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Charles Albert Converse Papers, 1939-1940  
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January 27, 1940

# Converse, Charles. Letter to Family.

Manchester, England

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January 27, 1940

Dear est Dottie and Tiddlers :

I received your letter this morning mailed on January 10<sup>th</sup>. and am at loss to understand why you have not received my letters written at and during Christmas. But on the other hand I do understand. I sent them all air mail and afterwards discovered that several sailings of the Clipper were held up on account of bad weather. They were good efforts and described our Christmas Activity, or rather lack of activity, fully. That must also explain why I have never received a reply to my long Christmas which I wrote to Emma about the same time. The next time you write to her, I wish you would ask if she received my Christmas letter. At the time I wrote it I thought you and the kiddies were going to spend the holiday with them in Greenville.

I had a note from Wilkie yesterday re business but in it he said that Jim had written him that he had met Emma Louise while in Greenville and that Pete had been awfully nice to him. Wilkie said we had better watch out we might be cousins yet. He wants George and I to go down with him for the weekend of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. of Feb. That is a week from today. If things go alright we might do it. I am still looking for a place to live for this hotel life is brutal. The expense is terrific but I am afraid at the moment I have no option. I will certainly remove myself just as soon as I get my rent allowance. In the meantime it is going to be very slim pickings with no rent or post allowance and the deduction from my salary of \$ 150. However I will weather it OK and George has kindly offer to loan what I might need. I was pleased that Col. acted upon my further letter and found that he could raise the amount to \$35.

I am very pleased that the children are having such grand opportunities and that you are able to afford them. I was rather surprised to see that little Laura is taking piano. I didn't think that she had any desires in that direction. Tell her that I know how she starts a job and then leaves it half finished, I don't want to see this happen in the case of the piano for it is costing good money that can be ill afforded if she is not going to make the most of the opportunity. If she really does feel that she will make the grade and will practise daily then more power to her and I am all for her. I hope that sonnie will stick to the piano and really master it for he does not realize what a joy and at the same time what a weapon, that is speaking socially, it will prove to be. So Puss is becoming a little Twinkle toe in the ballet. It should be marvelous for both of them. I know that sonnie would enjoy tap dancing. It was something I always wanted to do. But how are you going to swing all of this financially. For God's sake don't run into debt. I trust that, without my bad influence to hinder you, you have by now everything carefully budgeted far in advance of the actual expenditure. I am glad the Government check arrived on time. I think it a much better arrangement, especially for your peace of mind. George has had trouble getting his checks to Mrs Tait on time and is going to make an allotment as I have done starting next month. Then too there is now delay in getting the draft and all of the other little delays. The pound is still holding firm. The rate has not changed since you left. The cost of living has certainly not remained static however.

There has been considerable talk about putting everyone into standardized clothes. In other words as your old clothes wear out, whether you are man woman or child, and you go to the shops to buy new ones the only thing you will be able to buy will be one standard type of ~~xxxxx~~ overall, suit or whatever is determined upon. So in time everyone from the richest to the poorest will be dressed exactly alike and there will be no class distinction or show of wealth which might cause unrest. Personally I think it would be a damn fine idea if materials do become difficult because of raw products shortage. It will be a long time before this would happen though.

We have had 24 hours continual snow and it is horrible underfoot as soon as it falls here it is immediately churned into a murky black brown which is terrible on the shoes and trousers. The rubber golothers I bought last winter have proven to be a great help in getting to the office. George has had a terrible time in getting to work from out where he lives at Bowden. This is one of the reasons which prevents me from becoming enthusiastic about living out that far. The pavements haven't been dry one since I arrived, either wet from rain or covered with snow. I am certainly thankful that you all are safe down in Florida basking in the sunshine and rebuilding your depleted resistance. The children couldn't have taken this winter without going down with colds, I am sure. It is, by far, the coldest and most disagreeable one we have had since our arrival in England. Most people say it is the worse for many years. A very bad time to be introduced to Manchester but if you can stand it now I should imagine it would be duck soup the rest of the year. It isn't a bad town at all and the shops seem quite nice. There is a very fine municipal library quite near my hotel.

Sonnie it is all well and good to be a boy and do all of the things that boys do but don't be a fool. When you split one of your teeth you have ruined something that can never be replaced and it leaves a scar that will follow you through life. I remember what an ass you were on a bicycle down at Hudeford and really acted ~~thxx~~ as an idiot at times rather than a healthy normal boy. Please take hold of yourself and remember that you are the only man with Mother and the girls and that I am holding you responsible for their well being. If you get the name for being just a jackass, no one will place any faith in you and you will let us all down terribly. I expect far more than that ~~xx~~ from you so settle down old man and take your responsibility seriously, as you should.


I sincerely hope that all of the children fully realize what a wonderful opportunity this is for them to become acquainted with their own country and to absorb all of the good points possible. There is so much fine in our American way of living which at the same time is so different from the way they have been accustomed to living abroad. At the same time I do not want them to lose their diction and start speaking like any little Florida Cracker. A sort of Anglicised Southern accent should I think prove to be a very beautiful speaking voice. By the way are they losing their accents? I wouldn't worry about the fact that Laura does not desire to go to the Brownies. She is just like I was. I had no desire to join the Scouts. It would make no difference, as a matter of fact it might even be better if Puss didn't go. She is doing quite enough as it is. They mustn't be on the hop all of the time. They must have some time to read and think and thus develop mentally. If they are just running all the time, they will not develop properly.

I was very pleased to hear that Sonnie is developing a love for the piano. It is fine to get started now if he is interested. I think that John Sineath should bear the expense of shipping the piano to you after having the use of it for four years. Why don't you send for it. You might even sell it to advantage but with the children developing a love for music, I would recommend keeping it. Can you get it into your flat. Laura will like voice culture I am sure. I hope that Papa Jack found some possibilities in her voice. It's up to old Pusscat now to develop some artistic talent. Tell Laura not to go out and play football with boys it is extremely unlady like and undignified. I am sure that there must be some girls her age with whom she can play. I was terribly pleased to hear that she is losing weight and I know that she is. Keep up the good work. They certainly sound as though they are really blossoming out in the sunshine. You write little of your activities, but I hope that you are thoroughly enjoying life. Goodness knows how much time will elapse before I see you all again. I have reconciled myself to that. There was nothing else to do. Lord knows when this war will be over so I feel that the only thing is to try and face life squarely and do the best you can and find what happiness you can. Everything seems so upside down. I think people as a whole feel that way. Not a bright prospect for 1940.

I went out Monday night and spent the night with George at his home. He has a lovely house with central heating etc. He had it put in himself at a cost of £400. His wife is in Washington and he has a lease which does not expire until August this year, and he will probably renew it then if he continues to get his married mans rent allowance. No one seems to know how that is going to work out. We are leaving it with the Department but I have my fingers crossed. I will look forward with pleasure to receiving the snaps of you all, the flat, etc. I think that I have put on some weight but will watch closely to see that it comes to a stop. With all of this rationing, I don't think it will be very difficult to keep ones weight down. The hotel here is certainly going into the ration scheme wholeheartedly. A good chance for them to do some saving, at the customer's expense. The devils charged me 5/- for a club sandwich the first night I was here. I was tired and didn't feel like going down and thought I would just have a sandwich sent up. I won't do it again.

The furniture has arrived safely and is now in storage here. As soon as I have decided definitely on a flat, I will go to the warehouse and pick out the things that I am going to use and the rest of the stuff I will keep in storage. I will try to dispose of the things we do not want while here but as I have said previously, there is little hope of getting a decent price now. I must send the Xmas cards to you. We had a nice one from the Jenkins with their snapshot on it. I think he was about the saddest looking person I have even seen. His thoughts must have been pretty low at the time. She looks as though she has lost lots of weight. Take care of yourselves and God Bless you,

Devotedly,



*Miss Jenkins on the send sent their love & asked you to write to her. She thinks we are all here - I am sending snaps herewith*