

1936

MB-JB 1936.1

[https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:44521280\\$869](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:44521280$869)

a three-page letter (dictated)

on the stationery of

I Tatti, Settignano, Florence;

Mary wrote the salutation 'Your loving ... Mary

<Wednesday> Jan. 1, 1936

My dear Mother,

I have waited till the dawning of the New Year to send my letter to you. It does not break under the best of auspices, for people are getting more and more gloomy at the news (or rather suppression of news) from the seat of war, and the lack of tourists in Italy spells run for a great number of people engaged in the supply of travellers. We hear nothing but talk about the war, but at the same time nobody knows anything definite. Yet no one can think of anything else!

Our own little life moves on in its accustomed channels without much change; only, this year we see very few friends and entertain almost not at all. We had no New Year's [1.2] celebration except the pleasure of having dear Mrs. Shapley to dinner and reading aloud two of Mary Wilkins' tales.

Nicky was down in town celebrating the New Year with a merry party of friends at her sister's house and I'm sure they had a very good time.

Nothing could have been more full of the joy of life than little Roger when he came down this morning to wish me a Happy New Year. He raced up and down the corridor shouting with joy, and when he came in to say goodbye before going out into the garden, he ran round and round my room as if he were crazy with happiness. He, at least, knows nothing of the war!

From London I continue to have excellent news. Barbara's divorce seems [2] to be going ahead. Ray has had a big grant from the Carnegie fund for her "Woman's Employment Bureau"; Karin is overjoyed with the installing of hot water, new bathroom and electric heating in her cottage by the sea. Christopher and Ann Stephen are winning golden opinions at Cambridge. Ann's instructor in biology says she is the most gifted pupil he has ever had. Christopher says he has made 300 interesting friends, and belongs to 36 different societies. But he manages to get on with his work too.

Barbara has had a rise in salary, but her mother has in view for her a more important photographic bureau, and hopes to get her in as secretary at a [2.2] higher salary.

You would be very much amused to hear Bernard *boasting* about little Roger. And I know you would have laughed if you could have heard him telling his nurse to be sure to bring him in to his room every morning because "This is so civilizing for him." The little boy behaves quite nicely when he goes in, running about the room and then climbing on Bernard's bed and laying his cheek against Bernard's beard, which is so different from anything that he discovers in his other playmates that he doesn't know what to make of it.



I have searched in vain for another copy of my "Life" of Bernard to send to you in place of the one [3] which was lost. But I cannot find anything except the one copy which I must perforce keep for myself. Alys has a copy, however, and I have written to her to ask her to send it over — first of all to Lawrence, who will not take long in reading it, and who will then send it on to you. I hope to get to work on it again before long as I am slowly getting better.

I need not tell you how lovingly our wishes go across the ocean to all the dear family there, hoping that this new year will bring no new misfortune, but only happiness to each of you.

Your loving daughter,
Mary



MB-JB 1936.2
[https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:44521280\\$874i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:44521280$874i)
a letter
on the stationery of
I Tatti, Settignano, Florence

<Thursday> Jan. 16, 1936

My dear Mother,

I waited this week till I should recover from an attack of pain, and also till I could tell you that I had sent off to you my book, *Across the Mediterranean*,¹ describing our trip in North Africa.

Also I wanted to send you the last photo of dear little Roger, who has become by now a great chum of Bernard's.

The other day Bernard said to me, "It is a lovely way to grow old, to have people you love living with you, and a boy not more than [1.2] two years old in the house!" This is doing well from the ex-president of the King Herod Club!! He even lets Roger climb onto his bed and dance on his stomach every morning, and the other day, meeting the baby in the corridor as he was showing some ladies the pictures and noting that Roger was a bit cross (he was hungry), Bernard snatched off the child's hat and put it on his own head, which made Roger laugh and become good-humoured.

Afterwards Bernard said to me, with considerable pride, "You [2] see I know how to deal with little boys!"

I write of this, for I have nothing else to tell you, being all the time in bed and seeing no one but Roger and his nurse and Bernard and Nicky.

Shall I ever get well! I doubt it! But Vienna at least cured me of the worst and most painful symptoms, and I am trying to make terms with the invalid life I have to lead.

What luck that Bernard keeps so well! He has never had a better winter.

Our fond love to you — now as always,

Your affectionate daughter,

Mary



<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw211465/Bernard-Berenson-Roger-Hultin-Mary-Berenson>

¹ Mary Berenson (1864-1945), *Across the Mediterranean* (Prato, 1935). **Widener Afr** 2209.35.10; **Biblioteca Berenson** DT250 .B44 1935

