

Hotel des Deux Orphelines

4364

Aix en Provence. Nov. 4, 19.

My dear Pippa. I hope you aren't as cold as I am & have been these last days. Of course it's exceptional but that doesn't make it any better to have snow all over the green leaves (things hardly turned) and chilblains on one's toes and no fire anywhere except in the café when I write this & drink bad chocolate to excuse my prolonged occupation of 'de quai' coin'. Otherwise I should feel too much like the 'Christ-Sénex' of Georges Courteline. I'm not really at the two orphans yet but I go there to-morrow. It's at the hotel des Thermes, a colossal établissement Thermale - the word Thermale needs some commentary. I took on Therie's a hot spring wh. comes up in the basement so that when you open a door in the long corridor wh. makes the entrance of the hotel it's ten to one that you tumble down a flight of steps into a bath room. I had visions, indeed I had accounts from the inhabitants, of delicious, hot natural hot water with a peculiarly luxurious effect on the skin, so one morning I decided to indulge in one - the attendant turned a huge cock & a perfect cascade of water gushed out, straight from the bunch of the water. I waited for it to 'run' hot thinking that God's arrangements might resemble those of one's own bathroom - but it never ran a particle hotter & I ended by taking a distinctly tepid bath on the cold side. Since then I stay dry or have a bath in a india rubber tub.

All the same, in spite of the vile weather & the absence of calorifics it's a delightful town with its own rather absurd culture, a huge enthusiasm for art & Provencal poetry and altogether some of the air of being the capital of a small country & not merely a provincial town. It's all 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> century, great rather bleak & baroque facades of a lovely

brown stone & in all the big streets rows of immense planes trees  
brush by the roof. (The café gets too crowded at 6.0 so I come back to  
shiver in my [overcoat])

But up till recently it's been lovely, at Arancón near Avignon, then  
at Martignes I walked out of doors all day long [sometimes was quite hot.  
I bicycled from Avignon to Martignes by way of Les Baux when I met some  
of the Provincial peasant poets, charming people, very poor, very well read &  
with perfect manners. I wish their poetry wasn't so difficult to understand  
It's very imitative because you keep thinking you can understand it & try to  
catch on either to French or Italian & it's always slipping between the two.  
Some of my Martignes pictures are exhibited in the window of an Art  
Gallery here & have created quite a sensation. I don't think they learned  
much from having Cézanne among them & are still rather elementary but  
ridiculously keen. Art collecting is a mania with a lot of queer old crabs  
who crawl about the town and have endless leisure to discuss quite  
like this) futilely say new picture took came, why.



Yesterday one told me that a friend of his had got  
a portrait by Cézanne (whom *de resto* he despised)  
I wish to see it & found a nameless crone.

The same old boy is ~~de~~ determined by a desire to  
have something of mine to add to his collection of  
all the pictures Aixois but wants it for nothing next  
to nothing as account of 'ma situation' which is that

his sister keeps the money & won't let him have enough if she  
thinks he's buying pictures, which he does as the day. It's rather a  
Babacian situation. Her *vie* done a rather horrible little prochaine which  
I mean to let him have because his ridiculous passion is rather true.  
I don't like my to the 2 orphanages because the weather's too bad to peep  
out of doors & that's a wonderful old camera's inn filled with peasants &  
country folk & I can find lots of subjects there, also now I've found how nice  
it is to be with these peasants I can't put up with bourgeois places.  
I did like a letter but I suppose you'll be too hampered & worried to  
send me one. Yrs. Roger.



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