

5-28-1913

Alan Seeger letter from Paris, 1913

Alan Seeger

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MÉTROPOLITAIN : MONTPARNASSE

To my
Evelyn

Paris, le

191



TELEPHONE 705-23

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pour
BANQUETS
& LUNCHS
DINER-CONCERT

IMP. VINCENT BUREAU, 32, R. CASINO, PARIS.

Dear friend: Have you been entirely without news of me all these months, or have any feathers from the wings of Rumor reached you as to my present condition and whereabouts. Nothing seems more remote than my last evening with you and all the circumstances of our farewell,— the man from Pittsburg interested in heraldry, and the pretty boy, whose company over here would be most incriminating. Do not suppose that I do not think often of you, the charming room and the happiness it imposed upon all who frequented it. Who has succeeded to my chair?

Arrived over here in September I soon found a place that appealed to me, and there I have been ever since (lest I forget I will give you the address near 17 rue du Sommerard — near the Musée de Clugny, you know) Characteristically, I chose it for the view, not for the interior. And the outlook is indeed charming. Over picturesque roof-tops I see the wonderful, old towers

is sweeping over France, impelled by the socialists and the devotees of the new ideal, Humanity. The comb was last week when there were mutinous manifestations in garrisons in all parts of France against the reestablishment of the three years service, proposed in answer to the many's recent disproportional augmentation of her effectifs. The government stands against, but the Catholics smile bitterly and say it told you so and see in the spread of revolutionary and syndicalist sentiments the direct consequence of the separation of Church and State. The danger to France has ceased to be from beyond the Rhine;

the menace seems to be from within.

I need not say that I am well and, as you once put it, 'reasonably happy'. I have been gathering together my verse lately, and hope to bring out a volume soon, not with any expectation of having it read, but to circulate among friends, like the

sugared sonnets; I have been looking over your elegiacs today which made me think much of you - perhaps the motive of my writing. Write me soon in answer, and give my address to any who you think I would expect ^{against} - your lines - same as it were, since I have little hope of seeing you here yourself, and giving you the accolade of perpetual friendship.

Notre Dame, and not only from my fifth-story window and balcony, but even from my pillow, gray and bed at night, clear and sharply silhouetted against the lustre of the city lights, as I go to the cloudless dawns of these fair spring days as I wake in the morning. I am so attached to Notre Dame that I can never live willingly at any place in Paris without seeing it from my window. And it is not only the exterior that is familiar to me. The services here are wonderful, too especially on the feast-days when the cardinal archbishop officiates. Here is his picture. A few months ago I attended a splendid ceremony when Cardinal Vanutelli came from Rome to preside over the festival in commemoration of the centenary of Ozanam. There were three cardinals, many bishops and the cathedral so full that one could hardly circulate in it. Vanutelli was splendid, big and dominating, and when the ceremony was over he crossed the square in front of Notre Dame on the way to his automobile, walking slowly in his red robes, amid the acclamations of the crowd. You are happier in America, but everything here would discourage you over the decay of the old ideals that we love. They drove Christ out of France; but avenge they did not see what a double-edged sword they were wielding and how closely related were the love of Church and of country. Now a tide of anti-patriotism

Alan Seeger

28.5.13