

Berlin. June 29th

1927

Dearest Florence:

I wonder if you can forgive me for not writing to you when your cable came telling me of the birth of Heloise--and of your own health. I wrote immediately in reply, then read it over, and saw that it was no letter to send to you while you were yet in the hospital. It was not a very happy letter, for I have been suffering from stomach trouble for weeks, and one does not write such ~~xxxxxx~~ optimistic letters when one has a pain in the tummy. So I tore up the letter and waited. Then your letter just reached me today--about five minutes ago, and I shall write at once.

I am glad you are so happy. Your letter is a long song of praise of your baby. It is good. It must be a lovely baby and I am glad both of you are so well. You will perhaps not like it, but you must understand that Heloise is a stranger to me, and that I was much more concerned to hear that you had come through the confinement with good health than to know that Heloise was getting on well. Heloise can get her own friends later on; just now I am your friend, and was more interested in you. Of course she is a part of you and is precious for that reason.

You are perhaps home by now and are enjoying yourself tremendously, and I am happy for you. With all your delight over your child, some way or other no desire is awakened in me to have a child. Sometimes I'm a bit curious, but my desire goes no further. I read your letter with interest, expecting to envy you. But the desire does not come. True it is that I love children with a deep and tender love, and the sight of a lovely thing moves me. But the desire to have one of my own has not taken possession of me yet. I am no longer hostile--but am just indifferent, and am so much more interested in other things. One day I may adopt about six, if I have the money. Or at least two or three. Also out of curiosity and the desire for companionship and experimentation in education.

I am working, chil', working! You cannot imagine how. The Russian-British situation has thrown me completely into the arms of the Bolsheviks for all practical purposes. I am writing, writing, writing for the Indian press, counteracting British propaganda against Russia, for we hope that if another war breaks--and it is bound to within a year at the latest--India will strike for its freedom and that all Asia will at last be free. Night and day I read, study, and write, and have given up everything at the university except one lecture a week on Indian history, and my class there. I have joined an "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" for the study of Marxism and Imperialism and am working very hard in this, for ~~xxx~~ we all have to give reports. We are all Orientals in the class except myself and one Swiss girl. Our leader is a well-known Marxian economist. Within my own opinions I remain still non-political in so far as the Communist Party is concerned, and could never join it. I am more and more interested in economic action alone. But I must know other things also. Twice the past week I lectured, once in German before the Chinese and Indian meeting attended by some 500 men here in the city, and last week before the same gathering on Kaethe Kollwitz and her art (with magic lantern slides). Kaethe Kollwitz was present also and we had a very fine evening. But the work is too heavy and I often long for a bit of rest. My face seems to have taken on five years of age during the past two months.

I have an article to appear soon in "The ~~xxxxxx~~ New Masses" there in New York. It is anonymous and was submitted to "The Nation" for its series on "These Modern Women". They were afraid to publish it and sent it to the "American Mercury". ~~xxx~~ Mensken--according to a letter from the "New Masses"--also got cold feet and said the postoffice was watching him too closely. So it went to the "New Masses" and they said if I would give it to them they would fight on the issue. But even

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they want to cut out the word "homosexuality" and change a whole paragraph. I have let them. In the meantime I have a letter from "The Nation" telling me that they could not have published the letter without toning it down for "our readership, advanced as it is, also has its definite limitations". Then he is good enough to go on and says: "May I say to you that I think yours is one of the most extraordinary human documents I have ever read, for its frankness, its self-revelation, and the moving character of the story?" Now if he really thought that, why did he not run it and fight on the issue of "one of the most extraordinary human documents" he had ever read. And why didn't Mencken? Well, read the article yourself when it appears and see if you think Villard has merely flattered me. But I wish you would not tell who wrote it, outright just like that. The Indians will always use it against me anyway. What I think is that America is frightfully backward in such things.

I wrote the article to make money, for I am trying to get enough to come back to the U.S. in the fall, provided I go on to India. But the "New Masses" say they cannot pay. It is terrible. I work and work and work and get just about a pfennig. I have also given up Frau Durieux's scholarship--at least half of it--and next month give it up permanently. She gave it to me to work for my Doctorate, and since I am now engaged in this war business, I cannot continue.

My life here is none too easy in other ways. I need not write of them now.

I have not heard from Bakar for months. We agreed not to write. It often seems to me that our affair will never go through. I see no possibility of it. He is too young--or if you will, I am too old.

You named your child Heloise after someone in French history I believe. I am densely ignorant of who the lady was. Will you please inform me and save me the trouble of going and reading a book? The only lady I know of ~~XXXXXX~~ ancient France was Joan of Arc and the women before and during the French Revolution. Or was she Greek? I am glad you did not wish the name Agnes on her. It means purity, so I have heard, and perhaps there are pure Agneses. I suspect it came from the ancient Sanskrit word "Agni", meaning fire, taken over by the Latins and called "Agnus" or something like that. And fire purifies, and the ~~XXXXXX~~ ancient Hindu God of Fire was called Agni--and also ~~XXXXXX~~ the patron of propagation. He was the "defender of the matron and the beloved of the maiden" and so on. On the whole, seemed to be a rather interesting and energetic chap. You say you wish Heloise to be ~~XXXXXX~~ "courage in love and in her own opinions". Well, child, I was never courage in love. I didn't know what love was; it was only dirt to me and half of my life was gone before I realized how I had been poisoned.

I hope you have another child, dear Florence. It is necessary for the child. Otherwise you are likely to devour Heloise with love, without knowing it. Try and have a houseful to use up your mother energy.

Now I stop this. Here is my love to you. I now turn to events in China--to work.

Before closing I shall tell you a story: I hear that when the homosexual gentleman, the Prince of Wales, was in America, an American out in Duluth or somewhere stepped up and in a nasal twang said "Glad to meet you, Mr. Wales--shake!" I think I wrote you my British Ambassador story and the Queen Wilhelmina of Holland and so shall not bore you by repeating it. It is my choicest one now. But in case I forgot, I write it on another page and you can just not bother to read it.

Love, dear thing, to you and Sam and Heloise.

*Yours - Agnes*