

Rua de São João da Mata, 119, 12
Lisboa, Portugal
4 Novembro 1947

Dearest Mother and Olive,

Betty has been telling you about " our new home " (Kenneth's words).
What shall I tell you about ?

Well, we're having much cooler weather here now. The daylight hours are warm, about like our Indian Summer, but I thought Hallowe'en night of those nights long ago when you, Mother, used to take us out to join in the festivities. The weather seemed exactly like that in our Maine. I had a little time to spend just looking at the city and the sky before Betty and Lillian (Steed) came home from a party which the women had at the home of Senhor Pinto Ribeiro. The moon was bright in the sky, and the sky was clear of clouds, and every time I opened the window to look down the street I could feel a cold breeze strike me, quite like our nights back in America.

We have not had much rain, as yet. I suppose the rains come a little later. Last week we had two or three days of intermittent rain showers, with clear sky for perhaps several hours, then clouds of some size and an ensuing shower. One day was quite dull and with rain now and then. Last Saturday it was cloudy in the morning, but bright all afternoon and warm.

Saturday we went in the afternoon to Almada, across the Tagus River from Lisbon, to visit with Senhor Holden of the Centro. He lives there in a very old house from which you can see where King Philip of Spain stayed while he was outfitting the Armada which was lately destroyed by the English fleet in the English Channel. That was back in the days when Portugal had a Spanish king and did not like it. As a matter of history, Philip stayed in the house where he carried on operations because the owner of the house where Philip had been accustomed to stay did not like Philip and burned the house and became a monk. Well, I see I did not tell you the beginning of the story. The beginning is that also in the pages of history there is written a letter which Philip sent to a friend in which he says that he could not reside in the palace, really a mansion, which he was accustomed to use but had elected to stay in another place. The truth was that he was forced to stay in the latter place.

We're close to history here. In 1755 there was a tremor de terra, a tremor of the earth, an earthquake in other words, here in Lisbon which wiped out between 5000 and 6000 people when a large church down in the Lower City, just back of where the picture of Tommy was taken, collapsed. Others, seeing what was happening in the city, rushed down to the bank of the River Tagus and were killed in number between 5000 and 6000 when the resulting tidal wave which followed the earthquake came rolling up over the water front. The time of all this was about six minutes. Over in Almada, which is a little distance up the river, the people brought down to the river one of their church saints to stay the coming wall of water. The water did not touch Almada, as it happened. Of course, says Senhor Holden, the river opens into a large bay just below Almada, and the waters spread out when they reached there, but the people to this day carry the