1-11-1919

Letter from Ceylon Kingston to his mother, dated January 11, 1919

Ceylon S. Kingston

Follow this and additional works at: http://dc.ewu.edu/kingston

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ceylon S. Kingston Papers by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.
My dear Mother:

Still at Thisancourt and quite satisfied with the place as long as I have to stay in France. If I always have as good a location I will not have much to complain of.

I eat at the officers mess. There are four officers in charge of the soldiers who are quartered here. One is away at the present on leave. One speaks pretty good English. In civil life he is a business man in Paris. The commandant speaks some English and I give him a lesson every day. In civil life he is a mechanical engineer. He is anxious to learn more English for commercial reasons.

Frequently he will make a sentence in English. I will correct it. Then I will reply in French. He will correct that. Thus we help one another and the system works nicely. The lieutenant who speaks English quite well is also teaching me every day so I feel that I am getting along pretty well. I can generally make myself understood but if my French acquaintance talks very fast I have to make him stop and talk more slowly.

All I hear from the soldiers and village people is French and it is beginning to have quite a familiar sound.

Frequently I take a walk in the forest on top of the ridge back of the town. Forest land is valuable and wood is very dear. I asked a wood cutter what body wood was selling for and he told me 40 francs a stere. A stere is a cubic meter — about 35 cubic feet.

They treat the forest like a cultivated crop. They cut all the small growth out when it gets to be an inch or two thick. The brush is piled and later cut up into lengths and bound in bundles — fagots. These are used for fire wood. The larger trees are allowed to grow at suitable intervals. When it gains maturity it is cut and the best part used for lumber. The rest is used for fuel. There is no coal buried here and the people make a little wood go a long way.

The weather is better now. There is less rain and more sunshine. This morning there was a little snow which melted.

I am eating some new dishes which taste very good. This week the woman (at whose house the officers board) killed a pig. We have been eating fresh pork and some of these new (to me) dishes. I have learned that some of the things that we used to throw away are delicious. The thrifty peasants don't throw anything away. For example the blood is caught and made into what they call "boudin." You will not be able to pronounce the word as many French letters have different sounds than the English letters. It is quite good although I am not quite so enthusiastic over it as the French themselves.
I am continually impressed with the courtesy, kindness, and cheerful good nature of the French people. We have a good deal to learn from them in many particulars. There are things too that they can learn from us.

I trust that you are all well. Is John having his teeth attended to? Can little Lloyd read any better? Can Louis stand on his head?

Affectionately,

Ceylon