

Hosterwitz b. Dresden, January 28, 1920.

Dear Mr. Deane,

With warmest feelings I received your good letter of December 22, 1919 after the long interval by the dreadful war, and we all were sincerely pleased to learn you came out of it well. The last mail from you has reached me in January 1917, a letter, opened by censor, enclosing 2 Christmas cards to us all from you and Mrs. Deane. I am sorry if my correspondence got lost as I kept on sending christmas greetings as usual until 1917 when my letter to Prof. Goodale returned and I consequently gave up writing. The censure was rigorous, all letters to send open. I thank you sincerely for your kind sympathy, and I am pleased you heard my letter to Prof. Goodale. He has proved again the good old friend in noblest way that I never shall forget of him and he gave me good prospects to future. I shall be delighted to continue in another work for the Harvard Museum. Dr. Goodale's friendship gave us much relief in the present desolate time. You will kindly excuse the delay of this letter, I was anxious to reply at once. But we were in great apprehension for my mother who had met with a serious accident by falling on the stone-floor owing to a sudden fit. The case was yet fortunate without fracture but she had two bad weeks. Today some improvement is visible and the Doctor hopes she will get well through. Yet she is awfully weak. We want her to live for better days and sunny spring. Of course she is surrounded with every possible comfort that my wife and I always cared for her during the dreadful years. We neither spared expense neither trouble to procure for her the best that the pressure of the war permitted, otherwise, with the increasing infirmity of age she would have fallen a victim of the war like so many persons of her age. The tremendous scarcity had the consequence that we got entirely dependent on the insufficient provisions by the ruling authorities. The free sale of all victuals, except some vegetables, was



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severely prohibited, the purchase only permitted by official tickets. It was insane to continue the war longer, when the scarcity of grain was so tremendous, that the daily bread must get officially adulterated.

It consisted of rye, milled out of 96 percent, bran, meal of dry turnips and potatoe-shells and various other unknown matters, and was so indigestible, that Bicarbonate of Soda must be a constant companion of the meals. When the potatoes were gone, turnips were portioned out for and meat, butter, milk, eggs etc. got almost out of sight. A help in this bitter time was offered by the greediness of some farmers who, instead of delivering all their products to the government offices for public portioning, kept a good deal and sold it secretly at high rates.

They earned more by this. Most of the town-people made use of this and the country-trains were filled with hamsters as they were ludicrously called. In spite of the <sup>hi</sup>prohibitive measures by the authority, everyone who could, tried to get a bit of the rare comfort. Here the social misproportion was right visible as it had developed owing to the war. The owners of factories of munition and other war-objects and the well-paid workers there, pushed up the prices of butter etc. by offering and outbidding at any rate. So it got harder to procure anything and I had sometimes to walk eight hours on purpose to acquire half a pound of butter for love or money. I wonder I made it.

When the revolution began, we learned that the Kaiser, the princes and all those interested people who had cried loudest for the continuation of the war, had stored up rich stocks of exquisite provisions, sufficient for many more years. The smart peasants above mentioned, got wealthy by the war. This shows the whole corruption. We have yet now the compulsion with the ticket-system, except for imported victuals. Members of the government are afraid of a new scarcity in the coming spring. The catastrophal state of the Marks-valuta is said to be the cause. This in connection with the tremendous taxes and the impoverish-



#3 R.B'S to Deane.

ing confiscation of fortune makes everyone nervous. Nobody knows how long the present government will be able to suppress the inner unrest. We almost seem to approach to Russian conditions. The strikes here are incessant and there is much disinclination to work among the working classes. What they demand for quite common work is horrible. Now all the state-officials will receive an addition of 150 percent on salary. How these new burdens of milliards will be raised, is a riddle. No wonder, the general prices are rising out of sight by every day, What a dreadful misery this mad war has brought to the countries. I dare say I saw it before and never was fond of such adventures. My activity is only thriving in peace. It sounds like a story of the old golden times of peace, what you tell me in your letter on your scientific occupation and the increasing of your herbarium. I never stopped study of natural history, but otherwise I did not carry on any business. Of any matters concerning the war my hands remained clean. We lived on pretty retired during the war. In late summer and autumn we practised a kind of botany. My wife and I enjoyed in taking walks to the forests about here, collecting mushrooms. There are a good deal of eatable delicious species here, and they gave a good change in fire and dried provision for the winter. In August we collected the lovely blossoms of the common heath *Calluna vulgaris*, It is not yet generally known that they give cooked a splendid wholesome drink in flavor near to the Chinese tea, but without the exciting properties of the latter. We keep on using it, though *Thea Bohea* is to have again. The substitutes for tea sold here were abominable and also noxious. Now for today I must close the report I shall be delighted if you favor me again with a letter. Kindest love to you from us all.

Very sincerely yours

Rudolph Blaschka.



Blaschka, Rudolf. 1928. "Blaschka, Rudolf Jan. 28, 1920." *Rudolf Blaschka letters to Walter Deane*

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