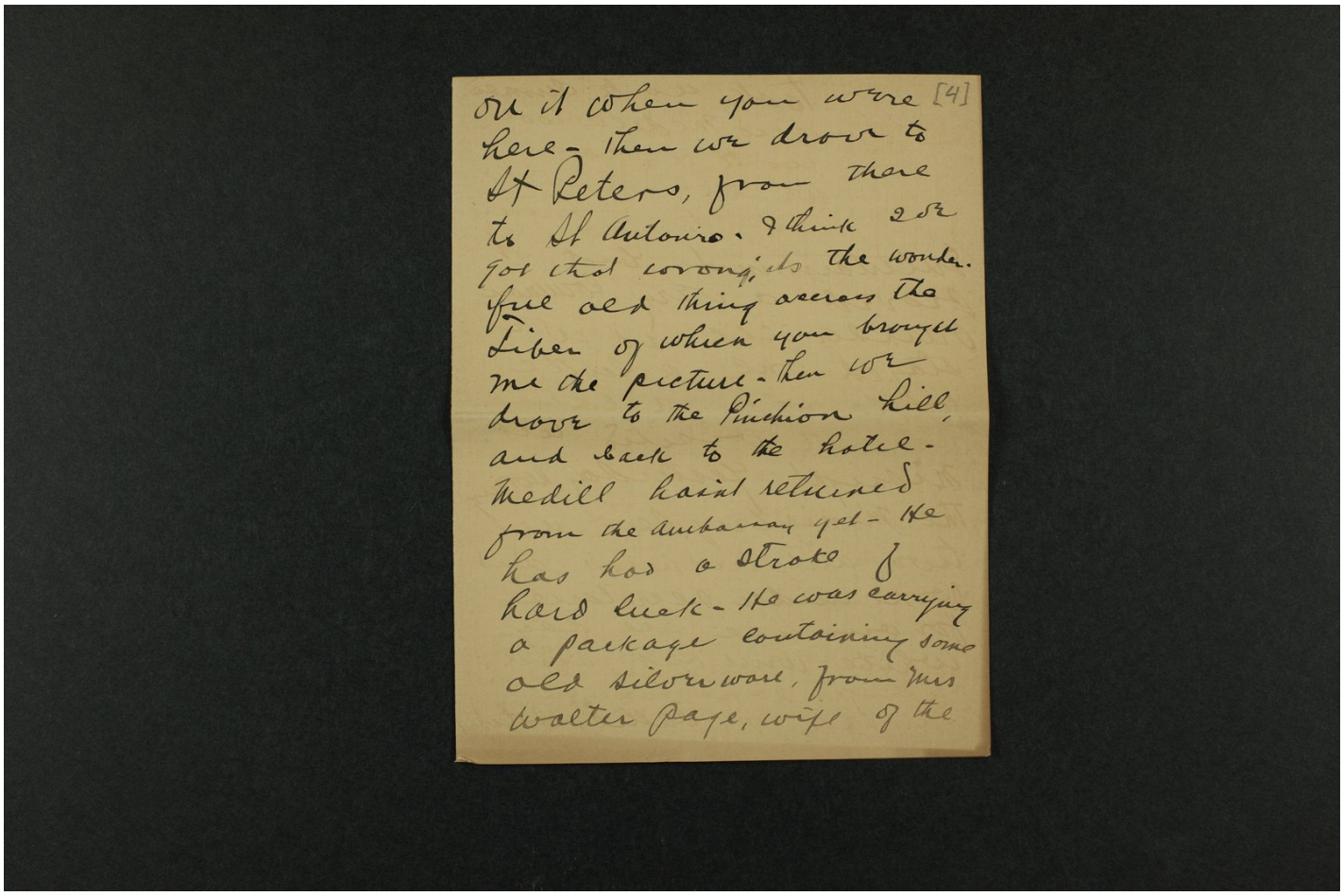
My Dearest Elsie:
Mr McCormick, Wile and I arrived this morning. We entered Italy after an all night ride thru France at Modane - and stopped 3 hours or so at Genoa where we got a fast train for an all night ride to Rome. As soon as you enter Italy you feel the difference - France is so worn by war, her women look so sad, there seem so few children and all the men are in

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



[2]
uniform. As soon as
we entered Italy we began
to see great numbers of
children and many able
bodied men not in uniform
at Genoa. which is the
best sea port in Italy -
the port from which
Columbus sailed on his
American expedition the
squares were crowded
with people - we saw
no women in mourning
It looked like a movie
picture screen to see
them strolling about the
squares or drinking

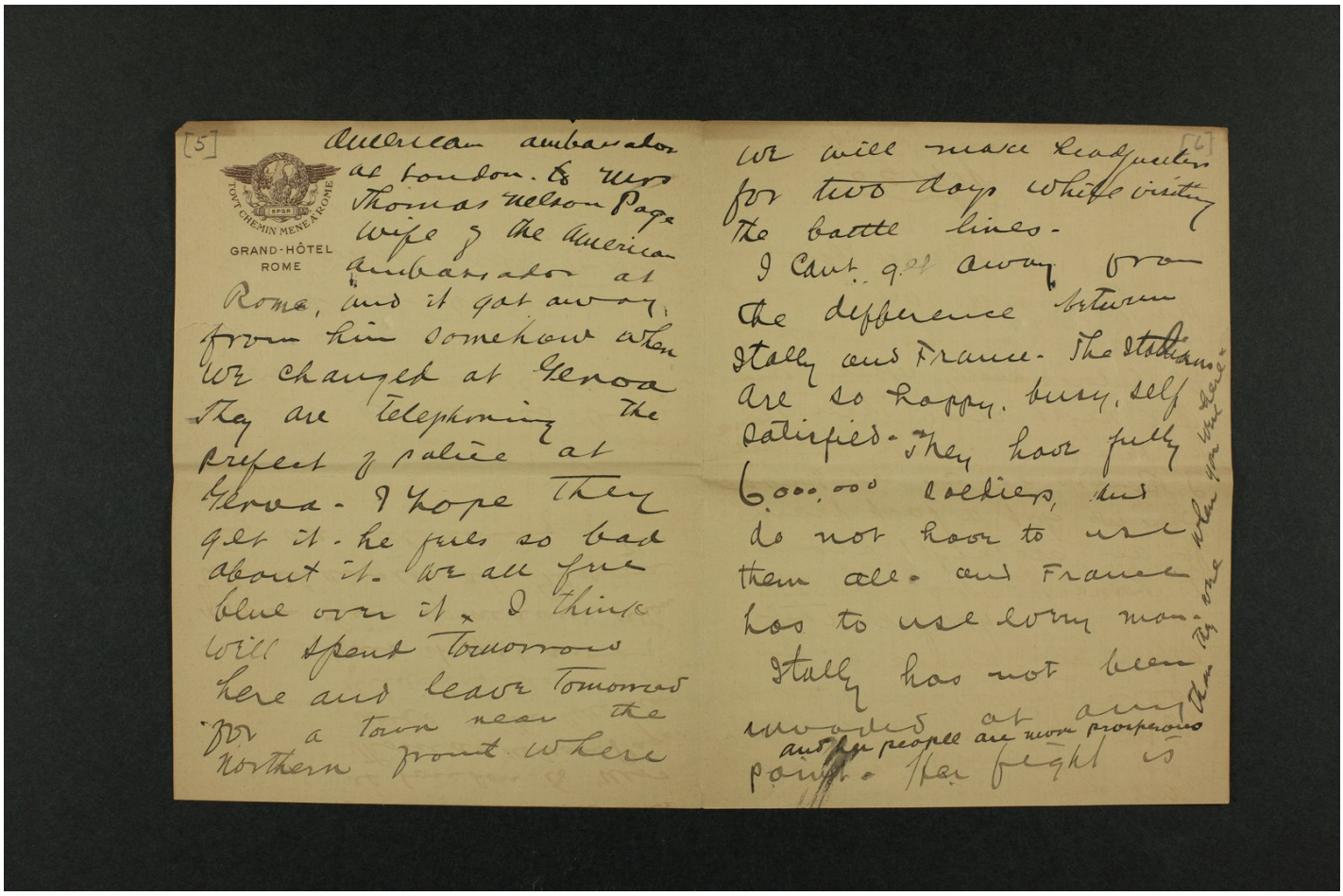
[3]
and eating at little tables
on the sidewalks.
Rome is, I imagine much
like you saw it. and
is really wonderful.
how many of the things
I've seen this morning
which you told me of.
Medill went to the Embassy
to get our permission for
the front - will and I took
a one horse carriage and
drove to St Peters, the
square of Victor Emmanuel
where they have completed
a beautiful marble
Memorial pavilion
that must have been working



[4]

on it when you were here - then we drove to St Peters, from there to St Antonio. I think I've got that coronation the wonderful old thing across the Tiber of when you brought me the picture. Then we drove to the Pinchion hill, and back to the hotel. Medill Baird returned from the ambassy yet - He has had a stroke & hard luck - He was carrying a package containing some old silverware, from Mrs Walter Page, wife of the

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



[5]

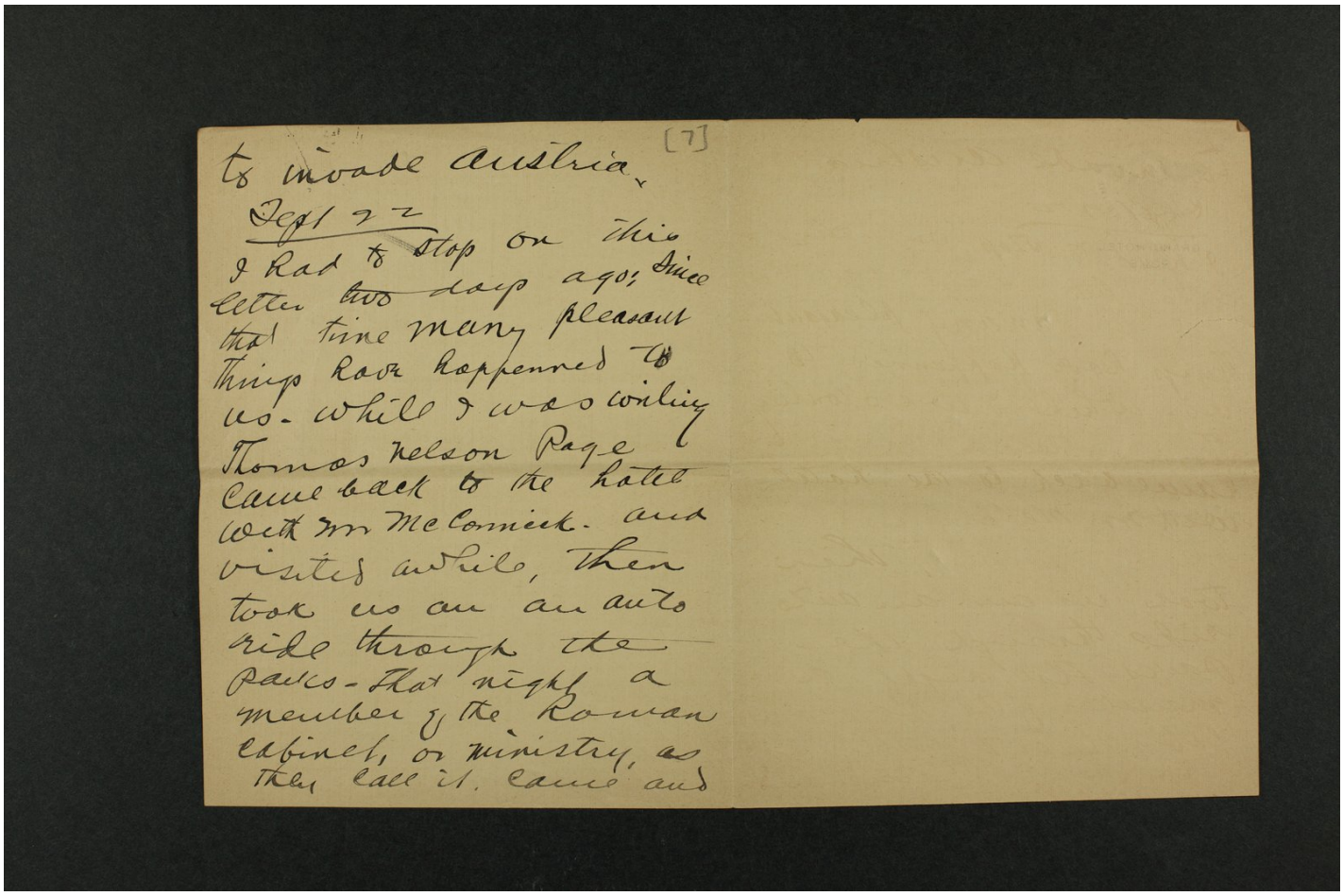
TOUT CHEMIN MENE A ROME
1908
GRAND-HÔTEL
ROME

American ambassador at London. & Mrs Thomas Nelson Page wife of the American ambassador at Rome, and it got away from him somehow when we changed at Genoa They are telephoning the prefect of police at Genoa - I hope they get it - he feels so bad about it - we all feel blue over it. I think will spend tomorrow here and leave tomorrow for a town near the Northern front where

[6]

we will make headquarters for two days while visiting the battle lines -

I can't get away from the difference between Italy and France - The Italians are so happy, busy, self satisfied - They have fully 6,000,000 soldiers, and do not know to use them all - and France has to use every man - Italy has not been wounded at all and her people are now prosperous - Her fight is

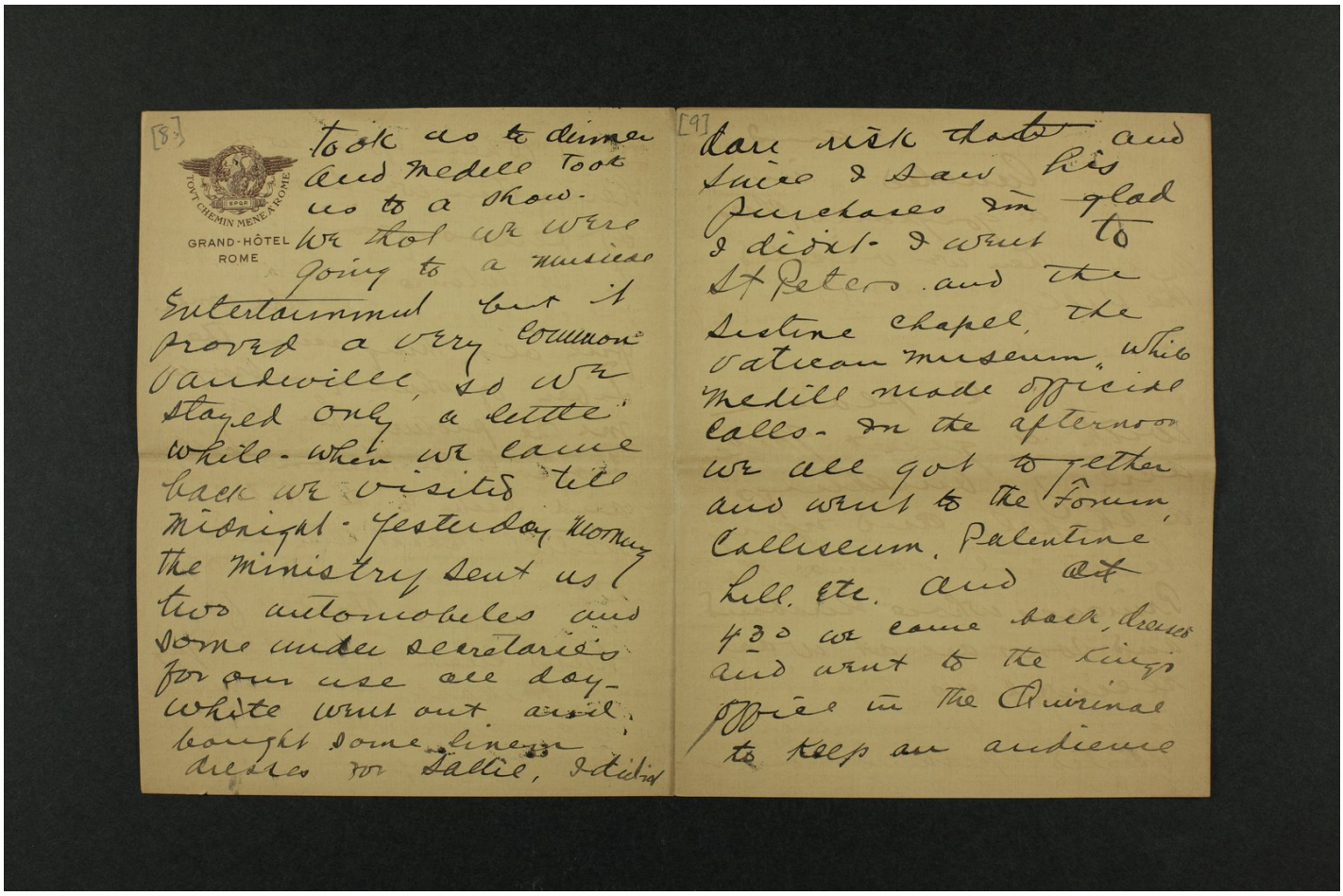


[7]

to invade Austria.

Sept 22

I had to stop on this letter two days ago; since that time many pleasant things have happened to us. While I was writing Thomas Nelson Page came back to the hotel with Mr McCormick and visited awhile, then took us on an auto ride through the parks. That night a member of the Roman cabinet, or ministry, as they call it, came and



[8]

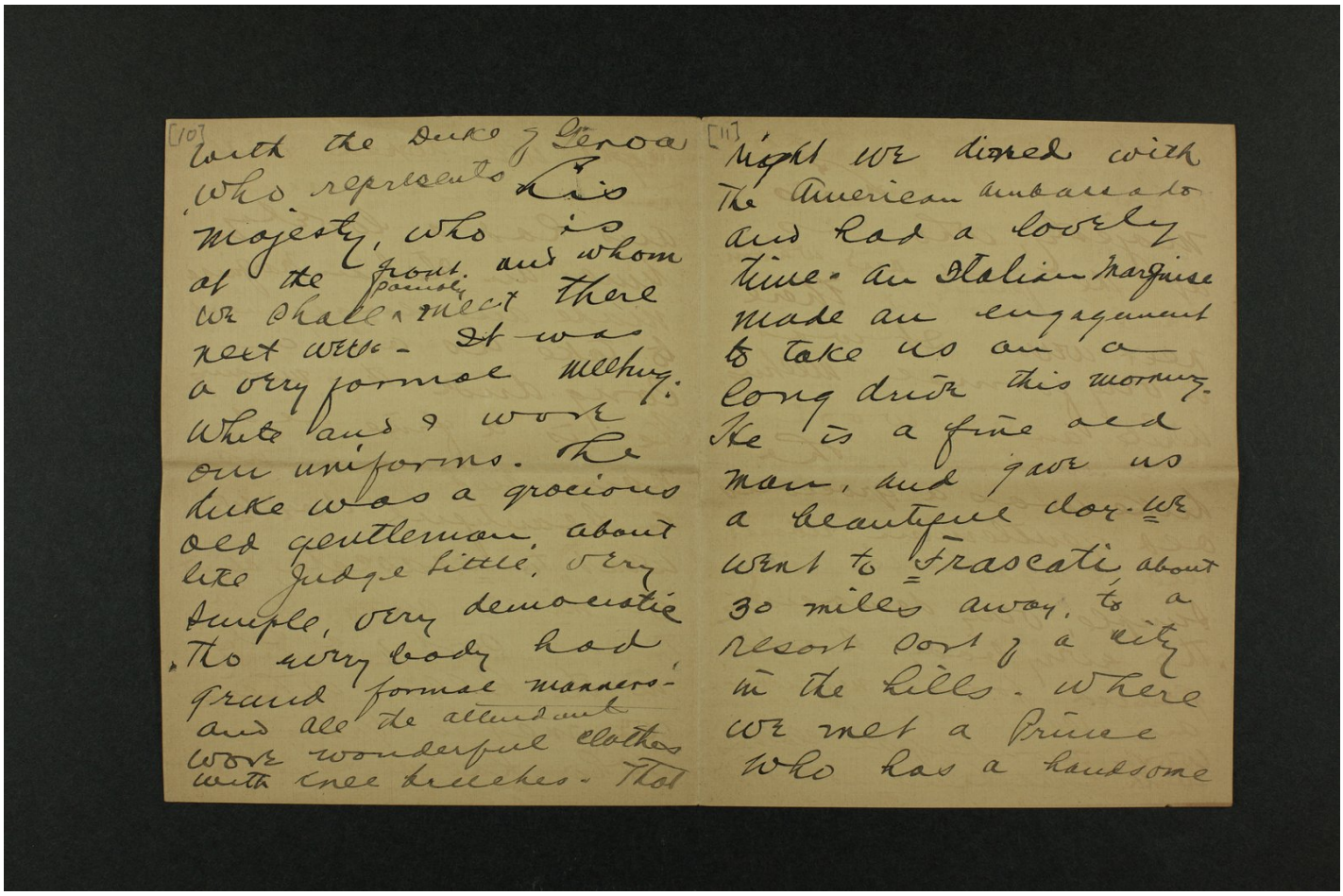
GRAND-HÔTEL
ROME

took us to dinner and Medici took us to a show. We thot we were going to a musical entertainment but it proved a very common vaudeville, so we stayed only a little while. when we came back we visited till midnight. Yesterday morning the ministry sent us two automobiles and some under secretaries for our use all day. White went out and bought some linen dresses for Sallie, I did not

[9]

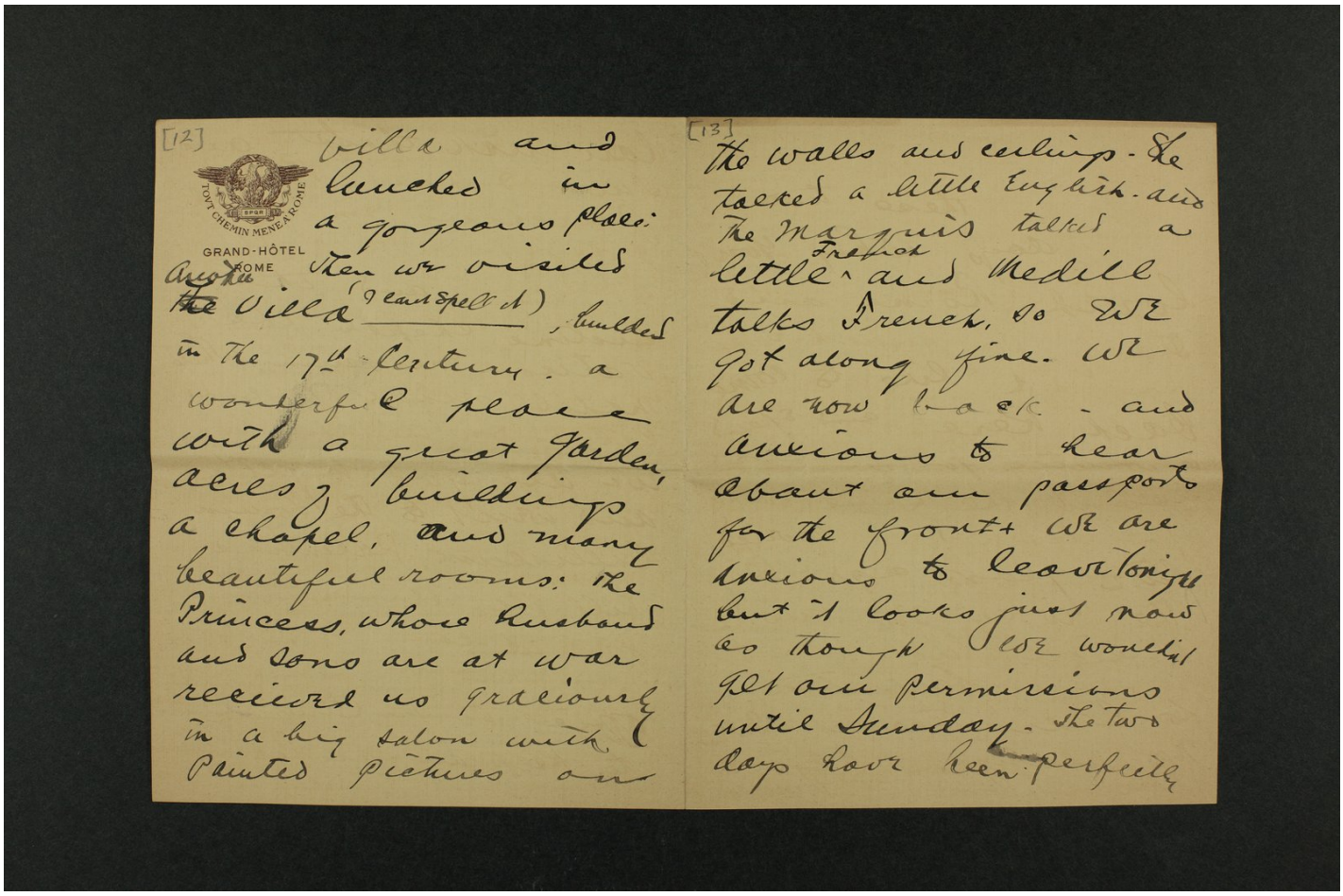
dare risk that and since I saw his purchases im glad I didn't. I went to St Peters and the Sistine chapel, the Vatican museum, which Medici made official calls. In the afternoon we all got together and went to the Forum, Collisseum, Palentine hill etc. and at 4:30 we came back, dressed and went to the king's office in the Quirinal to keep an audience

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



[10]
with the Duke of Genoa
who represents his
majesty, who is
at the front. and whom
we shall meet there
next week - It was
a very formal affair.
White ans & wore
our uniforms. The
Duke was a gracious
old gentleman, about
like Judge Little, very
simple, very democratic
The very body had
grand formal manners -
and all the attendants
wore wonderful clothes
with knee breeches - That

[11]
night we dined with
the American ambassador
and had a lovely
time - an Italian Marquise
made an engagement
to take us on a
long drive this morning.
He is a fine old
man, and gave us
a beautiful day. We
went to Frascati about
30 miles away, to a
resort sort of a city
in the hills. Where
we met a Prince
who has a handsome



[12]

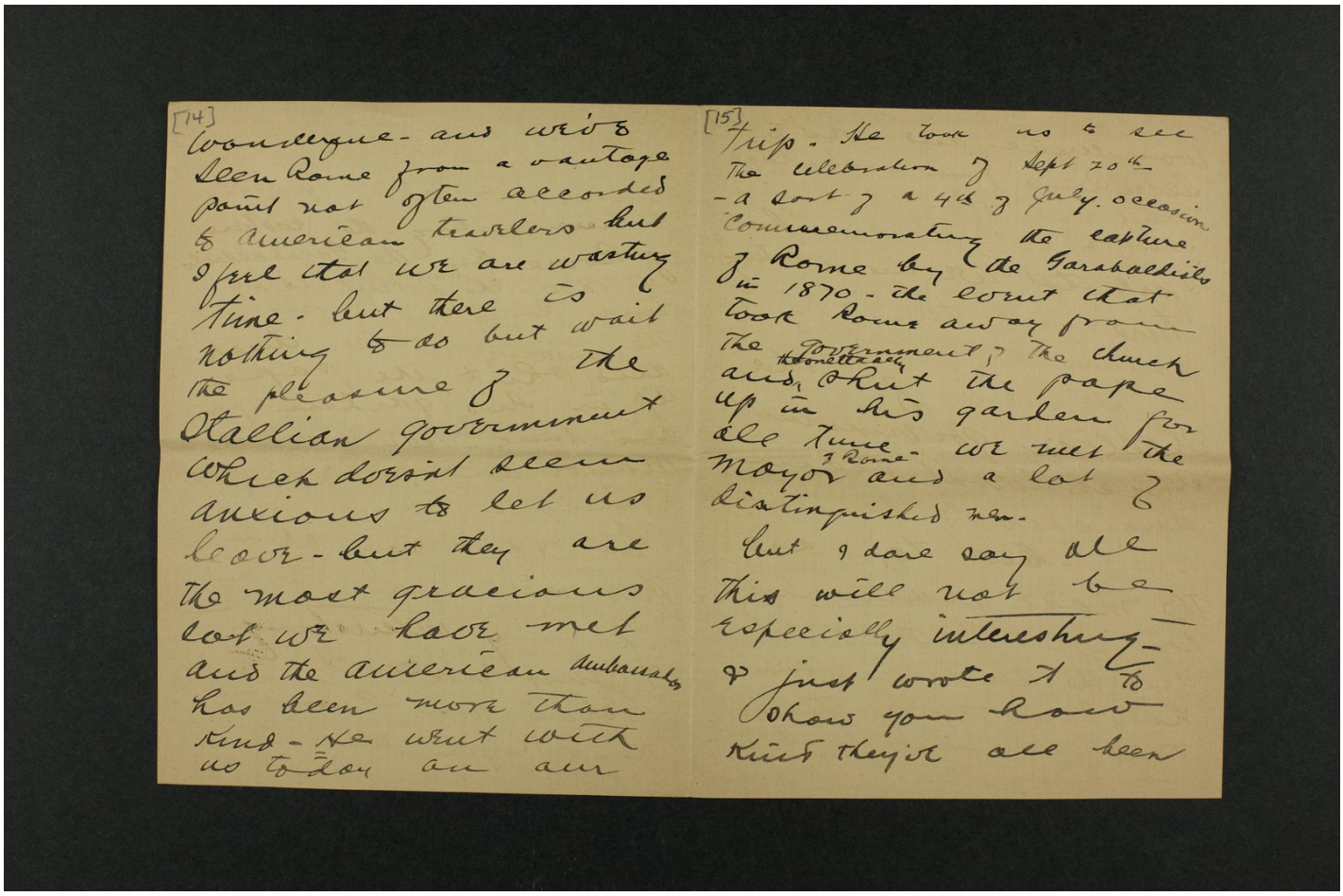
GRAND-HÔTEL ROME

villa and lunched in a gorgeous place. Then we visited the Villa (I can't spell it), builded in the 17th century. a wonderful place with a great garden, acres of buildings a chapel, and many beautiful rooms. The Princess, whose husband and sons are at war received us graciously in a big salon with painted pictures on

[13]

the walls and ceilings. She talked a little English. and the Marquis talked a little French and Medill talks French, so we got along fine. We are now back. and anxious to hear about our passports for the front. We are anxious to leave tonight but it looks just now as though we wouldn't get our permissions until Sunday. The two days have been perfectly

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



[14]

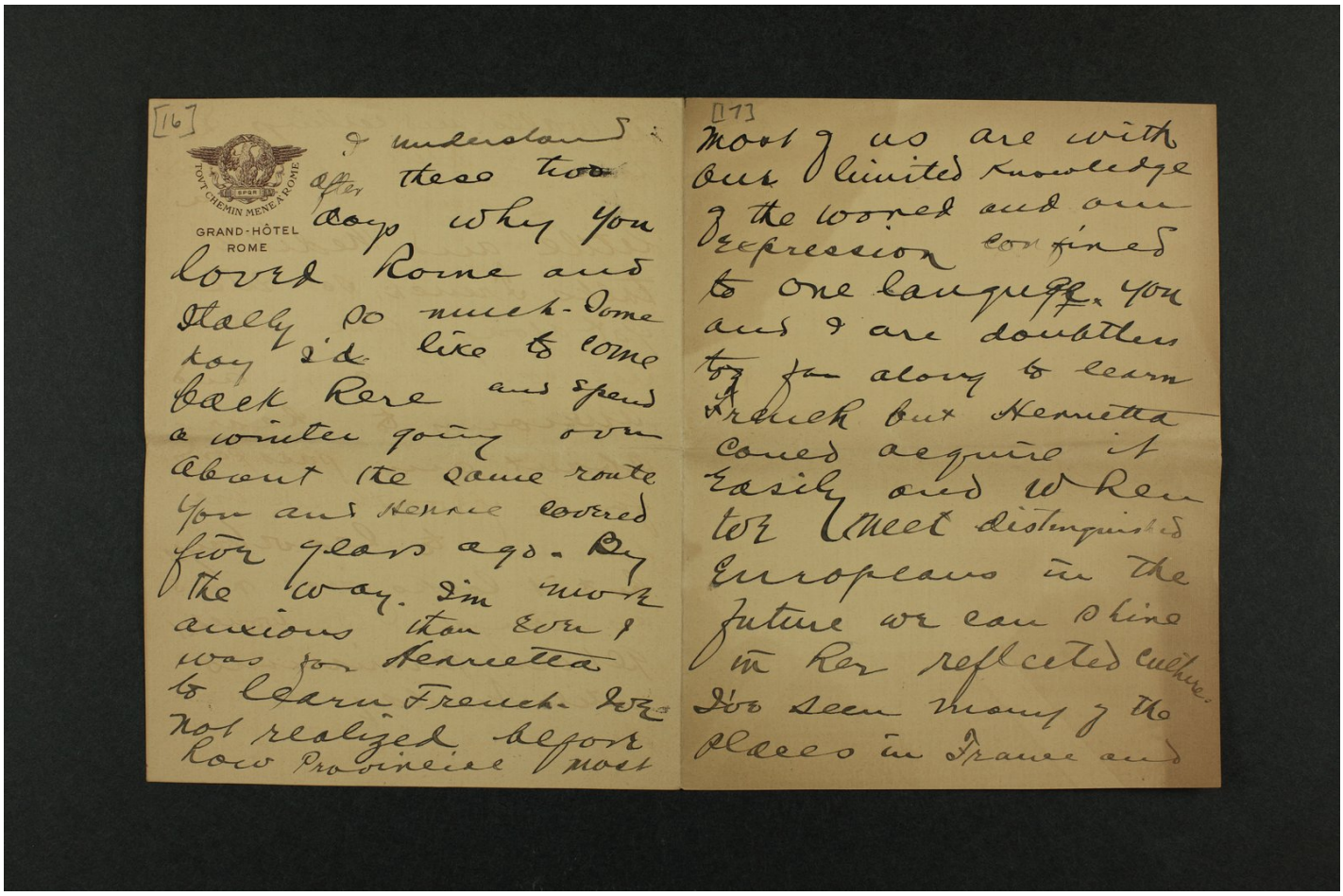
Wonderful - and we'd been Rome from a vantage point not often accorded American travelers but I feel that we are wasting time - but there is nothing to do but wait the pleasure of the Italian government which doesn't seem anxious to let us leave - but they are the most gracious host we have met and the American Ambassador has been more than kind - He went with us to-day on an

[15]

trip - He took us to see the celebration of Sept 20th - a sort of a 4th of July occasion Commemorating the capture of Rome by the Garabaldiites in 1870 - the event that took Rome away from the Government of the church and shut the pope up in his garden for all time - we met the Mayor of Rome and a lot of distinguished men.

But I dare say all this will not be especially interesting - I just wrote it to show you how hard it is to get any

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



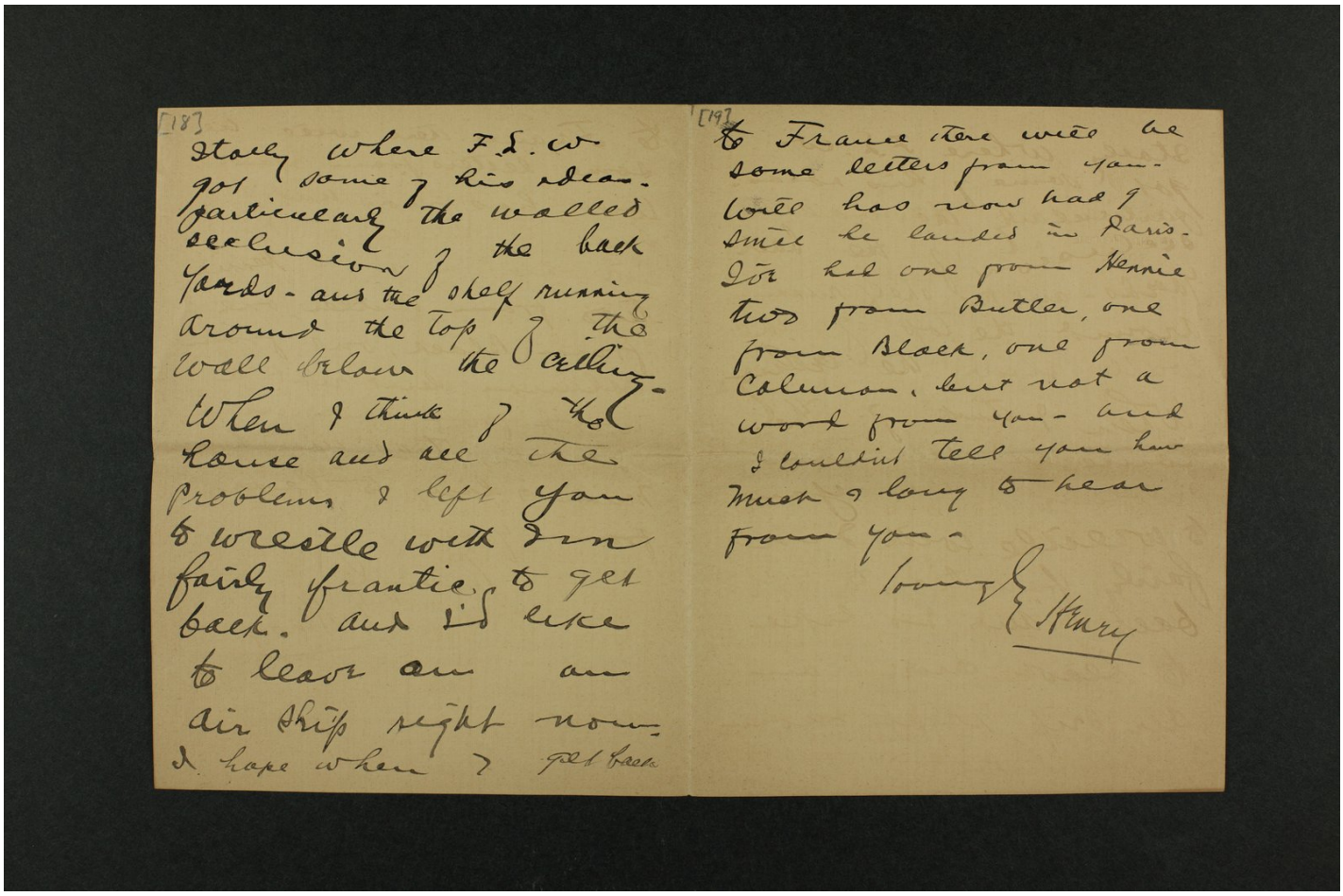
[16]

TOUT CHEMIN MENE A ROME
SPQR
GRAND-HÔTEL
ROME

I understand a few days these too days why you loved Rome and Italy so much. Some day I'd like to come back here and spend a winter going over about the same route you and Henrie covered four years ago. By the way. Im more anxious than ever I was for Henrietta to learn French. Not realized before how provincial most

[17]

most of us are with our limited knowledge of the world and our expression confined to one language. You and I are doubtless too far along to learn French but Henrietta could acquire it easily and when to meet distinguished Europeans in the future we can shine in her reflected culture. Do see many of the places in France and



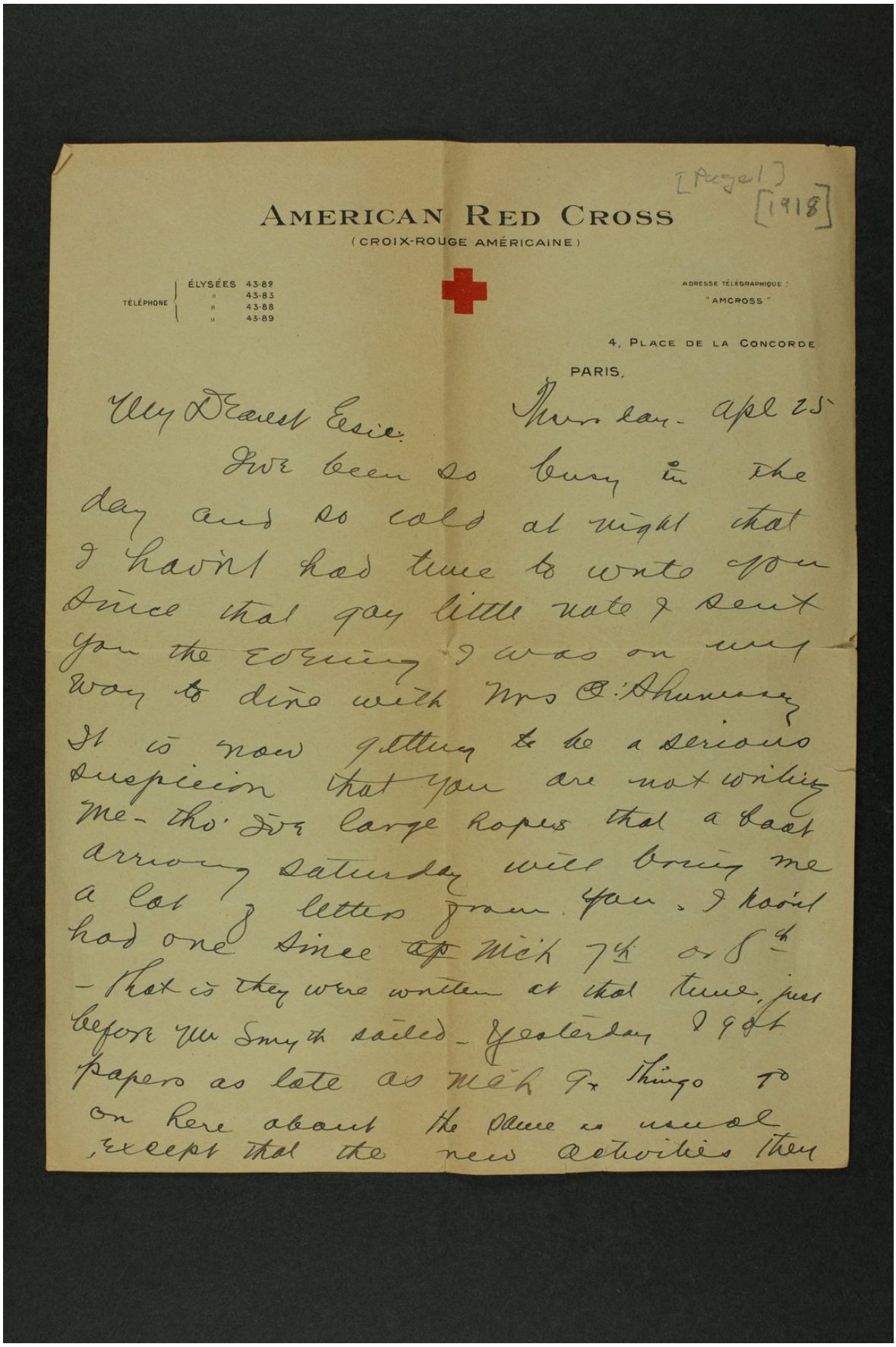
[18]

Italy where F.S.W got some of his ideas. particularly the walled seclusion of the back yards - and the shelf running around the top of the wall below the ceiling. When I think of the house and see the problems I left you to wrestle with I am fairly frantic to get back. and I'd like to leave on an air ship right now. I hope when I get back

[19]

to France there will be some letters from you. Lowell has now had 9 since he landed in Paris. Jo has had one from Jennie two from Butler, one from Black, one from Coleman, but not a word from you - and I couldn't tell you how much I long to hear from you -

Lovingly
Henry



[Page 1]
[1918]

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(CROIX-ROUGE AMÉRICAINE)

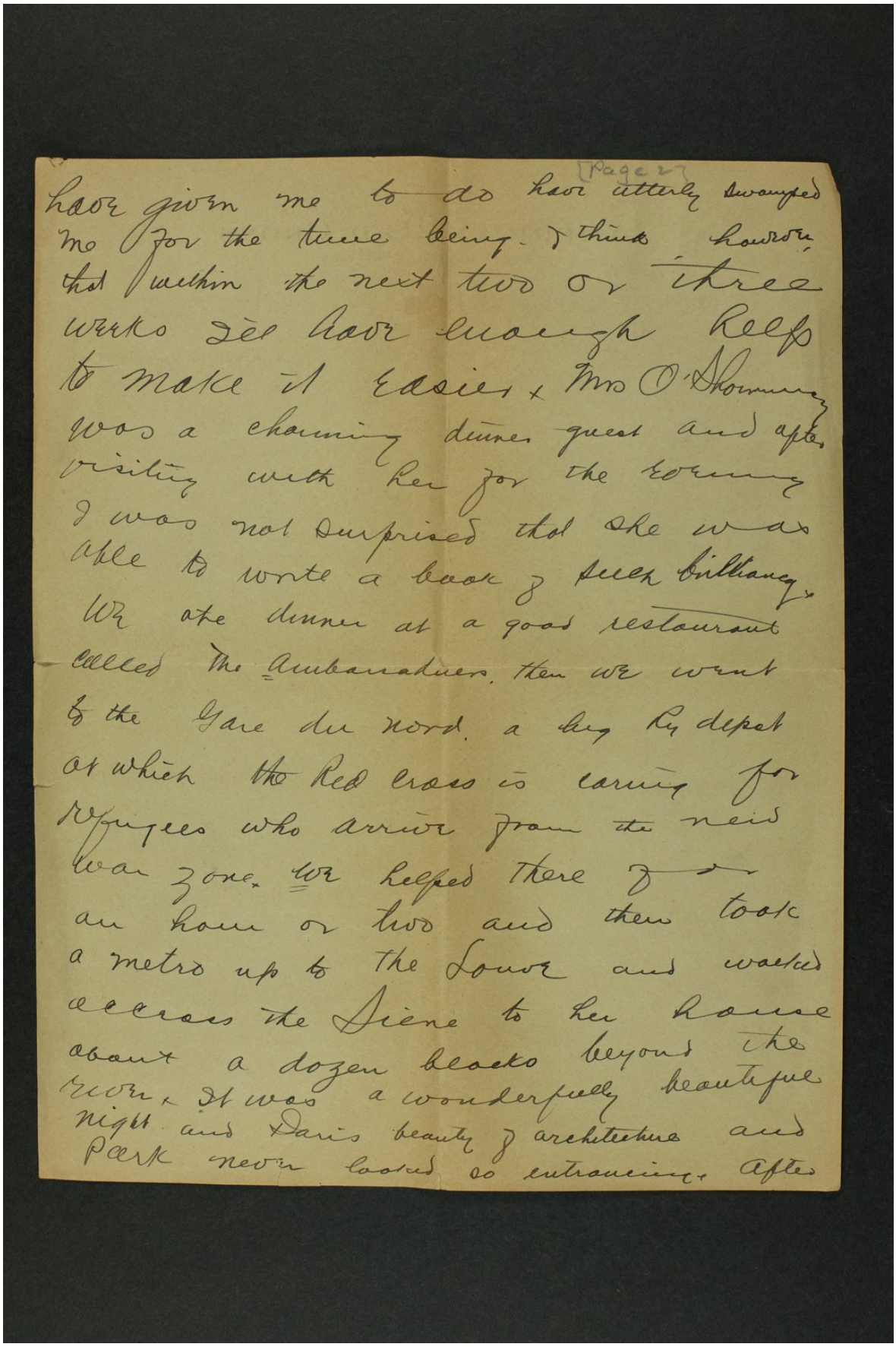
TÉLÉPHONE { ÉLYSÉES 43-82 / » 43-83 / » 43-88 / » 43-89

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : "AMCROSS"

4, PLACE DE LA CONCORDE
PARIS,

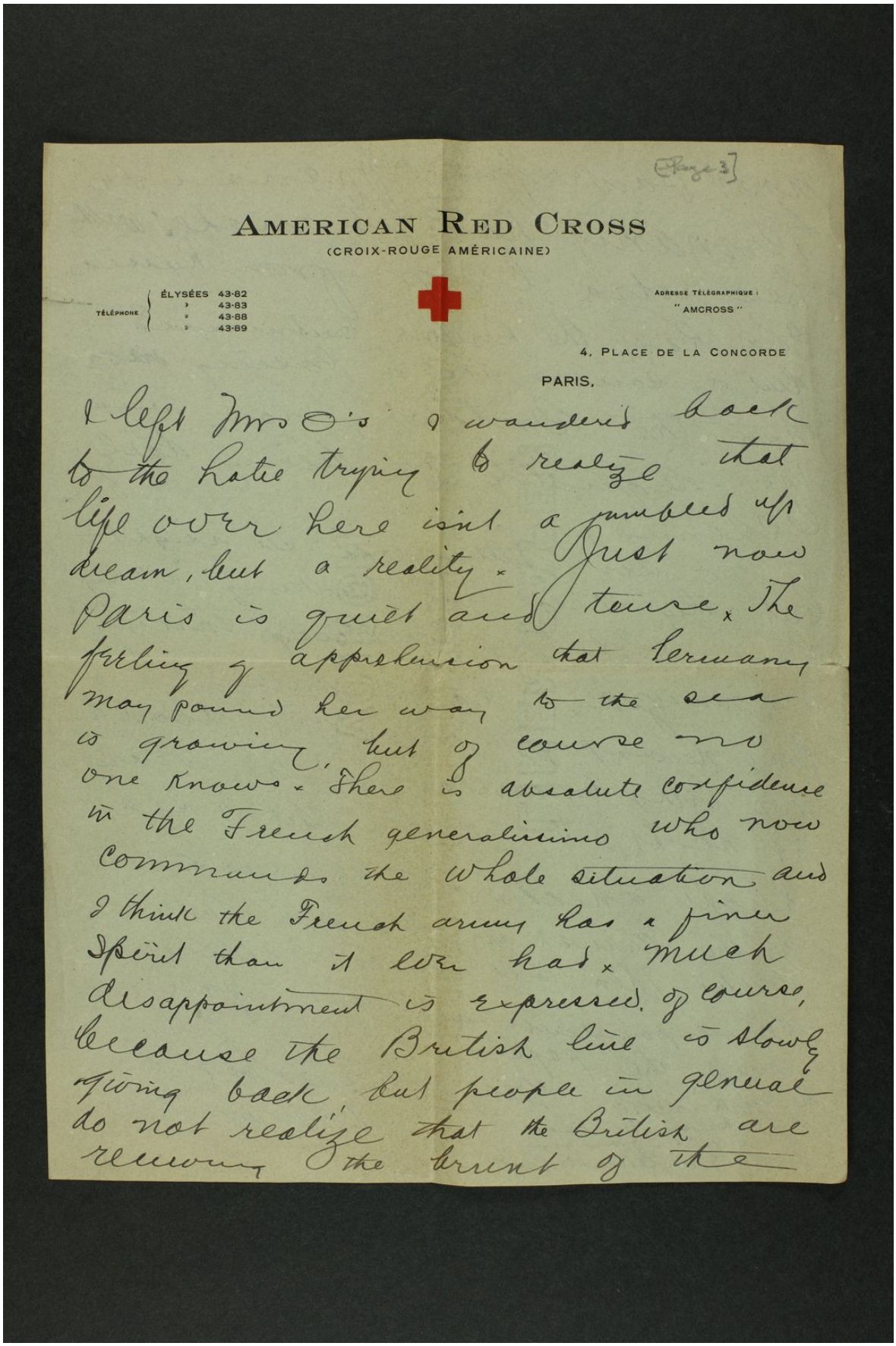
My Dearest Essie. Thursday. Apl 25

I've been so busy in the day and so cold at night that I haven't had time to write you since that gay little note I sent you the Evening I was on my way to dine with Mrs A. Thurman. It is now getting to be a serious suspicion that you are not writing me - tho' I've large hopes that a boat arriving Saturday will bring me a lot of letters from you. I know I had one since the Mich 7th or 8th - that is they were written at that time, just before you Smyth sailed - Yesterday I got papers as late as Mch 9th Things go on here about the same as usual, except that the new activities then



[Page 27]

hour given me to do hour utterly swamped me for the time being. I think however that within the next two or three weeks I'll have enough help to make it easier. Mrs O. Thomas was a charming dinner guest and after visiting with her for the morning I was not surprised that she was able to write a book of such brilliancy. We ate dinner at a good restaurant called the Ambassadeurs. Then we went to the Gare du Nord, a big R.R. depot at which the Red Cross is caring for refugees who arrive from the near war zone. We helped there for an hour or two and then took a metro up to the Louvre and walked across the Siene to her house about a dozen blocks beyond the river. It was a wonderfully beautiful night and Paris beauty of architecture and park never looked so entrancing. After



(Page 3)

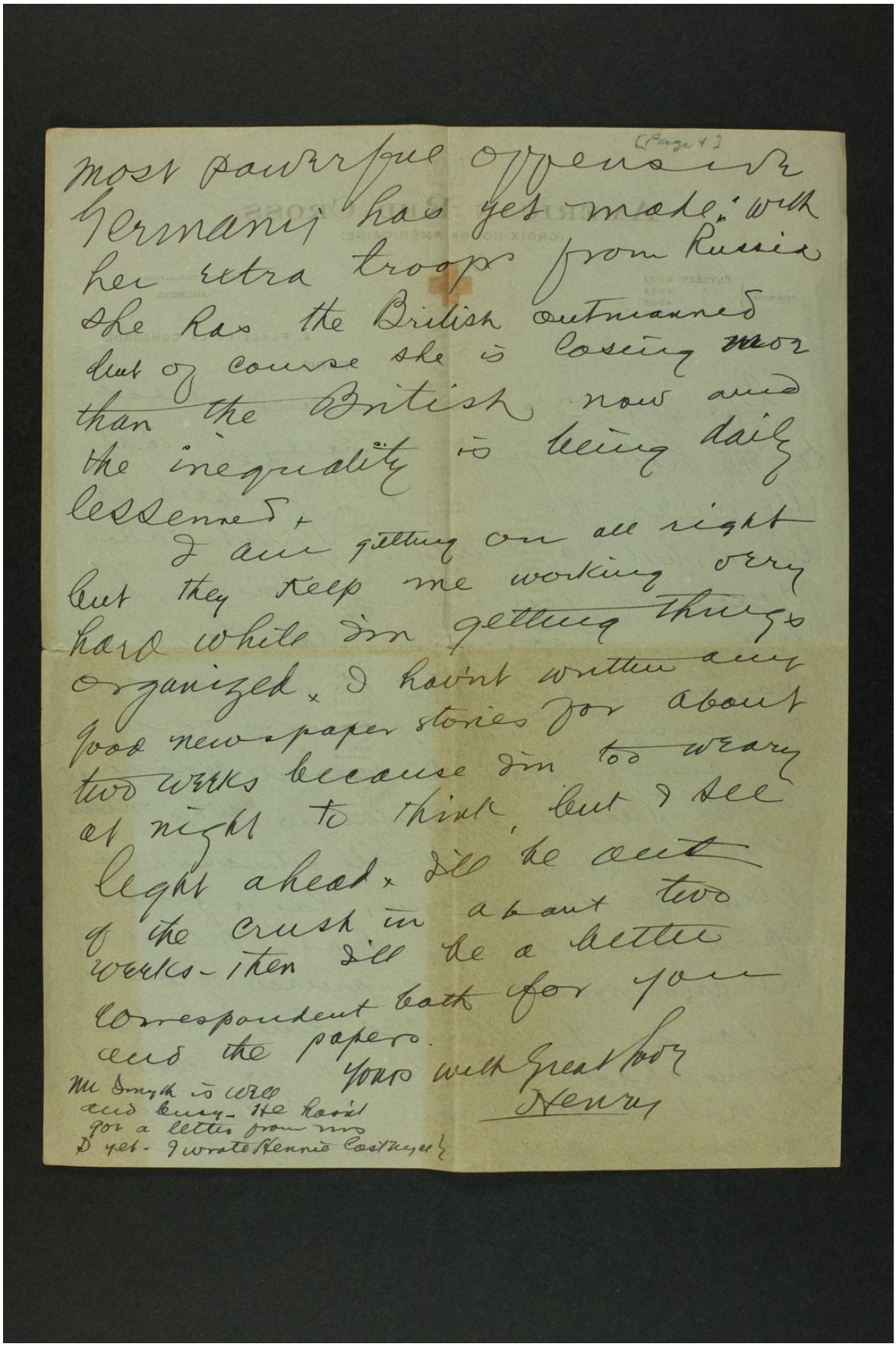
AMERICAN RED CROSS
(CROIX-ROUGE AMÉRICAINE)

TÉLÉPHONE { ÉLYSÉES 43-82 / » 43-83 / » 43-88 / » 43-89

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : "AMCROSS"

4, PLACE DE LA CONCORDE
PARIS,

I left Mrs O'i & wandered back to the hotel trying to realize that life over here isn't a jumbled up dream, but a reality. Just now Paris is quiet and tense. The feeling of apprehension that Germany may pound her way to the sea is growing, but of course no one knows. There is absolute confidence in the French generalissimo who now commands the whole situation and I think the French army has a finer spirit than it ever had. Much disappointment is expressed, of course, because the British line is slowly giving back, but people in general do not realize that the British are receiving the brunt of the



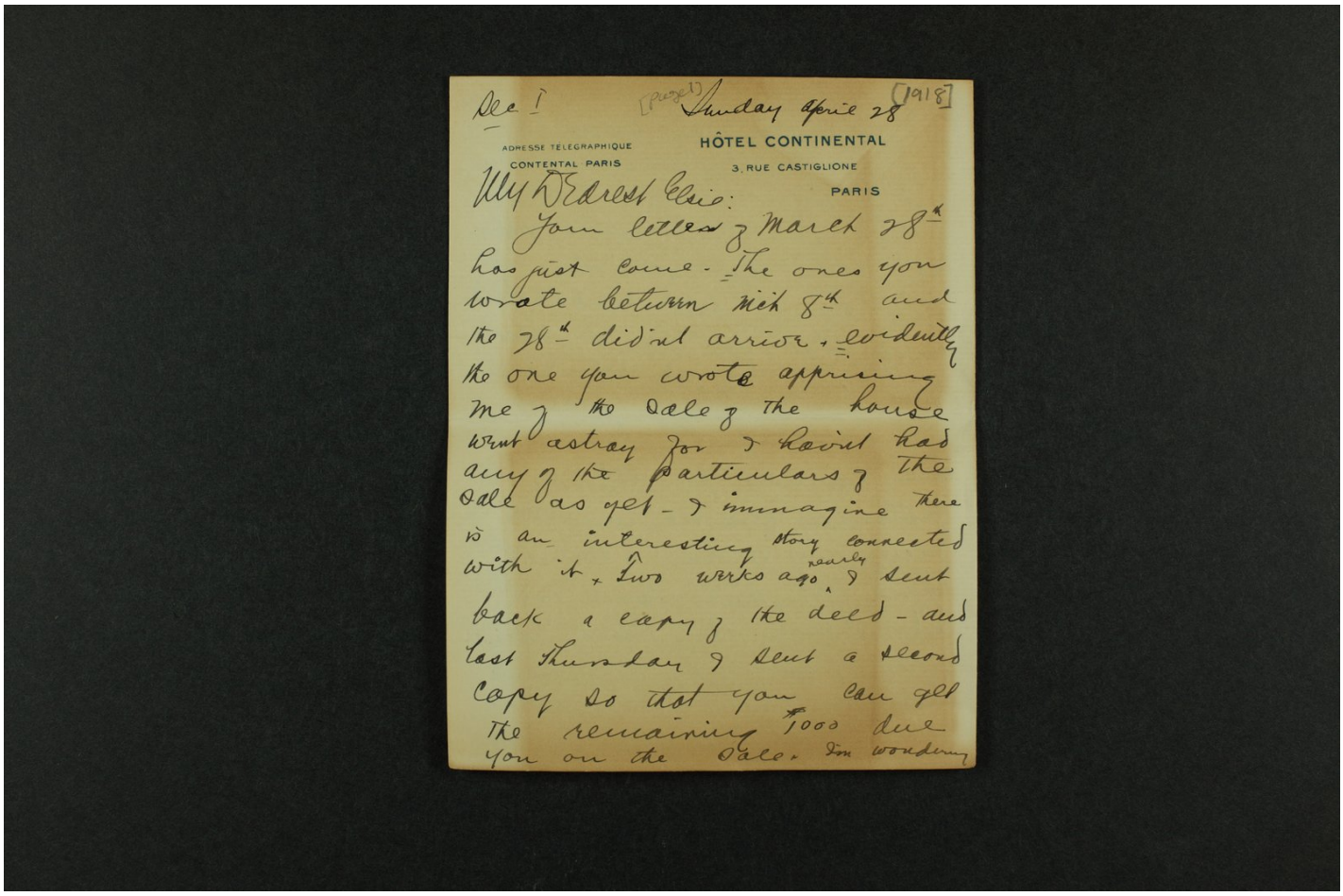
[Page 4]

most powerful offensive
Germany has yet made with
her extra troops from Russia
She has the British outmanned
but of course she is losing more
than the British now and
the inequality is being daily
lessened.

I am getting on all right
but they keep me working very
hard while I'm getting things
organized. I haven't written any
good newspaper stories for about
two weeks because I'm too weary
at night to think, but I see
light ahead. I'll be out
of the crush in about two
weeks - then I'll be a better
correspondent both for your
and the papers.

Yours with great love
Henry

Mr Smyth is ill
and busy - He said
got a letter from me
I yet - I wrote Kennie Castleyer



Dec 1 [Page 1] Sunday April 28 [1918]

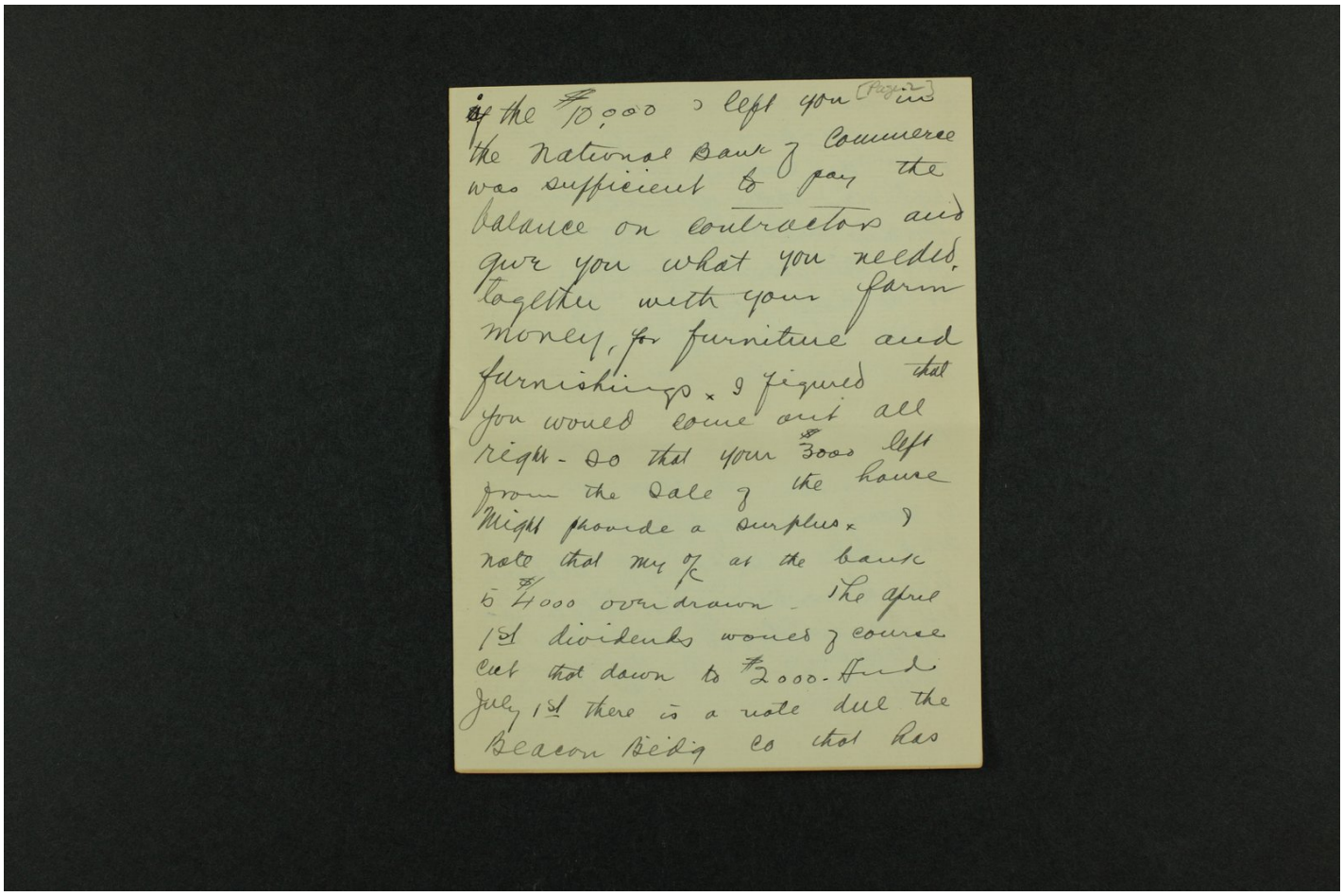
ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE
CONTENTAL PARIS

HÔTEL CONTINENTAL
3, RUE CASTIGLIONE
PARIS

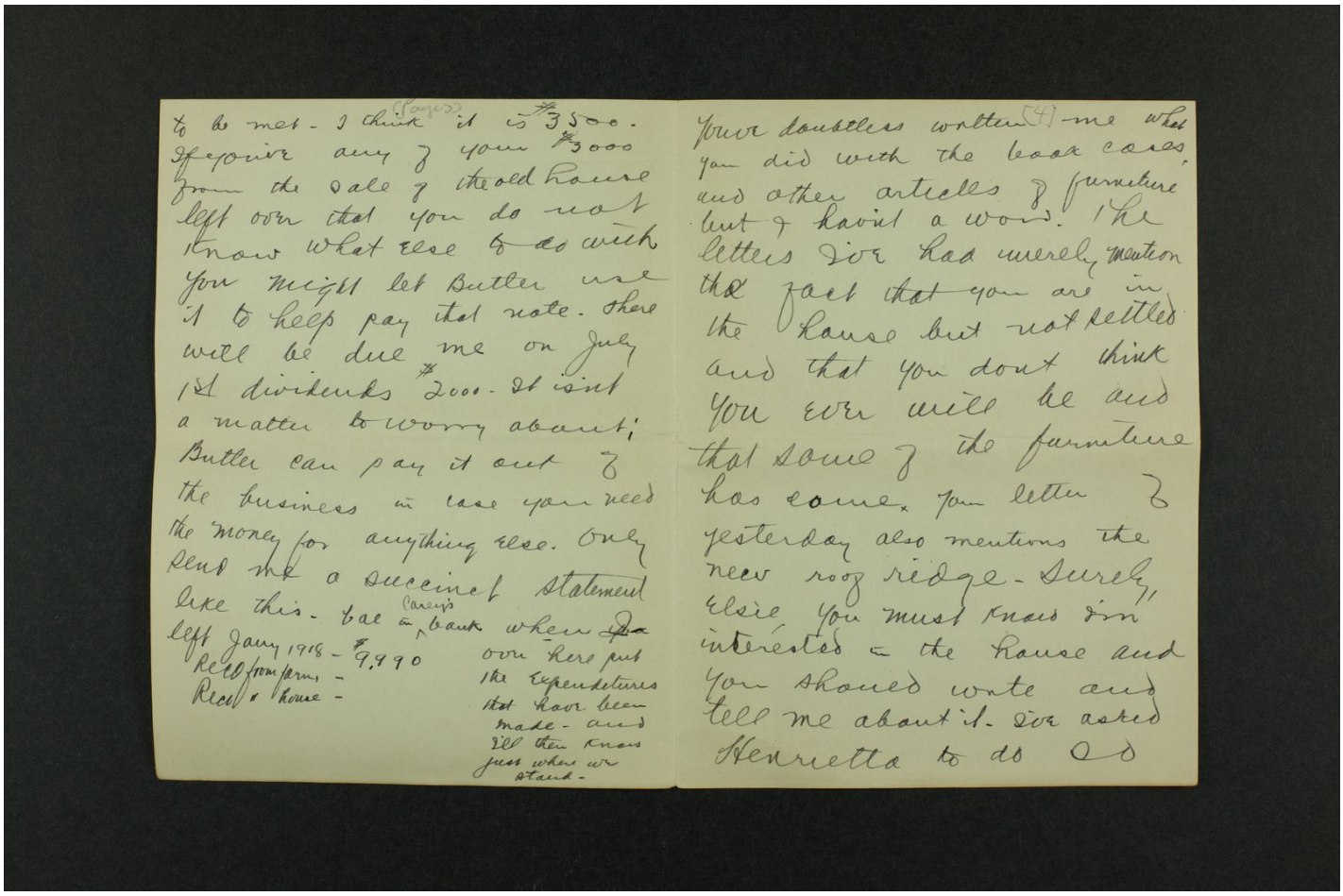
My Dearest Elsie:

Your letter of March 28th has just come. The ones you wrote between Mch 8th and the 28th did not arrive. Evidently the one you wrote apprising me of the sale of the house went astray for I have had any of the particulars of the sale as yet. I imagine there is an interesting story connected with it. Two weeks ago nearly I sent back a copy of the deed - and last Thursday I sent a second copy so that you can get the remaining $1000 due you on the sale. I'm wondering

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



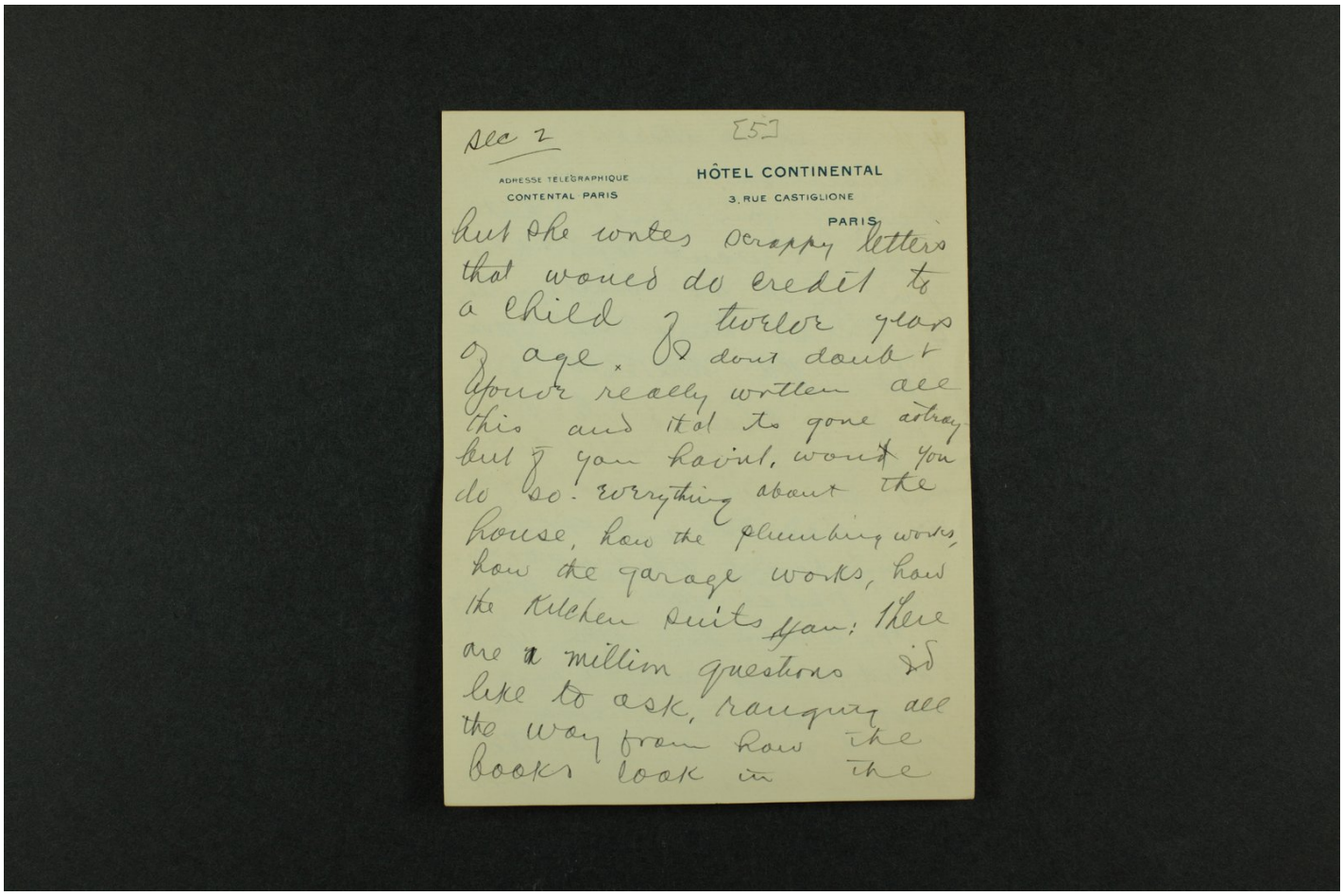
Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



to be met - I think (Sayers) it is $3500. If you receive any of your $3000 from the sale of the old house left over that you do not know what else to do with you might let Butler use it to help pay that note. There will be due me on July 1st dividends $2000. It isn't a matter to worry about; Butler can pay it out of the business in case you need the money for anything else. Only send me a succinct statement like this - bal in (Sayers) bank when left Jany 1918 - $9,990
Recd from farms -
Recd on house -
over here put the expenditures that have been made - and I'll then know just where we stand -

Your doubtless written [4] me what you did with the book cases, and other articles of furniture but I have'nt a word. The letters I've had merely mention the fact that you are in the house but not settled and that you don't think you ever will be and that some of the furniture has come. Your letter of yesterday also mentions the new roof ridge - Surely, Elsie you must know I'm interested in the house and you should write and tell me about it. I've asked Henrietta to do so

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



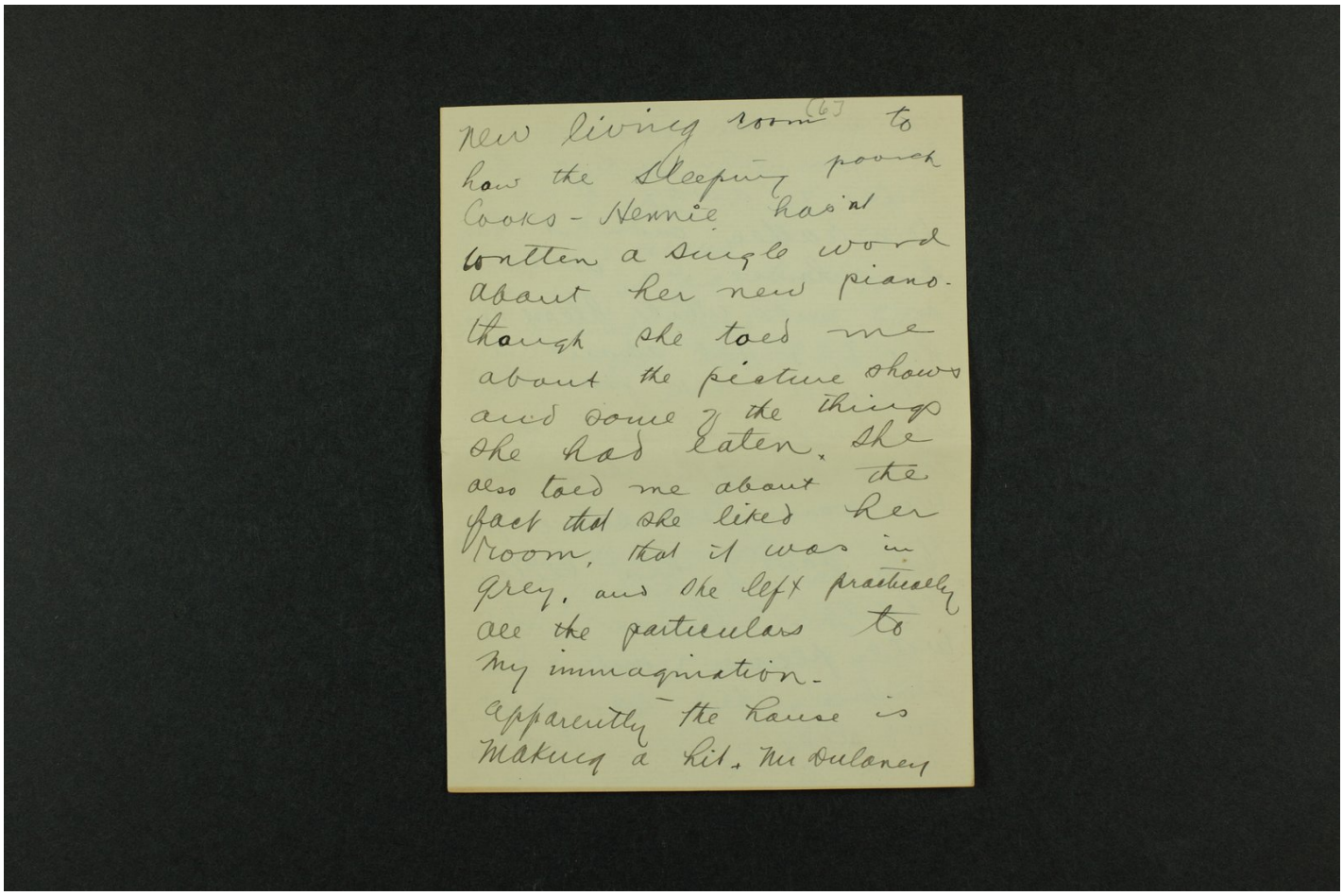
Dec 2 [5]

ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE
CONTENTAL PARIS

HÔTEL CONTINENTAL
3, RUE CASTIGLIONE
PARIS

but she writes scrappy letters that would do credit to a child of twelve years of age. So dont doubt your really written all this and it'al to gone astray but if you have, would you do so. Everything about the house, how the plumbing works, how the garage works, how the kitchen suits you. There are a million questions id like to ask, ranging all the way from how the books look in the

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence



new living room [67] to how the Sleeping porch looks - Hennie has'nt written a single word about her new piano. though she told me about the picture shows and some of the things she had eaten. She also told me about the fact that she liked her room, that it was in grey, and she left practically all the particulars to my immagination. apparently the house is making a hit. Mr Dulaney