Mary Cassatt Letters to Robert and Minnie Cassatt, 1909-1914

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Beau fresne
pas Fresneaux Mchevreuil
Oise  1909
July 29th

Dearest Minnie,

I telegraphed to know when you got in (that wretched Herald News gives any news) & the answer was at 2 o'clock. It certainly isn't long you arrived in Paris (or rather didn't [[?]] [[?]] one Tuesday & the next Thursday I hope but [[?]] at Rosemont. Mathilde sighed out that really we might try it, but it deliberately put yourself in a situation to suffer tortures if not necessary, if you can meet in March that seems hard. I trust you had a smooth passage, no such Alexander continued his triumphant career of success, he certainly has enough [[?]] in Paris. I shall be very anxious to know how he is - how you all are - This letter came after you left. I shouldn't have paid the bill & I told Rob to hand over the amount to D48
my account at home but it is better to know that it is all [[strikethrough]]
10, RUE DE MARIGNAN [[strikethrough]] correct - The "Minoge" left
before I got back from the States & to our loud complaints of incapacity I
was answered that "Minoges" in themselves were fast & where they
were "exhas"! Jean reminded me of Mrs Havemeyer's story of her going
into her kitchen & finding the [[strikethrough]] Butler [[strikethrough]]
butler boiling his socks in one of the sauce pans, whereupon she
hurried every manservant out of the house & has had women only since.
I sent [[strikethrough]] cool [[strikethrough]] a bit of glass to the bride
casted of the oriental vase & a woman from here opened the door to
Mathilde. [[strikethrough]] They [[strikethrough]] She said she had been
telegraphed for as all the servants had left on the eve of the wedding &
so you see the servant question isn't all smooth even here - Heaps of
love to you both & kisses to Alexander, I shall be interested to know how
the Crail affair turns out. I haven't seen Mrs [[Dreybustoher?]] wrote to
her not to come on Sundays on account of the automobile nuisance.
ever affectionately your Aunt Mary Cassatt
Monday

Dearest Minnie

I got back from Houlgate on Saturday evening, we went after seeing the babies to Mont St Michel & the weather changing left there on Saturday morning & got here at night. It is 350 kilometers & I have never before done so much, but the change of air & the shaking up in the auto helped me to get rid of the neuralgia in the back & now I want to sleep all day as well as all night to make up. The boys are such darlings I am looking forward.

D41
to having them here with so much pleasure - Alexander actually remembered the cake with currents from last year & "le petit chien avec une courverture!" As for Tony he is such a duck his hair does not matter. Then the rings to be just like Dads - I took Miss Lovel off to Baycane & Caen for the afternoon but the boys had to sleep after luncheon - she is such a nice woman - I hope you had as good a trip back from Venice as you had going the crossing back must be delightful - Tell Rob that Bertha wrote to Mathilde. (Bertha is with Mrs Campbell in England) but ask if she knew that Mrs Cassatt was very very ill - I don't see how she can travel if she is - that is all I have heard - Heaps of love to you both from your affectionate Aunt Mary Cassatt
Saturday [1909?]

MESNIL-BEAUFRESNE
FRESNEAUX-MONTCHEVREUIL
T MESNIL-THERIBUS (OISE)

Dearest Minnie

I wanted to get back to the Casig home & see the children. Yesterday afternoon, but I could not. I (?) fasted with Haletian & his brother at Ponissets & spent the rest of the time at an autoguarian with them, & after all found the Mantel piece would not suit the drawing room. However I think I should

D32.
them up & had besides a very amusing time Everything is going to
[[Anounces??]] Altman had just tonight a Rembrandt I don't know for how much, but Mrs. Huntington paid $300,000 for one last year so one may be sure is wasn't cheap; Altman's, I mean. These people don't know what to do with their money- It is not about this I was going to write but about the children. I can go in for them or send the car. If Rob will trust Pierre who is very careful, or let me go for them I know you have lots to do. Then let one of the nurses come by train & bring their things if you think it best. There is a train leaves at 11.45 from Mezu, waits there 40 minutes (gets there at 1) & arrives here before three [[underlined]]. She could eat something at Mezu.
If you think this best of course, I am glad it is core for they will feel the change from the sea shore, to Paris but it will all the same be better for them here of fine they can be mi, I if Paris they have more room to move about here - Lots of kisses to them & love to Ruth
Im fine
your affectionate aunt
Mary Cassatt
[Mary Cassatt/Frederick Sweet Papers Archives of American Art]
Dec 21st 1910-12?

VILLA ANGELETTO
ROUTE DE NICE
GRASSE (A.M.)

Dearest Minnie
I was so glad to get your letter from Paris, and hear all about you - I had no idea that Berlin was so amusing. - Of course everything goes on at night, as the days are so short. The boys will learn a lot, even in a short time, at their age.
The opera in Munich is much the same as in Berlin as regards the womens
D8
dressing - I cannot understand why they don't wear lighter clothes, if 
don't want to "de'collelatee. It used to so at the theaters in Paris, 
now they dress almost as much as for the Opera. Is Mr Gerard from 
Geneseo N.Y? If so he was a beau of Mollie Scotts & isn't he of the 
Fitzhugh family thru' his Mother? If so one of my earliest recollections is 
of a great uncle of his M. Fitzhugh, when I was a little girl in Paris. He 
used to come to our house. -- [Broun?]]. Ellen Mary, I might to say is 
deeply interested in the authoress of "Elizabeth & her German Garden" 
who is a Cless von Arnim, she is now a widow or was divorced before 
her husbands death, Mrs Spencer got her son to promise to ask about 
her, won't you if you get a chance. She is an English woman - Have you 
read the book? and others of hers you can find them in the Tauchnitz & 
they will amuse you - I hope you will enjoy being [[presented?]]. the 
Empress isnt agreeable & "finds fault with every thing" so I heard this 
afternoon. It is the men who are decoration in Germany, with their 
uniforms. The Emperor

Mary Cassatt Letters to Robert and Minnie Cassatt, 1909-1914 
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would not allow one of my pictures in the Museum, that was Baulis Irving - Mrs Havermeyer told one of his aides in N Y. that he knew nothing of art! he asked Prof. Sloane what he thought of Nelson! My news from home is full of hunting, and balls - E. M. asked Lois who is going to live at 1418 - Ellen cares more for the country, I wont tell her about riding in Berlin as she would want to go there - Heaps of love to you all. & kisses to the boys. I am so glad to hear they are getting on so well - A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from Your affectionate Aunt
Mary Cassatt
Dahayek ["Hope"]
Jan 7th [1911] or
Dearest Minnie

All through October & November I hoped for news of your coming, but you did not come. And here we are going up the Nile in a most comfortable boat & you, I suppose enjoying snow storms in Philadelphia.

How I would like to see the boys. I never dared send them a Xmas present on account of the customs here, but would not they enjoy the camels & the D37
donkeys! We have just passed a camel performing, or rather turning a crack, with palm trees for a background. Of course you know all this, so I share you a description, but if ever Rob wants a thorough rest & change bring him up the Nile, I cannot imagine any one not benefiting by it, such air. Your uncle Gard poor man has an attack of hives, & is unfortunately in bed, but we got a little Egyptian Doctor on board yesterday evening who prescribed & promises a cure for tomorrow. I hope he will soon be up here on deck, we are being towed to Luxor & Assowon - all the party are happy, your Aunt Jennie looking so well & Eugenia now reconciled to travels abroad, though looking forward with delight to boarding school next winter.

We left Paris or rather I did to join them in Munich, on the 10th & we stopped at Vienna - Buda Pest Sofia & Constantinople, missed Athens on account of the quarantine, but mean to return that way. It is a great change for me, I can hardly believe I am sitting on the deck of a dahabeya writing to you - While we were still in Paris, your brother John & his wife passed through coming from China. I heard of her at Laperriene - I hope your Mother is enjoying her travels, from here
China doesn't seem so far off, I met two Americans from Boston in Cairo the other day who had just come from Peking & were stopping over for two hours on their way home. We had a good deal of suffering on our way from Constantinople, but I was not as seasick as usual. If only, as Mathilde says, we could cross to America this way! You are of course very busy enjoying society, & dancing the hours away, & the boys bless their dear hearts must be having lessons, at least Alexander has. Give them lots of kisses from me, my love to you & Rob from the whole party, & do write me a line. Our address until March 1st is Thomas Cook & Sons Cairo.

Your affectionate Aunt
Mary Cassatt
Via Cherbourg.

Mrs Robert Kelso Cassatt
Beaupre
Rosemont
Pennsylvania
Etats Unis de l'Amerique
D50e
Dearest Minnie

I feel I partly owe to you the getting this little place, for I wrote to the address your uncle gave you for me, & when Mathilde & I arrived here two weeks ago, we saw this place the next day, the agent having received a good account of me, & took it at once. It is small, just enough for me, & has been lately done over and added to, in fact is not yet finished but has the modern comforts & now all I want is the sun, the servants dogs &

D50a
auto are here & I feel now like home. We have had some glorious days, but today is as bad as Paris gloomy dark a thunder storm all afternoon, there is a great variety in the climate.

I had a letter from Mrs Spencer who is in Paris with her son & now Mr Spencer, she wrote two or three days ago, & spoke of the death of Elsies child - I supposed it was the baby, but last night I had a letter from Ellen, & she tells me that little Cassatt Stewart is the one - What a blow, & to the Grandmother, he must have been older than Alexander - I have thought of little else since - I know your kind heart will feel for the parents, no matter who has passed. Ellen says it must have been awfully sudden for Elsie was at a ball the day before & danced until morning. I don't know what sort of a mother Elsie is, but not any mother could lose a child of that age & not be overcome - And now after all the wish to enrich Elsie and Ed at Robs expense your two boys are the only ones. One is appalled at what happens in this World.

Ellen says you have been
been very kind and you and Bob are to give her a dinner dance on January 8th which happens to be her birthday. She seems to be going all the time, she says little Lois comes up to her & wants to be with her. Ellen thinks she seems cowed & that they are not nice to her. I feel sorry for her, she has to walk as she is told, and she is so devoid of relations of her age. None on either side. She is old, and she is so afraid of You have been living in a state of excitement over the elections & we have had a near scare. I feel now as if we were out of that, no one wants to begin & it would
be an awful war every nations in Europe engaged - For a time the banks would give no gold, but that is over. Of course I was worried for Mathilde is a German & the first thing would be to expell all Germans - It would make a havoc amongst travellers, for all over France the hotels are all managed & run by Germans, at the Grande here even the chef is German - I
am going to write to you after the [[Ronard?]] sale where pictures by Degas Manet Monet & I are to be sold, for I want Rob to know the value of the pictures his Father left. I put them down at $200,000 - at least - From all over Europe buyers will be in Paris. I ought to be making my fortune, but that is the way things go, here when my pictures are sought for I cannot work!

Mathilde gives me so many weeks to get well. The change of air upset me very much at first but now I feel better but I don't get any heavier & I might be if I am to get stronger -

Dr Whitman is the one who has done me most good - He thinks your boys wonderful, I suppose that poor boy of Elsies never was strong - I hope dear Mrs Van Rensselaer
is well & that you are all enjoying your winter. When you have a moment
do write me a line. I know you must have very little time, it is well that
Lent comes early this year - Kiss the boys for me & with lots of love to
you and Rob

Your affectionate Aunt,
Mary Cassatt

I am just beyond the Hayes Castle a big stone house like a city house,
they say here that the climate of Grasse has preserved Mr Hayes who is
now 86 -
June 2nd [1912-13?] DR

Mesnil-Beaufresne
Fresneaux-Montchevreuil
T. Mesnil-Theribus (OxSE)

Dearest Minnie,

I was regrettfully shocked yesterday morning to hear that Frances had been operated on for appendicitis, she wrote that the Doctor had said she was suffering from an attack such as she had had in Paris, but I did not say anything of it in my letters to you, for I thought it not serious and you perhaps might be alarmed - I am so
sorry for the dear child, and for your Mother who must have been very anxious - Of course by this time all is well, as according to the letter which came to Mathilde! The operation was on the 20th. I hope you will find her quite recovered my best love to her and to your Mother and my warmest sympathy - Plenty of hugs and kisses to the Jakes and best love to you and Rob, also my kindest regards to Miss Lovell. Always your affectionate Aunt
Mary Cassatt
The children send love Gardner has left Vichy and is now at Dieppe watching the auto race - Yesterday one of the racers ran over and killed a little boy - Roman chariot races were not nearly so bloody -
Mr Robert Kelso Cassatt
Beaupre
Rosemont
Delaware Co
Penna.
Etats Unis le l'Amérique
D46
(1912-13?)

MESNIL-BEAUFRESNE
FRESNEAUX-MONTCHEVREUIL
T. MESNIL-THERIBUS (OISE)

Dearest Minnie

I hope this storm will blow itself out and Rob and you may have a good passage, even if you are good sailors it will be more agreeable. The weather is just the same at home. Frances writes that summer has only just begun. I had a letter from her this morning, she really is a dear. She says Alexander and Tony are darlings not that the we knew, Alexander

D46
taller all the time in the most fascinating way - and she thinks they may after all come over in July. I have no answer about the Austrian baths, if it comes I will send it after you. I have a mind to send you an account of a Miraculous Cure by Magnetism, but at any rate I will tell your Mother about it when she gets to Paris, you see I haven't an unlimited belief in Doctors any more than you, and I would say anything outside the profession - If this one spell lasts the Vichy cure will have to be postponed, they don't give it when the weather is too cold. I got out here Friday in an hour and forty minutes at the rate of 50 kilometers an hour and so shaken up over those bad roads that I ached all over the next day, that boy was racing a 50 horse power Charun and did not listen to my reminiscences any more than a graven image - he is just like the chauffeur in "Man and Superman" if you know the play - Carrole Tyson came over on Sunday and I took him to Beauvais, his accounts from Maine said it was winter up there - The children have the boat and the poney and seem happy and content. I am going home this year if nothing unforeseen occurs so I will see you in your own house and make Tony's acquaintance and enjoy Alexenders conversation, I am determined not to be such a coward any more - it has been a great pleasure to see
you both, more than I can say. I will wear the lovely present you gave me, and look forward to lending to your daughter; it will be nice for her boys to have a sister, nothing like having a quiver full is there? When you meet Mr. Thillman you will find him interested in the business side, he will talk about children to you, but mind his being dry at first, it is only his manner, and Grand Duchesses interest him too - I hope I may see your Mother, she and Mr Van Rensselaer were away from home when Frances wrote, but give my love to them all. I will write to Frances. The afar aunt heaps of love dearest Minnie to you and Rob and may you have a pleasant crossing.

Always your affectionate
Aunt Mary Cassatt
I was glad to go to Laden to rest. She enjoyed it enormously, but Margaret hated it, she loves France. I am glad Rob is able to take a vacation, all my letters, New York letters, are full of rails over the state of affairs at home. I am just reading one of Vanderlips discoveries on the currency. Mrs Sears thinks one will
have to go slower, incomes will fall short - she pays $63000 taxes in Boston! She has just gone home, very happy over Helens marriage & delighted with her son-in-law Cameron Bradley.

I hear Eugenia is determined on a "business career," no "society" for her she wants to live. I used to be like that at her age - Brown seems to be very Fussy, from Sat has had to give up coal - I will

have lots to ask you and Rob. I hope your Mother is well, the papers spoke of Mr Van Renssealaers' having been ill - I saw the Hayes today, he very much the same, I did not speak to him, Mrs H, very well & Millie the youngest such a nice girl very glad to hear about you.

So let know where you are in Paris, I suppose
the Castiglione, I can at least beflower you. That is one of the pleasures here to send flowers to our friends. Give my love to the Spencer's if you see them. They lunch with Browne Shipley. Heaps of love to you and Rob & the dear boys. I would so love to see them.

Your affectionate Aunt

Mary Cassatt
VILLA ANGELETTO
ROUTE DE NICE
GRASSE (A M)

Dearest Minnie
I am so disappointed, but I can understand your not being able to come
down here - When your time is so short, and after your grippe it would
be very fatiguing - I wish I had the strength to run up to Paris for a day or
two but I am afraid, though I am so well.  This the change of
D38a.
climate, if it were cold in Paris it could set me back. One gets tired after being ill so long. I have gained twenty lbs since the photo in that book was taken & look and feel very well - but as I said I am tired. Perhaps you will be over again soon - & I can see the boys before they are altogether grown up - They are the only two to carry on the family. Polly doesn't seem in a hurry, and her sister has no children - They write from home that young Thayer is attentive to Lois, it would be well for her if she could marry soon and have a home of her own, her Grandmother is very severe with her - I hear nothing of the others. I suppose you will
be in Marne in the summer - Business is more pressing at home, but the publications of New York incomes will surely make a row - No man ought to have 100 M dollars a year. I feel am itching to take the train, but I know I might not -
Heaps of love to you & the boys, lots of kisses to them from your affectionate Aunt
Mary Cassatt
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