Institut Pasteur
28. RUE DU Dr ROUX PARIS XVe
TEL. SÉGUR 01-10

Paris 4/10/53.

Dear Esther
Dear Josh.

I am just back from my late holidays in Italy. We went to the Rome Congress (where, by the mean, I had a faint hope to meet you) and then through Southern Italy, we drove to Sicily. We are back, now, with mixed feelings: the Greek temples and other monuments we went to see, are, no doubt, impressive and dream suggesting ... but it is such a work to see them, you have so much to travel through an hostile country (hostile in its structure and also hostile by its inhabitants) that we are back exhausted ... Surely enough poverty is due to a scandalous land inequality (extremely rich and backward land owners and a mass of workers paid 400 to 500 lires a day (= 80 cents!) but the reaction towards this extreme poverty is not a proud resignation (as the Spanish one) or a courageous revolt (as we had, in Occidental Europe, during the last century) but a development of demoralization through black market, robbery, vice and so on. In any case, whatever is the sociological reason it is extremely inconvenient for an enjoyable type of tourism, only specialists going by fast means from one archeological spot to another will really profit of such a visit. Such is the difference between Southern and Northern Italy (the latter we like so much) that they seem as two separate countries ...

The Rome Congress was not too bad, at least in the Immunochemistry section, some brilliant discussions arose on two or three of the main topics of the day: mode of formation of antibodies, the antigen-antib. reaction involved in new techniques etc... but we are still at the point where insufficient experimental datas leave place to an excessive dose of speculation (excessive in that it brings no light on the problems, it confuses the picture on the contrary)

Now I am back to work and again I face a change in

my place of work: I am going back to Grabar's laboratory.
This is the result of some misunderstanding with Boquet and also the difficulty of working in Garches 10 mils from my home, in a very provincial atmosphere.
If this does not represent immediately an administrative promotion it has the great advantage of bringing me near the main intellectual center in Pasteur: the Lwoff-Monod group and also near people like Oudin, Grabar etc.... The working space is very small but the facilities (equipment, animals and technical help) are great.
In any case my actual settlement is not definitive as the death of Machebœuf will probably bring some changes in the organization of the Pasteur Institute and I may be involved in the reorganization.
My work on the antigenic and chemical properties of the neurotoxin of Cobra venom will go on; I hope as I are more and more interested in it since I found that there is a ultrafiltrable (small molecule) neurotoxic fraction which is still lecithinasique... and it is also antigenic.
What have you been doing during this Spring and Summer? How is your work going on...?
I will write a little later, when things will be clarified in my new settlement. (This paper is disgusting and do not favour a "writing temper")
I have some hints of American life thanks to the New-Yorker (and to you)
Write soon. (in Paris)
Yours as ever
[signature]