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LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

By

Margaret Culkin Banning

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LETTERS
FROM
ENGLAND

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Margaret Culkin Banning

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YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED

TOO YOUNG TO MARRY

OUT IN SOCIETY

ENOUGH TO LIVE ON

A WEEK IN NEW YORK

SALUD! A SOUTH AMERICAN JOURNAL

LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

Margaret Culkin Banning

LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

SUMMER 1942

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LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

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Obviously
For Mary

LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

LETTERS FROM ENGLAND

SUMMER 1942

June 5

Dear Mary,

I looked twice at the date, for movement in the last two days has been incredibly swift and occasionally blindfolded. But Friday, June fifth, it is, and here I am in London, where the big bath sheets hang as usual over hot towel racks in a hotel which miraculously stands intact in the middle of a well-bombed district. I'll come to that later and now show what narrative skill I can muster up in not getting ahead of my story. The difficulty is that I want to begin both at the beginning and at the end.

It was a beginning without place, because I don't know quite where I started from. I've gone on strange journeys in these last twenty years, dreary ones and exciting ones, but this one rolls all the descriptions up together.

We were a day late in starting because of weather, and I wasn't sorry, because that gave me an extra night's sleep, which came in handy. It was an anonymous sort of sleep, taken dutifully in a bed that I can't remember feeling. The next day the hours dragged along, and less and less could I feel convinced that I was showing sense in coming over here. I was committed of course, and a great many people had taken pains to arrange the journey, but by this time I was looking darkly past all that and wondering why I had been asked at all and why I'd said I'd go.

There is certainly plenty of usefulness in the project itself. Everyone knows that there could be far more sympathy and good will between the English-speaking allies, and that this must be an active, positive force that can swing into action when it is necessary to take a poke at prejudices which are hurting the war effort. And the virulence of anti-British feeling in some quarters already amounts to sabotage, the kind of sabotage that it's hard to put under arrest.

Prejudices and bitternesses against Great Britain are not news, of course. I've always understood why many of them existed. The British have never been

cozy as far as their neighbors were concerned. They have always been important and strong, but as little lovable as the important usually are, outside of their own families anyway.

When I traveled through Ireland two years ago, just before the war broke out, and saw that so many old wounds were not healed, I was greatly concerned. For anyone could foresee even then the stubborn, almost pathological resistance that Eire would put up to becoming an ally of a country she could not forgive.

Some of that feeling was imported to the United States not only years ago but fairly recently. It is being blown upon now by people who want dissension among the allies. But there are many other prejudices, which are not of Irish origin, against the British in the United States. Some come from a very spotty teaching of American history which dwells upon the Boston Tea Party and ignores—maybe because the teachers are ignorant—the alliances and ocean treaties we have had with Great Britain to our mutual advantage and development. The feeling of defiance of England seems to start in the grade school, and later on it is pointed up by travelers who have gone to Great Britain and haven't

liked the fogs, or the cold rooms, or the vegetable marrow, or the British reserve. And lecturers came over from England with pronunciations of our language which seemed comical to us, and yet gave us a sense of inferiority. So when they left town we made fun of them and felt better.

All these things which hold the nations apart have been analyzed thoroughly and at length by students of such problems. I've lived through different moods of international feeling, some of them angry, as when you could hear on any street corner, in New York or London, in Duluth or Plymouth, discussion of the war debts and who really won the war. But, though I knew there was such prejudice, I was astonished at the actual violence with which some people objected to my coming to England. A woman with whom I've been trading for years said bitterly to me the other day, over the counter, "You belong here, in your own country, working for our defense! They haven't any right to ask you to go over there because they're in trouble!"

And the very judicial Mr. J. (we'll leave his name as an initial in case you never get this letter) said in his best chairman-of-the-board manner, "It might be a mistake to go to England now. You'll

be rated as an Anglophile, and it would diminish what influence you might have over here."

Of course, remarks like that made it all the more apparent that the thing to do was to come, even if it is a very small, insignificant act of deliberate friendliness. The statesmen and the generals will make important trips back and forth. Churchill comes one way, and General Marshall and Harry Hopkins go the other, and the air and sea ferries are full of people who are on vital diplomatic and military errands. The men in the State and War Departments are in constant consultation. But if the ordinary people in their countries are drifting into antagonism, or maybe being beguiled into mutual distrust, we shall get nothing more out of this war than a military victory and maybe not that. We certainly can't get a sound and co-operative peace.

So perhaps people should come even without portfolio and see what good they can do by bringing home a picture of ordinary British life in wartime.

My guess is that the British are badly represented in the United States at the moment by some of their subjects who have come to New York and elsewhere as refugees. Too many of them are the

sort of people who run away from wars, and try to feather a nest in a strange country when their own country becomes dangerous. I don't believe they are any more typical than our own expatriates, who are a sad lot too. So I want to see the British over here on their own ground and find out what they are like, after all they have been through. I want to see what danger and adversity have done to them and to take the news back home, whether it's good news or bad news. I'll at least be one more person to prove to them how much their danger has worried us, and to tell them how we admire their courage.

There is another thing that I must find out about while I am over here, and that is how the war has affected British women and what sort of job they are doing. On paper—I studied this pretty thoroughly when I was doing the research for *Women for Defense*—they are better organized than any women in the world during this war. But you can always tell better how things stand by seeing for yourself than by reading a report.

Too many women in the United States still don't realize that the outcome of the war involves keeping or losing everything of value they have—decent

jobs, the right to study, self-respecting husbands, children who aren't war matériel. I needn't write my favorite speech on women to you tonight, but have you ever forgotten that day at the Olympic games in Berlin when we realized that the only thing German women were allowed to do in the events was to clean up after the horses?

I wonder if all British women know it's a fight for survival of all the privileges women have gained —so slowly—since it was discovered that they were teachable?

It will be useful to find out how they are standing up under the strain and how their nerves are. Whether they are disillusioned or bitter. The women have been carrying a great deal of the industrial load, according to all trustworthy reports, and now that I'm on the ground here, with promises that I can inspect factories and workshops, I should be able to see how good their performance is. I have a list of things as long as my arm that I want to investigate, and that it should be useful to report on when I get home.

I had this all reasoned out before I started, and it sounded very plausible. During that last day I sat in the hotel and added it all up, and it came

out the same way every time. But that didn't keep my heart out of my shoes, or stop me from wondering if I'd made a decision that might mean I'd be an exile for the duration if things went wrong. That was a bad day before I started, and I found out that not only is it hard in wartime to leave people you love, but it's also terribly hard to leave your own country. Maybe it wouldn't be so if you were in uniform. But I wasn't, and the thought kept nagging at me that there was plenty to do at home.

However, I called a taxi and off I went, listening to the driver talk about his wife and his second child, who was not yet born but imminent. He was a man fluent with autobiography, and I was not only his passenger but, for the time being, his public. The story of his life gave me something to think about besides myself, so that was a help.

It was raining, not very hard but just mysteriously, so that every street crossing was guesswork and the driver got mixed up a couple of times, so I thought I might not get there in time. But finally he guessed right, and a sentry stopped us, looked at my pass, and took the driver's name and let us go through to the terminal. I paid the expectant father off and lost my last link with what was behind. I couldn't

go back, for there was no one to take me back, and it was much too far to walk.

The big waiting room was brightly aerial—you know how they all look—and quite a few fellow travelers were there already. For a while I was the only woman, except for the girl at the coffee counter, who was handing out cups with an air of "Eat a hearty breakfast for it may be your last." A short, thin Malayan came in looking shy—and big John Foster of the British Embassy, very easy mannered and companionable, with six or eight books under his arm which he'd brought along, he said, in case we were marooned anywhere. I regretted having left *War and Peace*, but it was leaving that or my shoes. Names and positions began to get about, and I knew in the first twenty minutes that most of the passengers on the plane were either army men, traveling without uniforms of course according to rule, or Embassy people; and then there were a couple of production men of high ability, the free-Malayan, Mrs. O'Malley (Ann Bridge, if you remember *Peking Picnic*), and myself.

There were thirty-two of us in all—and no one was going with pleasure, though most of them must have been stirred at the chance, like me. But they

looked tired, as if their farewells had been hard or ardent or late, and each person was considering his own difficult, uncertain destiny. Mrs. O'Malley was the exception. She was headed in the right direction —going back to her husband, soon to be within reach of her children, especially her flier son—and though she was unaccustomed to air travel, she has traveled in all other ways and was adjusting without fussing. They asked us—Mrs. O'Malley and me—to share a seat while all our noses were counted, and strapped us down with the same strap, which she felt as strangely about as I did, no doubt because both of us were accustomed to being queen bees and individuals and not assorted females held by one strap.

The plane taxied out, and you could be guided only by sensation, for you weren't allowed to raise curtains. A few men settled back casually, but you didn't have to be very smart to know that for most of them, too, it was a new experience, strange and grim, to take their talents, their abilities, over into the war zone. None of the affability of the Twentieth Century Limited. No sadness either. It was a very war-conscious moment. An air ferry goes back and forth often—safe as a clock. comfortable as your

own bed. But one day the Germans may spring something new. And the steward said, "I shall demonstrate the use of the life preservers, if I may."

No berths are made up any more on these air lines. All that luxury is out. You get soft pillows and a blanket—though again Mrs. O'M. and I shared one. Most people sat up, but the steward arranged for the ladies' discomfort by balancing a cushion between two facing seats. On this lay the two lady authors, their feet almost in each other's mouths but at least not tangled in each other's hair. I didn't care. A rock would have done me.

The dawn was bright, coming up from nowhere, and now that the curtains were up we could see the ocean, rather milder than I'd feared and somehow safely a long way down, with soft clouds to fall on in between. Morning is eerie when it is so bright with no song of birds. On the plane everything was orderly and well managed, breakfast coming and served in three sittings. These flights will be a commonplace when the war's over, though not until then. Boats will then seem slow, and people like us, who live in a hurry, won't bother with them except for a rest and complete change. Ordinarily we shall always take the planes, with an increasing lack of

risk and increasing comfort. With all the airfields newly made for war, postwar travelers can land in a lot of new places too.

There were just clouds above the ocean until we began to see the low-lying rocks that begin the coast of Newfoundland. The rocks are enormous, with pools between that must be lakes, but they are all run together like the pools and rocks on the north shore of Lake Superior, looking just as slippery, just as inadhesive, and far bigger. The scene below was like the surface of the moon, said someone—like a beach with the tide out, said somebody else. But most people slept.

Never have I seen a stranger company in some ways. There was no effort to be convivial—no suggestion of bridge or poker. One man read doggedly for forty-eight hours—he was reading when I went to sleep and at it when I woke up. There were a few casual conversations and a little guarded gossip. But so many subjects were banned. You didn't say to a man, "What are you going to do in Europe?" for he probably couldn't tell you. We all had been told "not to talk."

It was that day at lunch that I discovered I was sitting between an army officer who came from

Spartanburg and another who came from Madison. Both practically neighbors to us.

The town where we lunched was an unkempt little place, where people lived and let it go at that in peacetime. Now there was a great deal of good machinery about, but the streets still were unpaved roads. And though it was my first meal out of the U.S.A. for some time, I played in my usual luck and was served Middle-West pot roast and apple pie instead of foreign dishes.

I saw some planes. Battle planes—painted white. They tell me it is done so that they won't show against the sun.

Late that afternoon there was a splendid sunset. Do you remember the one we saw last year on the Caribbean? This one was different, not molten colors but frozen, and the hues were cold and clear as a Norwegian's blue eye.

Still the men slept. They slept like Tanner on his first day's holiday. They slept as if they were drinking sleep and couldn't get enough. A man wearing dancing pumps—why?—who, I heard, was on an important financial mission, and a diplomat with curly gray hair, slept hardest. Like tired boys, stretched out all over the place. I slept. Even Mrs.

O'Malley nodded, but she was pretty brisk and bright all day.

It was that night that she wore out. Our casual and joint bed had been made up more casually than ever, and though we lay down in the same foot-to-mouth way, it didn't work as well, for the middle cushion jumped up and left me sleeping on an incline and her on a gap. I tried to fix it, but she rolled out on the floor—the aisle of the plane—and went to sleep with *all* the blanket. I thanked the Lord for the fur coat I had and watched her for a while with considerable amusement, for the men who tried to get to the lavatory had to climb over her, and she pretty well filled the aisle. It looked for all the world like "Death in the Clipper." All the picture needed was a dagger in her bosom.

I don't know how much I can write you that will get past a censoring eye, even if I carry these letters back with me. But this much to say should be all right. Up to this point I have been glad with all my heart you weren't along on this trip. I've let you in for dangers enough, in Spain and even before that, when you were embryonic and I crossed the North Sea though the Harley Street doctor said it

would be the end of you. It wasn't. You probably developed some of your nerve on that first trip.

But on this trip, at every qualm, I have thought that you were safe, and refused to think that you were probably flying a plane at night yourself, or that Tan had been given sudden orders. It was the next morning that I wanted you with me to see the lovely greenness of somewhere in Ireland, to hear the donkey carts clattering down the hill, to look in the door of the church and straight across to a flowering tree in an opposite door. I walked up the hill near by—we had some hours to wait—and picked a few blue flowers, and sat on an old stone wall, and that sudden sight of peaceful land made me realize how at war we've been for a long time, physically and mentally. It's peace by sufferance in Ireland of course—it's a stage peace—quite unreal. An air squadron or two could roar over that island at will and bomb it to tatters. But it was like a picture postcard come alive. And obviously so loved—as loved a little village as the one where we'd stopped the day before had been neglected. The birds sang, the may was in bloom, the fuchsias were beginning to drip red blossoms—the church bells rang—idyllic and lovely. Child's play, you thought,

in a world of bombers. God's will, you thought—this is what He meant the world to be.

I got in a few political licks on the village street.

"Is it a pleasure cruise?" asked the girl in the tobacconist's.

"And where," asked I, turning on the full brogue, and a little anger too, "is there pleasure to be found today!"

We left by bus for an airport, and it was in the bus that I began to realize that I was food poisoned. We needn't go into that except to note that there was one point at which I lay on a cement floor in a "ladies' room" in a place whose name I don't know, and hoped vaguely that I could get up in time to take the plane. I did. I felt an awful fool because they all knew I was doing fancy swooning somewhere (Mrs. O'M. was no longer in our gang, having left to join her husband), and I seemed a very Unstable Daughter of the Regiment. But later on I found out that several of the men felt just as bad as I did. We all had a touch of ptomaine, or the equivalent.

Ptomaine notwithstanding, we flew from some place in Ireland to another place in England, and you know almost as much about it as I do. The

windows were glazed with white paint so no one could see what went on below. There was a tiny skylight, and we could tell that the clouds were white and the sky was blue. Better than such transport on a windy day or a stormy one. All I knew was that we seemed to make terrific speed, and that I had come through customs without fainting, and even had managed to make change when I paid dutv on the very few presents I brought from the United States for people here. Planes began to rattle close, and we came down at a landing field.

We arrived in London on a special train, in a restaurant carriage, which was a wonderful break, for a cold drink and a roll and butter seemed to be all my nature needed, and I was ready for the next jump.

The jump was into the lobby of Claridge's. No one had reserved a room for me—not after all that cabling. But as you may remember from our touring-through-Europe days, I have a way of going dowager with room clerks that makes them produce lodgings out of their hats, and it worked again. I've a very comfortable bedroom and sitting room—and though the walls of the bathroom are all glass, there is only one bad crack. This in a blitzed area of London!

I went to sleep at midnight and woke at one this afternoon. The first time on record.

So then I went to register with the police, which you do now on arrival in London, and I sat in a waiting room between a French woman and a Polish boy. The official who gave me my registration papers—it's a little booklet—talked proudly about having Dorothy Thompson as his last American journalist. She had evidently bothered him quite a lot. He found me quieter—less stimulating too, I'm sure.

From there I went to get some ration books, leaving the gas mask until tomorrow in spite of all the injunctions. But you can't do it all in one day.

They have great rationing offices, and it seems to me, from this first glimpse of their management, that they are most efficient. A woman besides me said greedily, "Where did you get those shoes?" I had on alligator brogues. When I told her, she sighed and said she couldn't get things like that, but after all what could you expect here now and after the war she was going to visit America. So I asked her to come to see us.

An old woman came out of the rationing office in trouble because her card had been "lost again."

She was very doddery, and said she always lost it. "Poor old thing," said the wise one beside me, "they don't dare let her have another for fear someone would steal it."

But they were so kind to her and so comforting that I was tempted to tell the girls behind the desk what an impression they were making on an American.

The offices are full of girls—only girls—who are efficient and swift and cool. They do not look smartly dressed, as a big group of girls in an office in the United States usually does. There was a little red nail polish about—not much—and because it was hot most of them wore thin, flowery printed dresses. They looked hot, but their heads were cool, and they were very painstaking with the applicants. There wasn't a mean note sounded while I sat there and listened—nor a sharp voice—and I saw in those faces what I've been seeing every minute since I've been here—a kind of quality which must be the result of experience. I mean that there wasn't a "dish face" in the lot. Plenty of them were plain girls, but their faces weren't empty.

I shall try to verify this impression later. Certainly my first sight of the rationing process in

action was all on the credit side. And when you think of the millions of ration books that have to be handled, and of the dimwits and the bunglers and the nervous people, you wouldn't expect either the efficiency or the kindliness I saw.

That took pretty nearly all afternoon. I walked back toward the hotel and stopped at a little Lyons teashop—one of the famous chain scattered all over London. You may not remember, but in the prewar days the windows of these places used to be laden with pastry and tarts and the kind of dry plum and pound cake you hated when we had it for tea during the summer we lived in Fletcher's House in Sussex. The windows of the teashops don't carry things for display now. The food is kept inside, and the supply usually runs out before the end of the day Also, there is self-service, as they call the cafeteria method over here.

I had a big dry bun made of National Bread, and the smallest piece of butter in the world, and a tablespoonful of honey. I could have had sausages, as the Canadian soldiers beside me did, if I had been hungry enough. The sausages look fat and normal, but I am told that there is very little meat in them. I rather like the National Bread, which is made

from the only kind of flour that is milled in England today, a flour which contains 85 per cent wheat grain.

In the United States we have heard so much about the merits of whole wheat that we probably would accept this flour and the bread made from it more readily than has been done over here. Not that I've heard many complaints, but I've already been given the information that it is the people who have never had much money who miss white bread more than those who have been able to afford a more varied diet.

The thing that seemed most changed about the teashop from the way such places used to look was not the limitation of food nor the self-service, but the dirty floor. Quite obviously it hadn't been swept all day, and maybe the date of cleaning was even farther back than yesterday. The whole place simply said, mutely, "Shortage of labor." Plates and teacups stayed on the tables deserted by the customers, and the two girls in the shop served at the food counter, made change, advised me to have honey and the soldiers to take sausage, and did their level best to make four hands do what probably used to be the work of twelve or fourteen.

At Claridge's tonight I was reminded vaguely of the Hotel Maria Christina in San Sebastian on the day after the Spanish Revolution began. There was shooting going on outside, you remember, the waiters had disappeared, and the food supply was very short. But the concierge, helped by a few chambermaids, set the luncheon table with the usual formality, even to service plates.

Of course, no such extremity exists here as did in Spain, at least not at the moment. But I have the feeling that there is more style in the dining room than food in the kitchen. There have been times during the blitzes when people slept on the floor of the lobby of this hotel because it was safer than in their bedrooms. But now, in the first quick look, things seem to be going on here much as they would in any luxury hotel in peacetime. On your second look, you notice that the age level of the employees is very high—or very low. There are a couple of small boys, neatly done up in buttons, who are only recently out of the kindergarten, and they run around with mail and messages. The waiters who are left are mostly foreigners—they always seem to be Swiss, according to what they

say anyhow—and they are all overworked, as are the elderly chambermaids.

I was told in New York that there was more and better food at Claridge's and Ivy's Restaurant than at any other places in London. That I shall see as time goes on. The menu here in the hotel looks very fine until you discover that many of the items are crossed off about as soon as the dining room opens. There is the customary big tray of hors d'oeuvres, but they are 90 per cent vegetables, with plenty of red cabbage, beets, and tomatoes used to make a colorful showing.

The newspapers today are clamoring over a Black Market scandal on salmon. Salmon apparently disappears off the open market and turns up in luxury hotels and restaurants. But there is a very healthy outcry about it, the penalties are high, and I doubt if the racketeers get away with very much or for very long. Lord Woolton—the Minister of Food—seems to be tremendously respected, and the rationing of food seems orderly and firm as far as I've had a chance to observe it.

The Ministry of Food seems to have thought out the needs of the population as well as figured out the food supply. There are priorities on milk, eggs,

and oranges, for example. Children, pregnant women, and invalids have a guaranteed supply of these things. I'll tell you more about the rationing system when I've experienced it longer. But so far, though I have blisters on my heels from walking miles in all directions and have gone into many restaurants and milk bars and teashops (to look, not to eat, and everyone is very friendly and informative), I see no evidence that London is at all hungry. Food is not cheap anywhere but the basic items are not unduly expensive.

Also, people look healthy, as if they have been on a good diet. They seem for the most part thinnish, firm, and fit. As I expect to be myself at the end of this month.

On that same point of appearance, the people I've seen, whether in the Strand or the City or Hyde Park, and whether in uniform or not, all have a certain resemblance in simplicity and practical dress. Nobody is dressed up, even in big hotels. There is a look of making things do, and getting along quite nicely or at least without complaint.

There is something else, hardly more than an impression but it struck me as soon as I arrived in London. A great deal of pompousness and most of

the signs of social distinction have been stripped from the city. No doubt it is due in part to the fact that there are hardly any big or shining cars in the streets, very few displays of luxuries in the shop windows. The taxis are old and rattling and shabby. I keep thinking back to New York, and it seems very luxurious. And every time I see a long queue of people waiting for a bus and know that there are undoubtedly titled people, housemaids, and mechanics standing in line together in the drizzle of rain, I feel that I've come into a democracy that is just now more realistic than our own. But we've only been at war for seven months.

Love,

Mother.

June 7

Dear Mary,

This is Sunday night and my first chance to write since Friday. So far I've made my own schedule, for there were things I wanted to do during this first week-end as a base for the days later when I'll have to see more people. Diligently

and with the usual feeling of intrusion and self-consciousness, I posted my letters of introduction. At that moment I wanted to go to Brule and sit by the river and meet *no* strangers. I wanted to do nothing more important than to go out to see your grandmother. But anyway—I mailed the letters.

Then I got a taxi, and this time *I* began conversation, instead of waiting for the driver's life story. I told the driver that I was a writer and wanted to see the blitzed parts of London. He was just as delighted as if he'd done the blitzing—no one knew it more intimately than he! He said that he'd "sent in" a little piece himself on the Fire. For all I know, I may have struck the one who took W. L. White around, though he didn't say so.

But he knew where to go, and I have seen what was done to London by bombers. It is largely cleaned up now but, none the less, for hours I have been sickened and stunned. You see pictures—you read about this—but as you drive on through block after block of what has been utter destruction, it's hard to believe that you're awake. It's as if some monster wrecker had set to work almost at random, though of course the City and the East End got the worst of it.

The Fire was timed just right. It resulted from a mass attack on a Sunday night, when the City was practically deserted and the Thames was at low ebb so there wasn't enough water to put the fires out. If you drive up Ludgate Hill, through Cannon Street, as far as the Tower, everywhere you look you see walls with no buildings in their arms, or millions of bricks half broken, or fireplaces and flues still standing but nothing else. I saw a little sign, "11-12 Half Moon Court," left by some freak. There was no court now but only a great open waste space. It was a tiny hidden place once, I suppose.

"This is *easy* to some up there," said the driver, and on we went, until I could do nothing except try to carry in my mind the magnitude of courage in enduring and cleaning up and readjusting.

Someone told me yesterday that when the fire was burning, the outlines of the Christopher Wren churches stood out with amazing beauty.

There are skeletons of churches. St. Clement Danes is a shell, but back of it Dr. Johnson's statue stands intact and stubborn, as if making an epigram on the event.

The clothing and textile industries were blitzed—but it wasn't just business buildings that were ruined. There were streets of tenements and flats which were burned out too. I saw a sign, "Rose Passage," but no trace of the kind of buildings that had shaded it. Who lived along Rose Passage?

"If he ever got to work among them skyscrapers of yours!" said the taxi driver with some relish. "He" always means Hitler.

I was thinking of something like that myself. I was wishing that a lot of isolationists could see this, as well as those few people who still wonder what this war is all about. There are no two ways about it. There is only one conclusion. If Hitler or the Japanese are allowed to get away with this kind of destruction unpunished, nothing in the world is safe. I kept thinking of Warsaw, Prague, and Helsinki, where it was worse, and of all that men have built and saved and loved that has been wrecked already by the terrible technique of war for which Hitler and his army are responsible. Nobody else.

Well, why argue with you? You're on the same side, but so many people can't see how *much* they're on the same side unless and until they see this.

The terrible sightseeing took hours, and I rested

a little and then went out again—on foot this time—up Oxford Street, past Peter Robinson's that was, over to Berkeley and Grosvenor Squares. There are great houses completely destroyed. You stand by their twisted iron fences, which the owners once thought could keep out robbers and marauders, and perhaps you see two tiled bathroom walls—the back walls—on top of each other. A blue one and a green one. There is still the marble floor and the fireplace below, and you can guess at the grandeur and snobbery that entered there for dinner. You can see how shockingly high and small the servants' attics—five flights up—were too. It's fantastic, this evidence of an attempt at obliteration of London. For it was that and nothing else. It's obvious, because you think you've come out of the bombed district and there again is a windowless building staring at you. Yet, of course, most of London is untouched. London has been in a bad wreck, but it's a good machine and when it's fixed up perhaps you'll never know how much damage was done.

It hit me harder and impressed me more because London has always seemed such a sure, confident city, with its well-to-do people so safe and often smug behind their iron fences. They always struck

me that way when I came here first. I used to be pretty savage about London contrasts then, fresh from studying social science as I was. The East End and Berkeley Square didn't make a pretty or balanced pattern, any more than the East Side and Park Avenue do in New York today. But now both the poor and the rich are unsafe here. Both were bombed out and, curiously enough, the poor win this time. They had less to lose and, if they have survived, they stand to gain.

It's midnight, and I must stop, but I still haven't told you about today, and today somehow belongs with yesterday, for I was letting my eyes inform me first. Tomorrow I'll begin to listen. I went to church and then walked through Brompton Road and back through Hyde Park. Far longer than I meant to walk, but it was a lovely day, with all the heat taken out of it and plenty of sunshine left. And everyone was out enjoying it.

Have I said that everywhere you go you see at close intervals signs saying "Air Raid Shelter," "Public Air Raid Shelter," "Public Shelter," "To the Trenches"? London has tried—God knows how it must have tried—to give everyone a shelter from

the devil's blasts. So you always feel as if you could run for it if you had to.

When your aunt and I were here two years ago there were a number of silly little sheet-metal shelters. These have all gone, and people really go below ground. I went down in a couple of shelters and they aren't very pleasant, though often they did turn the trick.

There has been a lot of head-shaking at home about what would happen to the morale of England and about the degeneracy that would stem from these long nights abroad in fear of death. None of that is evident on the surface certainly, though I shall ask a lot of questions about it. All I see here is decency and reserve—a good deal of handholding between soldiers and their girls, but nothing more. And in the Park this morning there were thousands of different kinds of people scattered all over—reading, talking, lying on the grass, swimming in the Serpentine, sailing boats with their children. They were so happy, so grateful for the sunlit day in the middle of war, that is was immeasurably touching. Soldiers were everywhere—Canadians, Australians, Commandos, Scots, alone or with girls. Some were standing listening to the soapbox orators.

It was orderly—it was neither watched nor disciplined pleasure—and it was deserved. For they all say the same thing—in such different accents, and always understating—"We've had a bad time, you know."

But this morning a whole lot of people were having a good time. And if I may sermonize, it being Sunday—just as I'd felt there was something that had to be fought against when I saw the results of the blitz, this morning I saw something that had to be fought for.

One of the most impressive things I saw today was a detail. I was walking through a district which had been bombed and was still being cleared, and there was a sidewalk erected temporarily over great cavities in the street. On one side was a crater filled with water and on the other were walls and stumps of supports and twisted girders and—wreckage. But tacked to the sidewalk was a can and on the can was a sign which read PUT RUBBISH IN THIS CAN.

It was not a joke. Nor irony. It was the attempt to maintain a standard of orderly living when everything normal was blasted away. And from all I can see, the standard has been maintained.

I know I may be thoroughly annoyed with the English temperament tomorrow. But not tonight. I went to a symphony concert this afternoon. It was a Beethoven performance, and there was a long queue outside, with many soldiers and sailors in it. However, don't think they are forgiving the Germans, in spite of Beethoven. Some titled lady seemed to get a lot of applause when she said in a public speech the other day that she'd like to see the Germans wiped off the face of the earth. But the more reasonable British say quietly, "Wipe out eighty million people? It can't be done."

It's been a long day, and I've been in a good many places. I wore my yellow flower hat this afternoon and occasionally felt misunderstood. In London today a lady with a bright hat can easily have her purposes mistaken. In New York I can wear a dozen yellow hats without being thought immoral.

The bitter with the sweet. Goodnight.

Mother.

June 8

Dear Mary,

I keep getting curious rushes of nostalgia. Today I passed that place where we stayed in St. James—the "Mansions"—where we had a service flat when we came up from Rye in 1929, after spending the summer there. That was an odd summer, which I had decided on with determination partly because I thought you children should begin to see Europe and partly because I wanted to take some personal problems out of their American locale and see how they would look off the home ground. So we leased "Fletcher's House" at Rye, the old parsonage which was supposed to belong to the father of the Fletcher who was in literary partnership with Beaumont. It was much doubted, that legend, but anyway the house was very old—and very shabby too—and very small. Mrs. Eldridge was the cook, and May—who had only two dimensions as far as I could see, and no last name that I ever found out—was the house-maid. You had a nurse-governess called Miss Burnham, who was the daughter of the local Mayor, and she was wished upon you against your protest because you fell off the ruins of Camber Castle while I was writing a serial for *Red Book*.

You had a good time and a bad time that summer. England appealed to your sense of romance, for some reason, and I remember how you burned candles in your tiny attic room that had its own small staircase, and once you ran away and went out walking alone at night. You became Anglicized. As Mrs. Eldridge said with pride when we left, "Miss Mary has become very English." And then she looked at Tan and said, with sinister meaning, "I see no change whatsoever in Master Tanner!"

There was no change in him either. All summer he cherished just one idea—to get back home. When we got to London he was temporarily diverted by seeing the Tower of London. But he was embittered by the man in the Mansions who said to him, "So you're an American. Well, that used to be a good country, before 1776."

Well, tell Tanner that the scene of that insult, the Mansions, has been blitzed. There's nothing left except the shell of the circular rooms which looked out on "gentlemen's chambers" for the most part. Later I put those rooms in a story—and sold it—and maybe I'll put them in another story for further safekeeping. As they look now.

I didn't spend the day gawking. Things began to happen as soon as I woke up. Mr. Hamilton called

first from the Ministry of Information, and then other people with invitations. All the introductions hatched out like so many eggs. Then I called Miss Heath's office to see if I could get a typewriter. They're expensive—I don't want to buy one for forty pounds certainly, but maybe I can rent one somewhere.

Audrey Heath came to lunch, and we talked about what had happened to her in the Battle of Britain. For ninety-one nights they had continuous raids, and now that I've seen the wreckage I can imagine the noise, the confusion, the fears, the crowding. The worst, Miss Heath said, was when her flat was hit and she couldn't wash because there was no water and no light. So she went to the office, thinking "I'll get a wash there," and the elevator boy said cheerily, "You can go up all right but you won't find much left!" She didn't find water or light and she couldn't wash—which seemed to be the worst for her. She didn't mind nearly so much the fact that she and her office assistants had to move "what was left" to another office, which was streets away, and to do it all by hand. There were of course no vans for moving things.

She's very thin, but not unconfident. Her secre-

tary has a worse time, she says, because that girl's husband is in Libya, and today the Battle of Libya is at its worst.

Audrey Heath told me how it felt when the wreckage I wrote of yesterday was being created. She also wanted me to meet Noel Streatfeild, who works for the Women's Voluntary Service and has been bombed out twice. She got a kind of shell shock the second time, but someone lent her a little wee house, and she got clothes from our British War Relief, and she went on working in a Mobile Canteen. Every night—for ninety-one nights—she took food to the people in shelters, in a canteen which had "A Present from New York" painted on its sides. Her brother and his wife and baby now are prisoners of the Japanese. They were in Singapore.

None of this may sound like much. If I understate, I do so because they understate. But prodigious nerve and quantities of courage show up on all sides.

The important thing is that the English haven't gone crazy or stagey. They believe quite confidently in victory now, but many will say that there were days when it was impossible to tell whether invasion

could be resisted. The thing they knew was that the blitz was an attempt to break their nerves, and if ever mind triumphed over matter, I believe London marks the spot.

But I have a job of my own to do which can't be done by listening only to tales of past heroism. I went to the office of the North American Newspaper Alliance, for which I am correspondent if anything happens that seems to be a story to shoot home in a hurry, and met the very agreeable head of the organization, Mr. Sargint, who had an Air Raid Warden badge on his coat. He wanted, first of all almost, to know if I had a gas mask. He said that they must be taken seriously and showed me some letters which he felt indicated that there might be "a little trouble" fairly soon.

He says that Hitler wasted a lot of bombs in the City without doing any real damage to war industry—that a country couldn't be knocked out by blowing retail warehouses to bits, no matter how much noise it made. He had a great deal of inside knowledge about this war and a pretty cool summing up of people. He is English, Mr. H. J. J. Sargint, I think. Or else he's lived here so long that the British manner has "taken." I'd sort of expected

an American—North American—in that office when I went in, instead of a humorous, courteous gentleman who bewailed that days and nights of blitzes hadn't reduced his bulk.

The main business of my day was to go to the Ministry of Information, which is housed back of the British Museum in big buildings which formerly belonged to the University of London. You'd have to be a very good spy to get in, for you state your errand, are given a pass to see the person you want to see, and have to turn in the pass when you go out again, signed by the person whom you were supposed to see. I suppose Leslie Ford, when she gets over, might do a mystery story on getting around that red tape.

The place was full of intelligent girls—as well as men. The men I had expected to see. But I hadn't realized that there would be as many smart young women who seemed to know what I wanted to do and, better yet, how to do it. Hamish Hamilton took me around to meet several people—most importantly, for my purposes, Major Machell, of the American Division, and Mr. Jobson, who directs "tours." That word sounds a little hidebound and as if you were to have your vision censored,

but it really means that you are to have an inside track.

I told Major Machell that I wanted to take more than exhortations back home. I want to study rationing and how it works; forced savings, wage deductions, and how they affect the small, tight budget; that I want to find out what women are doing in all lines, industrial, political, professional, and domestic; and that I thought I could knock a few myths on the head, given proper information as a weapon. Myths about the effort being slack over here, and myths about the bad effect the blitz conditions are having on children.

Major Machell was helpful and sure. So was Mr. Jobson. He will start me on a tour of industry very soon, beginning with the Government training centers in London and ending in the out-of-London districts where mobile women labor is employed. He says I shan't be comfortable and shall be tired. What did I come for but to get tired?

Tomorrow I'll go back and do some work on a plan of study. Then lunch with Russell Strauss, the father of the English children who live with Carl and Carol, and who is in Parliament. Then tea with Jennie Lee, the former M. P. The next day—

Wednesday—I have promised to lunch with Margaret Biddle, wife of the Ambassador to Governments in Exile. Then there is a tea for the Allied Nurses. Thursday I have lunch with Helen Kirkpatrick, of the Chicago *Daily News*, who is said to be both intelligent and very decorative. I'm not at all decorative at the moment myself, partly because I've been going very hard, so I think I'll try a dose of bed. Appointments begin early. Not much of a letter, this, but it brings you up to date.

Love,

Mother.

June 9

Dear Mary,

Each of these letters starts out with the hope that I can do both color photography and give sound effects, so that you'll know exactly what things are like. But each time I finish writing about what is happening and what I see, I sigh over my inadequacy. I have a typewriter now, and a very ancient one it is, but maybe I can do better with it, for when I use a pen I always feel as if I am signing

checks or writing Sunday night letters to you and Tanner.

It's not like that here. Have I told you how I live? I have lots of space—London has always seemed to me to have more room in its big hotels than any other ones I've ever been in, possibly excepting the long living room in the apartment at the Chatham. And even now, in wartime, with the windows all heavily taped to withstand shocks and breakages and the long curtains at the windows heavier than ever with their black linings, there's the London sense that, if they can afford it, people like to live with high ceilings and a tremendous lot of wardrobe space. The wardrobes in the bedroom have glass fronts on the drawers, and my Clipper wardrobe looks pretty skimpy behind glass. But very neat. The rooms are done in a modern fashion without tampering at all with British habits of life. At late twilight the maid comes in and "does the blackout," and after that I have to remember not to open the curtains impatiently for a little more air as I work. The windows may be opened, but only when the room is completely dark. Beside my bed are my gas mask and a small electric torch that I bought at Missildine's in Tryon.

The sitting room has ivory-paneled walls and some overstuffed chairs, and decided evidently, after a gesture in the direction of modern furniture, to stick to imitation Chinese Chippendale. There's a very small coal fire laid in the grate under an ormulu clock. These last two things are important, for I shall not ask for the fire no matter how cold it gets, because they must save six million tons of coal this year in domestic consumption, so said Sir John Anderson in the House today. The clock is important too, because if my watch should go on the blink I couldn't get it repaired most probably, at least not in six months. Luckily I brought two cheap ones, and may not lose both of them.

My routine is to have a cup of "early tea" at eight o'clock, get a bath, read three newspapers, eat a quick breakfast at nine, and then the day begins. London has always put me on routine quickly. I can't imagine being in bed with curlers on my hair at ten o'clock—not that I ever am anywhere!

Today I went over to the Ministry of Information again and talked things over with Major Machell and his two assistants, Miss Barker and Miss Skipsey, who are grand girls. They are both intelligent and well educated. I've seen them too little to be

sure of anything, but my guess is that Miss Barker is from a conservative county group, and Miss Skipsey from a more liberal, social-welfare-minded group. I mention this only because it is what you see on all sides. Girls from all groups have jobs now. Girls have to work. It's not a fashion or a pressure but Government orders. Girls from twenty to women of forty have no choice in the matter. Most of them, of course, want to work, as obviously do these two girls, who are well placed here.

We talked over subjects and lines of investigation, and I was given my press pass and newspaper credentials, which mean that I can go in and out of the Ministry without signing a lot of forms. Also, I am privileged to attend the Military conferences with the press at noon every day and the Naval conferences at eleven fifteen on Wednesday. And other important people meet the press here from time to time. I shan't be able to go to many conferences, but I shall go when it's possible.

I lunched with Russell Strauss. I wished that I had seen his children in America more often and could have told him more about them, but at least I brought the last word, that a few days ago they were well and happy, and I told him that I'd seen

them not too long ago and they were handsome and husky. And I described, as best I could, their well-cared-for life in the country with the Brandt family, and the local public school, and the milieu they were in, and I think it pleased him.

He is a member of Parliament from Lambeth and very close to Sir Stafford Cripps. I suppose that means that he is much in the know about everything, for Cripps certainly is. He will give me cards so that I can attend Parliament, and I shall go there later. The fuel debate is on this week, and I would like to hear it, but if I start hanging around Parliament I'll never get anything else done.

Mr. Strauss asked me if I would like to speak to some of the Lambeth women who have a political club, and I said that I certainly would if I could ask them questions. So I probably shall do that. Lambeth, in case you don't know or remember, is a workingman's district. Mr. Strauss does not live in Lambeth. He lives at 1, Kensington Palace Gardens, which is what we call a good address. But, as you must know, M. P.'s don't have to live in their districts as do our Congressmen. A district may be represented by a local man or an outsider, and Mr. Strauss beat the local man who stood for the place.

His wife is living in the United States, as are the children, for the duration, and his house, which is very large, is shared by some of his friends. I was there later in the afternoon to call on Jennie Lee, who is Mrs. Aneurin Bevan, also a writer and a former member of Parliament herself.

I blundered in making that call, for I came back to the hotel and took off my brogues and put on high-heeled shoes and a prettier hat, and I fear that Jennie Lee took me for a suburban socialite. There's no way to explain your appearance at any time, and, as you know, I make those breaks now and then.

However, Jennie Lee had no way of knowing that the social problems she had on her mind were no novelties in my life and that whenever she spoke of coal all I had to do was substitute the words iron ore and the picture was much the same. She is an Independent in politics, working with the Labour Party, though most unofficially as she isn't in Parliament and hasn't been for a long time. Very intelligent, mentally ardent about her opinions, she plunged right into the discussion of the coal mining problem and said that there was dissatisfaction in the coal mining region, which could only be met by nationalization of the coal mines.

She said that there was no question at all about the common desire of all the British to prosecute the war, but that if they wanted to get the most out of the people's war effort, the workers must be convinced that no one was getting away without making a proper effort. Just what we talk about at home. There was some discussion about whether the richest seams were being worked in the coal mines in Wales, which made me almost lonesome, because it's been so much discussed in Minnesota this year as to what is being done about the richest ore deposits and whether all the companies are really doing their best or are holding some rich ore for postwar exploitation.

That was about all there was to that call, except Jennie Lee herself. I shall remember her working in that room furnished very sparsely with a working table, a couch, and not much else except a packing case and a chair or two. She wore green corduroy slacks. Her hair is very black and her face excited and scornful and pretty, and she speaks with gestures, and must be remarkable at public meetings. She's to the Left, but not in an adolescent fashion, and she makes concessions to brains even if people aren't exactly up her street, if the brains deliver.

She would have a hard time staying elected except in a district that loved and trusted her.

She has a book coming out this month, and I shall read it with the greatest interest. It's about herself and her point of view, and she says it tells her story, though she added that no one could really write an autobiography.

I wondered about that at intervals all evening. I don't think she's completely right.

Love,

Mother.

June 10

Dearest Mary,

I have just come upstairs from an odd little dinner and am of two minds—one to put my feet up and call it a day, and one to put the sequence of today down before I forget about it. They had asked me to report back when I had my identity card. So I did and asked the man at the desk why, as he was copying off the number. The identity card, you remember, is the one issued when you go to the rationing board.

"Well," said the policeman in a very friendly way, "now I don't like to frighten you, and this will not happen to you, we'll hope, but it's as well to have it on record. Sometimes, you see, after a blitz, this card might be all that was left, and then we'd have a way of identifying you."

Pleasant world the English have to live in, isn't it? And have lived in for more than two years and a half. I only have to take it for a month or so probably. They live in constant peril. The island is so small—only seventy miles from the sea coast at the most at any place—and what is seventy miles to modern airplanes? They live in danger, but truly not in fear. It's amazing. But if you hear of a small piece of my identification card being part of street rubbish somewhere, remember I'm only one of many who got the same dose.

We have decided at the Ministry that I'll see women in industry from the training centers through to the hostels where they live when they are moved to a job. I'll stay in one and see what they are like. Then I'll go down and spend a few days with Louise Farnam in Sussex and get the point of view of life in a Defense Area—I have to get the permission of the police to go where

she lives, but that will be arranged. Also, I'll go to Canterbury and see the Land Army near there, as well as that blitzed area.

We lined all that up, and then I lunched at the Ritz with Mrs. Anthony Drexel Biddle, who besides being the wife of the Ambassador to Governments in Exile is also Margaret Biddle in her own right. She was on the air with me not long ago, on an international hookup, and I'd heard about her, but until today I'd never seen her. She is chic, of course sophisticated and well dressed, but she jumps over all that and the large diamonds into immediate questions about what you want to know and tells you whom you ought to see in order to find out about it.

It would have been easy enough for Margaret Biddle to sit back and be decorative for a long while and still get plenty of thrills, for her husband is, of course, in the midst of exciting events, and she would be bound to see the dramatic people of the world. But she hasn't lived like that, at least not in Europe and England for the last few years. She really does go at living the hard, diligent way, informing herself about everything that English women are doing, writing a simple, lucid book about

it which is, as far as I know, the only such compilation on record, and in addition giving broadcasts for BBC, into which she took the actual women workers of England so that they could explain on the air what they were doing and how it felt to do it. I took copies of her broadcasts and read them, and they are singularly free from her own opinions. They are clear and factual, and I shall get material for my own use from them, not in quoting her but in remembering what she brought out of the women's experiences.

Later on in the afternoon I went to the American Embassy to get my passport put in order for the return trip and had my fingerprints taken. The man who did it said that he could tell it was the first time I'd been fingerprinted from the way I put my thumb down. Then I did some odd jobs at the Ministry of Information and walked for an hour and a half, always seeing more of the same things with hardly ever a repeat. Houses demolished—such a lovely drawing room used to have green paneled walls with wreaths of roses painted on them, for there is one panel left. Shops are closed here and there, but others, many after all, are open.

A dreadful bit of horror happened the other

night, and a new shudder of pity ran through London. Near the Elephant and Castle station a bomb, which had been long undiscovered and may have been a "creeper," went off, killing a great many people who were quietly at home with their children, burying them under rubble and ruins. For several days they didn't know how many there were. I went down to see it yesterday.

That gave me some idea of why so many English people have said to me of the blitz, "You can't guess how it was because it's all cleaned up now." This piece of destruction was not cleaned up. Wood, brick, pieces of iron, all were in a horrible mess. The area was roped off, and the survivors had been moved out by the Home Defense organizations and were no doubt being kindly cared for. But there it was, a place which had been home to men and women and children only a few days before, and now suddenly and shockingly it was a crumbling ruin, and under the bricks and timbers were broken, torn bodies, indecently buried. I don't want to try to harrow you—that does no good—but when you see something like that you wonder why cruelty is so carelessly distributed and why disaster like that has to hit people with no warning.

Was it a creeping bomb? Was it an attempt at terrorism? The incident is over. A few people will never forget, and everyone else has forgotten already.

In the United States, in Duluth, and at Brule, people will probably never realize what this war is like. To realize it, you have to be somewhere where you know that at any minute it may be your turn next. Don't think I say that with any feeling of being coolly reconciled to death, for I want to get back home. I'd prefer to get blitzed on my own territory, in my own country.

I walked a long while, cutting out the tea for nurses at the Allied Club, and went down to dinner about eight o'clock and ran into John Foster, who was with three other people, and they asked me to join them, which was very decent of them. And very amusing. The other woman—much younger than I—was Mrs. Rothschild, rich I suppose, but none the less she has a scientific job, from which she was temporarily on leave and counting the days. The other two men and John Foster were all Eton graduates, and the talk was marvelous in spots because they got really vivid about school days, and the reminiscences weren't

the sort to excite tears. I have little notion who the two men were—they seemed to know everyone in London who was important. One was preoccupied with the Free French, and the other was, I think, a newspaper publisher.

There was a quality about those people that was very savory. Their manners were quite perfect to a stranger, and they were really gay. You felt they'd be gay anywhere, and even in trouble—yet not silly. Mrs. Rothschild is thin, with an oval face that you wouldn't forget if you saw it for an hour, and I liked her very much.

Remind me to tell you one good story that somebody told.

Love,

Mother.

June 11

Dearest Mary,

I wish I would hear from one of you. No letters today, and it's time now for a few to appear if they are sent via Clipper.

All my mail this morning was made up of Eng-

lish letters. Sometimes they look as if they were being returned because of a wrong address, but that is because here the "austerity" practice is to use an envelope twice or more. The envelope is opened, your letter taken out and a slip pasted on the front usually, and your envelope comes back with the answer. The Government sets the example by using previously used envelopes, pasting on them a label which says bravely "ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE. Fasten this envelope by gumming this label across the flap. Open by cutting label instead of tearing envelope."

What could be fairer than that? You can't miss.

I had quite a few letters this morning, and engagements are piling up. You know how it is. In a new place, for a few days nothing happens and then everything does.

This morning fairly early I went up to see what the Bureau of Advice, established at Selfridge's by the Food Ministry, was like, and came away with a bunch of recipes for wartime cakes, for parsley dressings, and for nutritious weekly menus for children, which I'm sure would interest women in the United States even if we do think we know more about nutrition than anyone else in the world. And

we may be right. The Government effort is very well done, except that, as in all government printing, the print is small and unexciting.

Then I wandered through Selfridge's Food Shop, having a curious attack of nostalgia or of being born again or something. For in 1914, when I was the greenest young married woman in the world and living in a service flat here, during the First World War, I used to try to escape from the conventions of English meals by walking up to Selfridge's and buying extra things there, getting a bunch of grapes or something that tasted American, like grapefruit. William, who was the houseman and waiter, thought I was crazy anyhow after he saw me standing on two chairs one day trying to fix some window curtains to my liking. William just didn't know how I felt. I had to do something to fill up the long, limp days while your father was in Holland and I was wondering what a lot of women wonder now, what kind of future a child born in war would face. I worked at Red Cross some days, and I did some Belgian relief work, but there was never enough to do while I was alone. The ghost of that green girl goes around with me a lot these days, and the funny thing is that, though I hope she has

improved in some ways, she hasn't changed her mind in others, and still believes that women should have jobs and that slums can be cleaned up and that the world is some day going to put its foot down and say no more wars. We have this one more lesson of horror to learn, to convince us once and for all that there will be wars in a world where people are careless of politics or let immediacies of comfort and advancement blind them to what is or is not being done.

From that little Selfridge errand I shot over to the Ministry of Information, because the Chinese Minister of Information, Mr. Yeh, recently from Chungking and before that from Malaya and Singapore (one of the last to get out of each place), was to be interviewed.

The big press room, hung with enormous maps all made on a superlarge scale so that campaigns can be pointed out and followed, was fairly well filled with people, all with press cards of course. Mr. Yeh was youngish and didn't look haggard at all, in spite of all his adventures. He had a nice humor and a stable, confident manner. He read his statement, which didn't amount to much but said in one place that "In China there is a strong desire

to see a new world security evolved from this total struggle. To return to the *status quo* is not all we are fighting for." I always like to see that on the record everywhere. He did not give figures but said, in a way which he called diplomatic, that China's losses were not less than the enemy's, and that the Japs already had lost two million men in China. Figure it out for yourself.

Afterwards they fired questions at him, and the thing that chiefly interested me was that he said the Japanese strength had been underrated, that they took Java with two divisions (a division in Japan, if full, is about twenty thousand men), and that sixty to seventy divisions are still waiting for action in Japan.

On the outskirts we talked about the fuel debate in Parliament, which has come to a head. The Government is not going to ration fuel just yet nor take over the ownership of the mines, but it is taking over the complete control of operations, separating that from the financing and selling, and doing what it thinks best regardless of whose pocketbook is hit. Sir Stafford Cripps said to reporters that the White Paper on this matter is in earnest, that those steps will be taken. Of course the Labour Party isn't satis-

fied, and any baby could see how much depends on whether this is a technical change in management or a real one. In the meantime the public will be urged to save fuel voluntarily, to cut down fires and turn off lights.

This will be more austerity, the word which covers the war sacrifices of daily lives—the rationing in all ways, the abandonment of luxury. After next week no meal may cost more than five shillings, unless special permission is given, in any public place.

I saw a peach in Selfridge's—not a big peach, but just an ordinary one—and it was priced at four shillings. Eighty-five cents a peach is a lot of money. I must write that to Arthur, who buys them for seventy-five cents a bushel in canning time. The new pooling of food resources of the United States and Great Britain would solve so much if only we had more boats to ship food in.

I lunched with Helen Kirkpatrick of the Chicago *Daily News*. They all tell me she is one of the good newspaper women in England. She comes originally from Rochester, which should interest you, and she is going back to the U.S.A. on a lecture tour this fall. If she comes to Rochester, be very

sure to hear her and meet her. She is an authentic person and very well surrounded.

She thinks highly of Margaret Biddle too and is doing a piece on Mr. Biddle for *Collier's*. And she told me, as has everyone else, that the key woman here in Labour is Caroline Haslett, with whom I am lunching tomorrow.

Helen Kirkpatrick and I agreed on a lot of things about the temper of the people here. She is conscious of the suffering and told me tales of Plymouth, where, during the blitz, many of the women heard their sons and husbands had been lost and no one made any trouble or went to pieces. She said Nancy Astor was superb during the Plymouth trouble and is equally fine at the Canadian Hospital, in Cliveden.

You hear a lot of tales, stories of the difference in people's living. Caroline Haslett said, "We drove up the great approach to Cliveden," (this I shall tell Nora) "in the smallest little car, driven by Lord Astor, and I was very popular in the house because I'd brought my ration book so there was a little more sugar."

Now a little bit about Miss Haslett, and then I'll go to bed. She is particularly up your street

because she is a scientist, though her line is electrical engineering.

She is both a student of electricity and a believer in women. She saw no reason why homes should not be run by electricity, why housework should be back-breaking instead of being aided by all sorts of electrical devices. So she started to teach women about electricity, how to repair their equipment as well as how to turn on a switch. The various competitive electrical manufacturers tried to get her to work for them, but she waited until she got a Government subsidy, which she has been given today for her work. She trains teachers, not personally but through the shops and training courses in the universities and trade schools, and then they go out in turn as teachers and crusaders.

That is the core of her interest, but the spreading out of her activities has earned her a tremendous reputation for sanity in outlook, for wisdom, for progress. So she was asked to assist the Ministry of Labour and, as the position works out and as I understand it, she is head of an Advisory Woman's Committee with which the Ministry of Labour consults in regard to problems of women's employment. I gather that though it is an advisory com-

mittee, it packs a pretty good punch, and that it would be difficult to go against a strong recommendation or protest which it might make.

Miss Haslett is also on other important boards and committees, among them one which is planning reconstruction after the war. When I met her today—Margaret Biddle had taken me around and introduced me and then left us together—we talked about postwar plans. Like Mr. Yeh, Miss Haslett sees no reason why we should be content with a return to the old *status quo.*

She has an extraordinary vitality, and coupled with it there is a sense of power under control. I haven't met many women who gave me that feeling. She's not at all mannish. On the contrary there is something very feminine about her charm. Strong as she is in point of view, she isn't at all harsh.

To talk to her took the dreariness out of the war for the time being. I am going to see more of her, and she will arrange for me to meet more women who speak with authority on one matter or another. As I see them you'll hear about them. And one day you really must meet Caroline Haslett.

Love,

Mother.

June 12

Dear Mary,

This morning of course the big news is the new treaty between the United Kingdom and Russia, and hardly second to that the solemn pledge which we seem to have given that a new allied war front will be opened this year. It is very stirring news, which London takes calmly on this rainy day. I am sorry that I came in too late last night to know that I could have gone to the press conferences the Foreign Office gave last night. They telephoned me, but when I called back I couldn't get an answer, and that was what it was about. I have all the news but missed the scene, and also the one in Parliament, which I could quite easily have attended if I'd asked to get in this week.

It wiped out, at least in the sight of all the world, all the blunders and misdemeanors of 1939, when Russia and Germany made their untrustworthy and unsuitable alliance. There was nothing in common between them at any time, but everyone was playing for time, and in the end the price paid for this was fearfully high.

Today I spent an hour or so at the Ministry of Labour, getting a basis for my inquiry into British

women in industry. I talked to Mr. Frere, and then to Mrs. Reisner, who is another woman of simple conduct who has a big job on her hands. She told me of the Labour setup. The Labour Exchange does not actually divide its employment into a man division and a woman division, but lumps—this is probably more ideal than real—all the available labor resources, whether they come from men or women.

That is, there is no separate Woman's Division of Labour, though all the problems in regard to women in industry with which we have been and still are struggling in the United States exist here.

It is interesting to see how great the similarity is. For example, after I published *Women for Defense,* and especially after the subsequent articles on women in war work, I got letters from many localities, sent by women who said in effect that, though they had heard of the great need for women in industry, they couldn't find work even after trying in every reasonable direction to get it. They were bitter and frustrated—felt cheated—and Mrs. Reisner used exactly those words in describing one of the major labor difficulties six months after England went to war. Many women were frustrated in their early desire to serve the country, she said. And it

was a pity, she said, that they were called on before jobs were ready, because after they had offered their services once or twice and been refused, it was difficult to rouse the same enthusiasm all over again. We have the same trouble now at home.

Mr. Frere, who is Secretary to Mr. Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, gave me the same figures I had already put in my notebook on employment. Out of a population of 33,000,000 between 14 and 65, 22,000,000 are now working full time in industry, civil defense, and the armed forces. These figures are important to destroy any vestige of doubt in the minds of people at home that the British are hard at work to win this war.

He said that after Dunkirk they had practically no war equipment left in England, that they had to begin from scratch to build a war industry and to do it while they were being blitzed. Sometimes, when in person they point out these things to me—things I have known—it seems as if on our side of the water we never have realized how close the disaster was, with the awful result that Hitler would have controlled not only all Western Europe but Britain as a base. I have told you of the blitzed areas I've seen, but I don't think I have spoken

of the great rolls of barbed wire which you see around certain areas, behind which the British were ready to defend the last streets if necessary. And there is still constant warning that the danger of invasion is not yet over.

In a not long talk, Mr. Frere told me other things of interest, some off the record, but he made no secret of one especially astonishing fact, that one airplane factory had to be broken up into ninety units for the sake of safety, so if one part was blitzed the others could go on. They had to transport materials and workers to ninety different areas, under fire practically, but the final answer was that they got greater production from the ninety separate units than from the one great one. "So much for your United States mass production," he said cheerfully.

I'm collecting a great deal of excellent data on women in industry, but the figures are too complicated for letters. There are human stories everywhere too, and you can guess at the number when I tell you that out of five and a half million women in industry at present, one and a half million did not work in peacetime. By that token there are at least a million complete stories of changed lives,

altered schedules, new environments. There will be much more of this to write to you as I go along, so I won't dwell on it now.

Caroline Haslett and I had a very pleasant lunch, talking about people, exchanging philosophies, some of them pretty good too. I repeat that she is a person whose name you should remember, for you will hear much more of her on both sides of the Atlantic. She has been in the United States recently, but she will come again with more authority each time. Her cool hands gather up a good many reins, and she seems to know just where she is driving.

A big, very human woman, with a beautifully molded face and very straight eyes, she fortunately isn't a *heavy-leather*. She believes in women but not in the old-fashioned feminist way, and she likes to work with men, as I'm convinced the men must like to work with her.

I was going to Camberley in Surrey on Sunday but found out that there is to be a procession (parade to you) in London, and since I have been offered a place in the press stand I am sure I would be a quitter if I ran off to the country and was social for a day, though I'd like to do just that. I was going to stay at the house of a Major home on

furlough and might have heard a lot of things that would be interesting. But the procession is to be reviewed by a few kings, so I was told informally, and there may be a cable in it to send back to America.

Tonight Storm Jameson, the President of the English P.E.N., is dining with me here, and that will be a pleasant few hours. John Strachey (Flight Lieutenant Strachey) called me up yesterday, but I was out and missed him. And this morning I had a little note from Harold Laski, saying that he would be in London next Tuesday and asking me to come to see him, as I shall of course.

There is lovely iris in the near-by florist's on Brook Street, and I bought a few stalks because it's raining and they are so lovely. At home I would have bought a couple of dozen, but I too have caught the feeling of austerity, though no doubt they like to have the good old American dollars spent over here, just so you don't use up coal. Iris are all right to buy. They can grow more, without interfering with the war effort.

There are a few amusing food notes. The look on the bedroom waiter's face and his tone (there was none grander than this fellow, even at

the Maria Christina) when he said this morning, "Madam, this morning you shall have an egg!" When I think of the eggs we have left neglected on plates and see the joy in one here!

Another funny thing this noon was when the waiter at lunch was getting us a cocktail and came back to say that no more gin could be used in cocktails, but if we liked he could bring us gin and lime juice. Which he did, in cocktail glasses.

The control of food constantly makes me aware of how much extra food we have in the United States, and how much we eat or waste. Those plates of salted nuts and tin cans of popcorn that we take for granted don't exist over here. There is plenty of food, but the trimmings are gone. Also, there is an appreciation of food, the keener because everyone is conscious of conditions on the Continent and in the more remote countries of the Near East and in China. Something fundamental comes back into your point of view when food becomes important.

In the small restaurants where you may go for lunch there is always a sign reminding people that a customer is limited to three dishes, and certain servings, such as sardines and toast, would count

for two dishes—also if the toast is buttered you wouldn't be allowed an extra pat of butter.

The general statement is that, "If you can afford it, you can 'eat out' with considerable satisfaction." The problem comes when you can't afford restaurant prices or haven't access to them and have to feed men in the family on ration cards at home.

I have collected a good many recipes and bulletins, all of which should be enormously interesting when we get them home. I'll try them out.

A shortage of meat in the United States is probable if we do our share in feeding a hungry world as well as our own armed forces, and the English can give us a good many tips on civilian consumption. The Ministry of Food advises reducing the size of meat helpings first of all, stating that the popular demand for meat is psychological rather than nutritional and not proportional to quantity. They also stress, in many printed pamphlets and statements, that overcooking of vegetables makes a great difference in their palatableness. That's something for the British to learn, for they've always boiled their vegetables to exhaustion.

They rub it into the public mind that soya flour has twice as much protein as an equal weight of

meat. And somebody must stay up every night inventing new sandwich fillings. Cheese and parsnips. Cheese and carrots. A spread made with lentils, split peas, raw carrots, cooked potatoes, and (this was new to me) vegetable yeast. There are dozens of such recipes, and the contriving and distribution of them are Government business, which is the interesting thing.

This is enough. You'll get tired of following me around mentally. I might ask after you once in a while and about how the war effort in your laboratory is progressing. Tomorrow will be Saturday, and I hope that maybe you and Tan are getting together again if the gasoline ration doesn't prevent it.

As for me, I'm going over to the BBC headquarters to see Mr. Maurice Gorham, who runs that network, and do a few other bits of work, and probably have my hair washed for a treat.

The hairdresser is as informative as everyone else. She is a slight girl, and not only is she the only operator in this hotel but she does the work at another hotel as well. She has the most limited supplies, cheap and poor quality creams and nail polishes. I had brought a small bottle of red nail

polish with me and I gave it to her because she regarded it as such a treasure.

She does excellent work, but she yearns to be rid of it and to be in active war work and has an application in for one of the services. Her health seems to work against her, for she is really fragile, and yet every day she commutes to London from a seacoast town, and every night, she tells me, her family has some of the Canadian soldiers in for supper so they can make it homelike for the strangers. Think of the length of her day.

She loves to hear about the United States and likes to have me come in and tell her what it is like in New York. So we both enjoy the shampoo.

Love,

Mother.

June 14

Dear Mary,

I can't round off Sunday without a letter to you tonight. It still strikes me as odd that I'm here instead of on the other side of the ocean. And every time I see the sign below my window—"S→Shelter

for 100 persons"—I feel as if pretty soon the lights might go up and this be where I came into the movie.

Storm Jameson and I did have a pleasant evening. Almost immediately we began to talk. She both deeply understands the war and deeply feels it. But her emotion is not verbose nor expressed with gestures. It's as if her sympathy now penetrates life more deeply and more quickly than it can ever have done before—but then I never knew her before, so that is sheer foolish guessing. However, hers was a beautiful mind to touch and to be with her was both stimulus and rest. I didn't have to assemble any data. She synthesized what I have been seeing and hearing in a very expert way.

We talked over my little errand with her, which was an explanation of the USO, for which fund a group of English authors will do a book. They are going to put their good pieces in it, not just leftovers, and she tells me that practically all of the finest English writers agreed instantly to contribute work, which could, of course, be sold elsewhere, for the benefit of the USO. Pretty generous, isn't it, and very helpful.

We talked of Anglo-American relations, and, as

is true whenever I talk with anyone who is really thinking about the future as well as the present, she feels that they are basically important. I don't think she believes that we can have a weatherproof peace without those relations becoming progressively closer—nor do I. And we talked of the myths that needed destroying, and the few rude or bigoted people who get in everyone's way.

She told me one wonderful story about her milkman, who said to her cheerfully the morning after France surrendered, "We'll be all right now—rid of all the foreigners and standing alone!"

Also, she gave me a very vivid description of how close invasion really felt to her, and what it meant as she looked at the prospect. There was, she said simply, no place to go.

There is something in her face and manner which symbolizes the present British austerities for me. You only have to look at her to know how much she personally goes without. She has a delicate, concentrated face that you would never see at a suburban bridge table, a face you wouldn't be likely to come upon in a department store elevator. It is spiritual, and yet it is full of immediate purpose.

The suffering of the war hits her doubly because

she has known France so well and loved it so much. She has written many fine novels about France. Try *Cousin Honoré* some day, and I'll bring home *The Fort,* which is less a novel than a conversation about war.

She understands politics too and keeps in touch with what the government is up to. She also knows how ignorant and unlucky people live and feel. I came upon a book of hers called *A Day Off,* a story of a prostitute which is almost as bleak in its realism as Nora Hoult's *Mrs. Johnson.* How does a delicate, spirituelle woman know how an ageing streetwalker's feet hurt?

She does know. She understands her London, from the women who walk on the Embankment to the men who sit in Parliament.

It was a good evening, and I shall see her again next Thursday, when she is having one of the army psychiatrists to meet me at lunch and I shall hear more about morale from the scientific side.

BBC was, as of course you know, bombed out and has been relocated. I went to the new offices yesterday. I had seen the old ones, which were located right around the corner from the service flat which we had the first time I was in London.

There are a few craters around there, but a great deal of substantial structure has survived.

The broadcasting went on right through the blitz very coolly, and full arrangements were made to carry it on if things had been even worse than they were. Mr. Gorham asked me if I would broadcast for BBC, and I said I would like to of course but would rather wait until I had gone a little farther in observation and study.

Yesterday was Derby Day, and there was one curious thing about it. The King's colt, Big Game, was being run, and he was the favorite—very much the favorite. In fact, so much so that both the hairdresser and the waiter told me that people were betting almost with superstition, saying that if the King's colt won it would be a sign of victory in the war.

But Big Game finished sixth. For a minute he was ahead, and a great cheer came from the crowd. Then, when Watling Street, Lord Derby's horse, won, there was hardly a sound, though the fact is that Lord Derby is very popular with the public.

Odd—it's not only the Irish who are superstitious I guess.

But no matter how disappointed their subjects

may have been when Big Game didn't put it over, the King and Queen didn't look disturbed as they reviewed the various units of the war services attached to Great Britain, in front of Buckingham Palace today. It was a very fine procession, as neat as a pin in every arrangement. It was not too long, and there was no hanging around before or afterwards.

The whole parade had been very hush-hush said a lady wearing surprising silver foxes to excess, who was standing beside me in the press enclosure. It was a very good enclosure, for the press and the photographers had the whole of the Victoria Memorial to themselves. That, as you ought to remember, is directly opposite Buckingham Palace, which stands there blindly now, its windows all boarded up (possibly it's not boards, but it's not glass).

There was a temporary dais in front of the gates for the royal persons, and the whole thing ran off very well. We were asked to be there by half-past two, and there we were in the big space around the monument, which is a circular stone base with a curved balustrade. Shortly afterwards the high officials of the Navy and Army came out of the

Palace yard and stood at the left of the dais. Then the Ambassadors of all the United Nations came out and stood at the left. There were Mr. Winant, notable for a soft hat, his Lincolnian attitude, and the easy way he carries his height, and General de Gaulle, and Mr. Maisky, of Russia.

Then at exactly the time set on our schedules, which was five minutes to three, the Royal party appeared, the King first, then the Queen, and then the other Heads of States who were to be on the dais. Including the two Princesses, who looked very young and very slight in powder blue coats and hats, apparently made just alike. The Queen wore gray, with her usual off-the-face hat.

But I forgot. After the diplomats had come, and along with the Royal party, Mr. Churchill turned up too. He did not sit on the dais nor did he stand with the other diplomats, and whether it was casual or design I do not know. He stood alone by the gates, and looked very much like the Personage he is, as if after all he was completely sorted out and had a single, rather lone job.

The King has great dignity. I watched his constant salutes, the perfection of them and the attention he gave to each passing unit. He and the Queen

looked like the fine people they are, both as rulers and as human beings.

The procession itself was very simple, but very inclusive. All units of the war effort were included, only a few of each, for only approximately 2,450 people marched, and that's not such a lot, when you recall parades in Rio. But they didn't leave any war service out. The Civil Defense people were all represented—both the Heavy Rescue and the Light Rescue squads, the police, the ambulance men and women, and the wardens. They made up the first column, and after them the Irish Guards Band led the procession of war workers, railway men in uniform, building trade workers, dockers, bakers with white caps, miners, postmen, and many other divisions. The women followed—telephone girls, canteen cooks, tank workers, ordnance workers, fisher girls in striped skirts—as far as I could see, every group of workers had a representative there. To me it was the most interesting part of the whole procession, though I had my eye out for the WAAFS and the ATS and the WRNS as they came along. The girls in the ATS section marched better than the others. As a matter of fact, except for the regular soldiers who had been

given years of drill, there wasn't a great deal of emphasis on the marching. They all walked along easily, and though I may have read this into the whole thing, there seemed a voluntary look about the entire line of march, as if they were there because they wanted to be and not because the Gestapo would get them if they didn't.

I have not mentioned the onlookers. But there were thousands of them below in the streets that pour into the big plaza before the Palace, and as soldiers on leave were scattered all through the crowd, it was a very handsome mob held back of the ropes. When the King and Queen went back into the Palace and Mr. Churchill followed, as did all the diplomats, there was a brief pause, and then the police released the ropes that held the public back. It had been a pleasant, interested crowd but not a madly enthusiastic one until then. But at that signal the crowd moved forward on the run, and it was something to watch them from where we were, as thousands and thousands of people poured up to the Palace gates, to see what was left to be seen—not much but the automobiles coming out of the yard, and each automobile got

a great cheer, especially Mr. Churchill's. I had never heard Britishers cheer like that.

Everyone looked happy—the people were having a good time on United Nations Day—and the celebration seemed in perfect taste, a simple display of how every branch of the British war effort is dedicated to the whole cause of the United Nations.

I wish your grandmother, who so loves parades, could have seen this one. It really was up her street.

I neglected to mention that Mr. Churchill carried his gas mask slung from his shoulder. No one else did, as far as I saw. There are constant admonitions to carry your gas mask all the time, and some day a whole lot of people may be sorry that they don't. But I notice that I don't think of carrying my own.

Along that line we have had a very wrong impression in the United States about the number of people who spent their time in shelters during the Battle of London. It is true that some people did, especially bombed-out people from the East End. As Mr. Gorham said yesterday, it was always easy to get a picture of a crowd in a shelter. But most people, after first getting used to the noise

and shock, simply went on with the day's work. If there was a special job for them to do in an air raid, they were quickly on it. If their job was before them, they usually kept on with what they were doing, unless of course things got too hot. This has been spoken of so often to me and by so many people that I have no doubt at all of its truth.

There are plenty of shelters, some open by day, some open by night, some open all the time. I have seen many signs saying "Rest Centers"—places for those who have been bombed out to get their breath, to sleep if necessary, to make a fresh plan. And near the parks and in other places are signs saying "To the Trenches," where the public could have gone to take up defense stations. I hope our coastal areas and target zones hurry up with some of the same protections, for the construction of all this didn't happen overnight. But London did not spend its time, during the ninety-one days of bombing, underground, because there was too much to do on top.

This has been a quiet day, in spite of the procession, probably because I've done so little talking. I went to church this morning, to the same church

where I prayed that the First World War would end, and I think that many of the other people around me were repeating their prayers too. There was no sermon. Perhaps everything Christian that can be said in time of war has been said. The racks of votive lights were full of burning candles, and I suppose each flame represents a hope for a soldier or sailor.

Women in black were kneeling at the side altars when I left the church, still and taut with prayer, like the women I saw in the Madeleine in Paris on the day I left there in 1939 after the mobilization. That was a strange sight. It was a warm autumn day and the doors of the church were open, so from the street and across the square the picture was strangely composed of men on the walks reading newspapers, as if their lives depended on the news—as was true—and of the sculptured words above the church doors, Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, and beyond, the women in silent, rigid prayer at their *prie-dieu's*. And the leaves were drifting down from the trees along the avenue.

After the service I walked for a long while, meeting people who looked as if they had been to church and more who looked as if that wasn't their

idea of Sunday. Then I took a bus to the East End to have another look at that district, which is like a worn face with the teeth knocked out and the nose bashed in. But in spite of the disfigurement and ruin there was a smile on the old face today. Children were playing about, no one was frightened, and I even heard a street organ.

Later this afternoon, after the procession, I went into a few more churches and stopped long enough to read the list of services. People still go to church, but I had the feeling that Sunday is more a day of pause for most of them than a day of deep devotion.

The telephone rang as I came in, and I didn't answer it. Whatever it is, it can't be business on Sunday, and I am too tired to be social.

The newspapers are obviously getting the public ready for bad news from Tobruk. There was a long analysis in the *Times* of the Japanese situation after six months of war, warning against undue optimism or perhaps against anticipation of too rapid victory. But right now the man in the street is saying that the war in Europe may be finished this year, even though the war against Japan may take another year or so.

It isn't going to come that easily, not at least without some violent convulsions that will be terrible to watch and experience. And the Government definitely doesn't want the English people to become overhopeful and then go down in the dumps when their hopes aren't and can't be realized.

That's all for now. I've explored my mind as well as as much of London as I could cover, and think the best thing I can do is to get to bed and be ready for tomorrow and a hard week which will use both my eyes and wits to capacity.

Love,

Mother.

June 15

Dear Mary,

I am writing you with the violence and rapidity of a machine gun, but as I look at the calendar ahead and see the days fill up, I am afraid to let an evening go by without telling you what has gone on. This is after all my only record, and facts have a way of slipping in and out of the foreground. You know the way it always is. When, as a stranger

or newcomer, you get to any place, New York or Buenos Aires or London, you may sit on your hands for the first few days and then by the tenth day you must tell any number of people you'd like to see that you haven't any free time left during your stay. Luckily I had anticipated that and did my personal inspecting and gawking on the two free Sundays, or I never could manage it now.

Today I wanted you here more than any day yet, for I was seeing things that you would have understood and appreciated. You would have known more than I possibly could about the technical side of the work I saw. I went to a training center, run by the Ministry of Labour, established for men during the depression and now used to teach girls and women as well as men who are going to make precision tools, work in sheet metal, and do welding and other things. The first aspect interested me enormously, because of that prevalent superstition among people in the U.S.A. that though women are useful in precision assembly, they are not successful in the making of precision instruments. In fact, not long ago I wrote a little philippic on the subject of how necessary it will be in the future to teach girls more mathematics.

But what I saw today was astonishing. The girls in this particular training center had in no case been there for more than twelve weeks. Many less than six. Some of them had been clerks and stenographers, some engaged in domestic service for others, and some had worked only in the home kitchen. There were former beauticians and salesgirls. Their backgrounds fanned out in dozens of directions. Yet, because of the war, they were all learning now how to handle machines, work with delicate instruments, conduct themselves in machine shops, and even, in a few cases, how to set up their own machines, which is, as you know better than most, a highly skilled piece of work.

According to the men in charge, the training is really successful. The subjects taught are draftsmanship, fitting, machine operating, electrical installation, inspecting, and sheet-metal working. The courses are open to all women, but men are eligible only if they have been placed in a deferred class by the Army Medical Board.

As I've already written you, British women between the ages of 20 and 45 have to satisfy the Government that they are not idling but are being useful. They are required to register when their

age groups are called up, regardless of private income of course. Then the sorting-out process begins. If a girl is already a WAAF, a WRN, or a member of the ATS or VADS or some equally useful service, she stays where she is. If she has small children—and is taking care of them herself—she is not required to do anything more, although of course she may volunteer for other part- or full-time work, as many do. If she is pregnant, naturally she doesn't have to go to work.

I've studied the Call-up, and it is obvious that every effort has been made to be reasonable and human and yet not to allow girls or women to waste time and energy when their country is short of man power. Every girl or woman who really has not important duties at home is required to turn to and help win this war. Women who marry after joining one of the services are not free to leave without permission (pregnancy would settle that of course), but there is a gentle bit in the official statement which states that while widows without children are in the same position as single women, the Ministry of Labour will pay "special regard to the position of women recently widowed." That recognition of grief and shock makes the Call-up human.

You can't imagine how strange this seems to me, who has been saying for years that the woman of leisure was due to disappear before long, to find all of a sudden that she has vanished in England, that she's an outlaw. Oh, there are some odds and ends of idle women left. You see some crones around Claridge's. There are a few long-lashed beauties who don't look as if they were exerting themselves very much except to please the men. But not many women who live in England are out of the war effort. Both public opinion and the law are against that.

The effect of this, when it becomes realized, on our own country—and the effect on the habits of women in time of peace—is bound to be tremendous.

The training centers are obviously still raw and new for the work they must do, still clumsily organized, and housed as may be, and their results still surprise themselves, from their proud comments. But they surprised me much more. The girls who were in training had come in some cases voluntarily. In other instances, because they had no real preference or couldn't get into the service they preferred, the Government had sent them

here. Most of them were run-of-the-mill girls, picked almost at random from a raw labor supply.

I have always thought you were very exceptional to do the kind of work you do, but perhaps you are exceptional only in going ahead and doing it. From the look of what I saw today, plenty of girls have mechanical skill who don't know that they have it until some condition like the present comes along and proves it to them.

"Before I came into this," one of them said to me, "I was a cook. I'm forgetting how to cook. The other night I tried to get a meal and burned the meat and I let the coffee boil over."

~~"Do you like it?"~~

"Yes—for now," she said.

That was the impression I got from most of the girls I talked to. They don't want to keep on with this kind of work forever. This is war, and since it is war it's up to them to do this work. But they don't want to keep at it indefinitely. One girl told me she was married and had been called up. Her husband was in the Army, and they had no children, and she obviously didn't like this kind of work much though she was not kicking. She only wanted the war to end.

There were several things that impressed me. The first was the great concentration on the job in all the shops we entered. There was no loitering, and yet there was no very obvious inspection. It was like a superschool, under good discipline, filled with students who could be trusted not to waste time.

The shops are noisy and badly aired, and working in them must be very hard until a woman's nerves and her ears get adjusted to clatter and motion. But I heard no complaints either in words or in overtones. I did notice that the girls seemed happiest who were most skilled, either working at their own machines or in the classes which so amazingly were teaching higher mathematics to girls who had never had more than rudimentary educations.

And they've only got twelve weeks to learn it.

There were plenty of men working and learning there too. Most of the men were over military age or in some way unfitted for military service. The training center itself was established after the last war and operated rather unsuccessfully through the depression, when it was so difficult to find jobs for the trained graduates. They had the training but nothing to do with it.

When the need for women came in this war, the

girls were sent here. The head of the school said that they had a placement division and sent the girls to various war industries after they completed their training. If they show no great aptitude they stay here only eight weeks, and do unskilled work subsequently. But if they are really able, they are kept for a second eight weeks, and fitted with more skilled jobs. There are twenty-four training centers of the sort in the country, and the turnover of this one is 1,500 every four months, so you can see why British production has been so stepped up. But the Ministry of Labour announces today that it needs many more women and will soon call up the 40-50-year-old group.

There was, as you might expect, a certain distrust of women mechanics when all this started. The head of the center told me that the Royal Ordnance Division of the Navy had no use for them at first. Then it had little choice. There weren't men to do the work. So grudgingly they took some girls, who worked out so very well that the Navy is giving women workers high praises.

There has been Trade Union resistance too, as already has begun to show up in the United States, as the threat comes that great numbers of women

will go into industry. It's natural that the resistance should exist and that Trade Unions should fear that women should replace men in the less highly skilled jobs and thus tempt the employer to maintain women in those jobs. The fact that women are paid less than men for the same kind of work aggravates this situation, and Trade Union leaders agree on the principles of equal pay for equal work.

Women are paid 38 shillings a week while in training, if they are over 21. Women under 21 get less. Men over 21 get £3 6*d*. a week, which shows the rating of sex today. When they get out, the women's jobs are largely piecework and the pay averages 1*s*.1*d*. an hour. That's only about 24 cents an hour at the present rate of exchange, but in most ways money goes farther over here in spite of food costs, and with rationing there isn't a great deal to spend money on and very little competition in dress. Also, there is an extra war bonus paid in some places, but I can tell you more about that later.

Women, of course, surprised and flattered at earning at all in many cases, are satisfied with their wage levels at first. But I have heard already what I expected to hear, that the lack of drive in training

women comes from the very roots of Union-Employer relationship.

I asked how women were suited for the work as far as patience and endurance went, and the head of the center said that in his opinion women could stand a monotonous job better than men. I wish your often anti-feminist brother could have heard the comments and seen the girls at work at their machines.

They work in three shifts, getting used to night as well as day work, and every girl has to serve her time on each shift. Here too the food is reasonably good in the canteen, and a girl can get a great big meal, with everything on the menu, for 11*d.*

There were some amusing things, very feminine touches. A kind of head covering is required to keep the girls' hair out of danger. The training center provides and requires a kind of bandanna, which the majority of the girls put on their heads like a doily and then loosen their curls under it, for all the world as if they were wearing small and fashionable hats. The supervisor who was taking us around objected very much to the bandannas and the way they were worn, but without any effect on the girls, as far as I could see.

I asked the man in charge of the sheet-metal department if he found the girls worked well.

"They do," he said, "if they're good mixers and if they know how to mix with the men. If they're standoffish, we can't use them."

That I have lived to see the day when equality of the sexes in a machine shop is sought after by the foreman is something!

There is much more that I fail to set down, for in my experience this visit was unique and the fulfillment of a private ambition. I have been so eager to know, and it has been so impossible to discover, except by the slow method of individual trial and success or error, what the capacities of women are in the industrial field. Apparently they can do this work. Equally obvious it will not hold most of them bound when they can go back to making homes. The ones who must work will at least know how to work, and all over the world women are bursting out of the conventional occupations that have held them channeled so long. They are learning to share work with men, to discuss jobs and techniques. It must be all to the good. One of the most heartening things I have seen here is the seriousness with which the Ministry of Labour takes

the woman supply of labour. It can not be dispensed with in wartime at least.

I came back to the hotel just in time for a late luncheon with Constance Spry and her husband. She is the florist of New York as well as London, and you've seen her Park Avenue shop as well as some of the beautiful loot I've been sent from there when I'm in New York. We had a good talk, mostly about austerities as they hit the well-to-do classes, who now have no servants. But since I'm going down to spend tomorrow night at her house in the country, I shall tell you more about them after that.

One thing I did between appointments today was to take my passport to the Ministry of Information, to apply for an exit permit, which must be done two weeks before one plans to leave the country. You may know you are all right and that your motives in exiting from England are of the highest, but after filling out a questionnaire or two you begin to suspect yourself! Anyway, my formalities are mostly finished, and all I can do now is to forget about it and hope that the routine sooner or later churns me out an air passage home.

I decided too that there was time to stop in at the Embassy. So I did and was handed around for a while. I am impressed again with the cordiality and

friendliness of diplomatic people, and when you think it's part of their job you wonder that it can seem so fresh and personal.

Mr. Winant is enormously popular over here. There are bits in the newspapers booming him for President of the United States—not a tactful place for his English friends to start a Presidential boom, I must say—but it does show what they think of him. The Embassy itself, while it preserves all formalities, has a good feel about it—not too stuffed-shirt but as if the soldier boys from home, as well as the big shots, could come in and get their questions answered.

In the brief intervals between calls and inspections, I am reading. I have Virginia Woolf's new book, *Death of a Moth.* Strange that her essay, "Thoughts on Peace During an Air Raid," printed in some small Midwest magazine at least two years ago, has just been brought out over here. Odd and sad that she is dead when women are at last beginning to swing into the stride she hoped for. And, believe it or not, I am rereading *Passage to India,* and getting more out of it than ever before. The lights are bad to read by. Mazdas are all very small, and it is a decent austerity to save electricity.

Another event of the day was an hour with John

Strachey, to whom Carol had given me one of her open-sesame letters.

I'd given a dinner for John Strachey in Duluth long ago, when he was lecturing in the U.S.A. Now he is quite different in mood. When he wrote *Digging for Mrs. Miller*, which is certainly the war classic about air raid warden work, he was an air warden. Now for some time he has been a Flight Lieutenant in the R.A.F.

His wife and children are in the United States, and he let them go over when there was actual fear of invasion here. He said he didn't want his children to grow up Nazis. But, like most other thoughtful people here, when I said we talked at home of possible evacuations of our coastal areas if things got threatening, he said that there was a good deal to be said against evacuations. That seems to have been one of the less successful war experiments. Storm Jameson said much the same thing the other night.

John Strachey said that he had never liked London so well as in its wartime mood of kindness and helpfulness—the words are mine but the sense his. Again the repetition comes. As the days go on, the people I meet all accent the same things which have

so deeply impressed England—the courage of their own people in adversity, the sense of a shared peril which cut through all income groups, the necessity for making what they jointly have go a long way.

England has always been regarded as set in its ways and as stubborn about every tradition great and small. But today it seems perfectly fearless of change or experiment. The bumpers of the cars are painted with luminous paint, the shoppers carry their packages in paper bags also painted to glow. There are long, patient queues waiting everywhere for cinemas, for buses, before a counter where cigarette lighters are repaired, in the shops where one can get lunch. People are doing things they have never done before, and without looking at themselves in astonishment.

Economic structure alters. The coal mines are not to be taken over by the Government immediately, as Jennie Lee hoped, but the fee owners will have their interests bought up by the Government. From now on there will be no further private interest in the coal mines. The news caused not much of a ripple.

The British all faced an ultimate within the last two years. They faced invasion with loss of freedom

or annihilation. Everything else seems easy now that victory again is ahead, even if it is still not won. And nothing in life seems strange after a close look at death.

Of course, there are scandals exposed in the papers, such as I mentioned about Black Markets. There are people here who are trying to gyp, just as there were some such cheap rascals and rascalettes at home when the sugar ration and the gasoline ration went into effect. But numerically they are so unimportant. Here as at home.

That's all for tonight. I can't write tomorrow because I'll be out of town. But I've been windy enough for a day or two.

Love,

Mother.

June 17

Dear Mary,

Last night I slept for the first time lulled to sleep by bombers overhead, friendly ones from what I heard this morning, though I didn't know it at the time. It wasn't in London. I had gone down into

the country for the night. There was a coal fire in the grate, and a big red pouffe on my bed, and a very gentle country breeze sifting in even through the blackout curtains, and I felt that it wasn't such a bad place to die, even if the bombers happened to be enemy ones and took a fancy to drop a few eggs and made a direct hit on the house where I was staying. It was a lovely room too, a very old room dating back to the seventeenth century. The doors of the cupboards and wardrobes were all whitewashed, and yet none of the furniture was peasant, but rather museum pieces of several periods —a very ornate mirror, several big *bergères,* two old French tables on either side of the bed. It would have been a pity to bomb it.

And it was a strange end to that particular day.

I had gone in the morning to see Harold Laski, by appointment. He was in town and said he would see me at eleven o'clock. He talked in his study, surrounded by the kind of books that you rarely see outside of collectors' libraries. Every volume looked chosen, and they were all bound as books used to be bound—for keeps—and their colors had softened to the color of classic reading, which is something quite different from the color of a modern

book jacket. But we didn't talk books, except for a moment when Mr. Laski spoke with great admiration of Dr. Eloise Ellery, of Vassar, and took down a book she had written, from his shelves.

Laski is, as one person said to me the other day, the brains of the Left. I had gone there to learn what little I could in an hour about how the Left looked at the future of England now, and to see if Mr. Laski felt, after going through the blitzes with his countrymen, that England was a sounder country, in which ways had been opened up for further social improvement.

He does think so. I have as yet met no English person—man or woman—who is not truly proud of his country today and who would not echo Laski's quiet remark, "We're a good people." There seems nothing left of the feeling that used to exist here even in 1915, which would allow the British to sing humorlessly, "God Who made us mighty, Make us mightier yet!" As a nation, the British people is humbler in the best sense. They have a sincere admiration for the nation's courage, yet each man seems to forget that it is partly of his own making. They are not sentimental. They will tell you of a pose or a greed or a disappointment, but on the

whole they have become dearer to one another. They have behaved like brave and free people and are less eager to advertise that than to think of it with quiet gratitude.

There is practically none of the "Oh, what I personally suffered!" mood. At least I haven't seen it.

But beyond all that, and because it is true, Mr. Laski feels that England must now lead the way in establishing a living and articulate democracy. This involves reshaping of education, raising the standard of living of course, sloughing off the White Man's Burden of the past, and assuming the White Man's Responsibility of the future. This, he assumes, is England's job—to set the example of a working democracy so that others may pattern themselves on it. He thinks it is vital not to allow the lessons of the war to be forgotten, but to take graduate courses in the same subjects of sterner and more generous living. That is my simple metaphor, not his. He said it better.

I told him something of what I was trying to explore in regard to girls and women in industry, and he told me that I must see Dorothy Elliott, of the Transport Workers Union, which is just what

I want to do if it's possible to make an appointment with her.

Laski told me of a long conversation he had had the night before with an army officer who had telephoned asking to see him. There was no previous connection between them, but the officer wanted so much to come that Mr. Laski said to come for an hour. They talked for hours, he said, and as far as I could make out from his condensation of the substance, it was on the necessity for definition of war aims, and the need for clear, vigorous thought in the Army and out of it. He also read me a letter from a friend of his in one of the colonies, which was very critical of the Civil Service. Laski himself feels that the British civil servant is a deterrent to national progress. The limitation of the civil servant's point of view, his clinging to security and formalism and red tape, all affect the national point of view in regard to the Empire and give it a bad name in the colonies.

They tell a story over here about two soldiers —I did not hear it from Mr. Laski—who were told by their captain to come and ask him anything they liked if they were puzzled. So one day they got to arguing about whether prosti-

tutes could have children and finally one of them said, "Let's go ask the Captain." He said, "Well, boys, what's on your mind?" One of them said, "To settle an argument, would you tell us if prostitutes can have children?" And he said, "Why surely—where do you think we get our civil servants?"

I doubt if that story gets by the censor.

There was something else that Mr. Laski said that seemed most important. He believes that at the end of the war we are due for a great renaissance, greater than that of the Middle Ages. And in him again, as in the simpler minds, was this great hope and also great trust in the future.

But he doesn't intend to sit around and wait for Utopia. He feels, and strongly, that nationalization of coal is immediately necessary to increase the output by making the miners feel that they are working for their country and not for private owners. And though the buying up of fee owners' interests may be a step in the right direction, Laski is still completely unsatisfied and impatient that men should be working in the mines for operating companies and be responsible to them.

There is no desire anywhere to obstruct the war effort politically, even when one feels that the right

solution has not been reached. First of all the war must be pursued and won, and then in proper order other things come up.

Many people are thinking of the postwar adjustments of course. No one more profoundly, or with a better background of history and economics, than Harold Laski. It is wonderful and unusual to see the thought of the country proceed as ably as the other war efforts.

I scurried from his house to meet Miss Haslett at the Forum Club, which is the largest woman's club in London. I can only wish once more that the woman's clubs in most of our cities were constructed and located to meet the conveniences of the women who shop and happen to be in the city for a day, or in a certain section of town. Most of the woman's clubs I know in the U.S.A. are not so accessible nor so freely used as meeting places as the London clubs. Even in New York. And there is no good reason why not.

The factory which we were to visit was one to which I was admitted not only by invitation of one of the directors. In addition, the Ministry of Information had provided me with a special pass, accompanied by the information that anything I wrote

about the factory must be shown to the authorities before publication. This was because it is an M.A.P. factory, which means Ministry of Air Production, and is therefore under Government control, though the management is to some extent the same as it was in the days before the factory was converted from a peacetime to a wartime industry.

We had lunch, and they gave me something of the picture. The employment in the grouped factories under this particular management is a fivefold increased production of wartime over peacetime. Before the war, about 20 per cent of the employees were women. At present 70 per cent are women and girls.

We had arrived on a day of celebration, they told me. It was a big day, for in one rather small unit of the factory, in which all workers were women except for a few men who did the sweeping and the heavy lifting, the complete set of wiring for a great bomber was laid out, ready for transport and on display in one long room, so that the workers could see the assembly and completion of their endless, monotonous tasks.

You know what the wiring amounted to in your own apparatus, the one you designed to measure

the effect of certain metals on light rays. So you can appreciate how unbelievably intricate the wiring of a great battleplane is. The skill and brains in making all the parts and assembling the switchboxes, the many fuses in each one so that it could be assembled in a comparatively few hours, is what struck me first. Then the speed, the concentration, the labor-saving devices, the careful inspection of every part, not only by the company's own inspectors but by a further check from the Ministry of Air itself, impress you one by one.

But they have, it seemed to me, always kept the main object of their work in sight. An airplane is to be operating in battle, with the minimum of time for repairs and with the necessity of meeting every emergency—possibly alone. So what? Everything must be labeled beyond a possibility of error, so if a fuse blows, the airman will know what has to be replaced and can do it with no delay.

If he wants oxygen, he must have a device that will supply it to him whether or not he is at the moment able to put his mind on getting the oxygen, as we could when we flew the Cordillera Pass between Santiago and Mendoza.

There must be no flaw that can possibly be

avoided. This is not a car on the road—"and if anything goes wrong, mister, after you've tried the car out, bring it in and we'll make good." None of that, because there is no time for that when you are flying a battleplane.

As we went around the factory, there was the constant evidence that all such things had been borne in mind, as well as the need for speed, for planes, and for more planes.

The girls are on piecework, and in many sections it is joint piecework, when some part is being assembled and each girl has her place on the line. They do not talk. Each of them is intent on her task, and there is no gossiping whatsoever. But there is music nearly all the time in this factory, and every now and then there is a burst of whistling as a tune catches hold of a group's fancy.

The girls do not look up as you pass. They have been inspected often by strangers, and they do not want to lose time and money. The King and Queen have watched them work, and there isn't much glamour that is important after they have had that. The workers are both young and middle-aged. Many of them are extremely pretty, and you see, as you do everywhere in the world, shining, beautifully

brushed hair, except where the girls are doing jobs which make it pretty imperative to cover their heads with caps.

They asked me—the managers—if I would say a few words over the loudspeaker to the girls, and I have rarely had worse stage fright. But it was only for a couple of minutes. I told them the fact, that I wanted to bring back news of them to the United States.

We went from shop to shop. Some of the girls were doing small, precise jobs, but others were handling machines which, said one of the directors to me, "we wouldn't dream of letting a woman touch in peacetime." I asked if the women were competent, that is, if they harmed the machines, and the answer was prompt and negative.

Unless you see it for yourself, it is hard to make it clear. The concentration of the workers at the plant was terrific, so it seemed to me, but it was not the same kind of drudgery that you see in a factory in peacetime. There were two currents, one of willingness, one of excitement, which seemed to take the misery out of the undoubted fatigue which the workers must feel.

I talked to a good many of them. They made no

pretense of being at work on a job which they would like to keep for the rest of their lives. A number had worked in their own homes, nowhere else before this. Slightly more than 50 per cent were married. They had been secretaries, librarians, shop girls.

One girl working on welding seemed fascinated by her job. One married woman said that a woman on the night shift took care of her children while she worked in the day, and then she took care of the children of the night shift worker.

But nobody talked long. And I didn't prolong conversations because it was piecework.

The most important women in England today are not the few whose names I may happen to mention. Those are well-known and useful women. But the important ones are the many who are proving that women are stronger than they were believed to be, hard of muscle and mechanically apt, diligent and patient to the amazement of those men who work with them, whether it's in the Services or the factories. Woman history is actually being made. The organization of homes is being modernized. I don't believe that the community nursery in industrial districts, or the community restaurants for large-

scale, inexpensive feeding, will ever be given up. They will be improved and kept.

The English woman is more than a cut ahead of us in the United States at the present moment in personal independence, self-reliance and realism. And I hope we can catch up.

I came back to the hotel feeling pretty damned incompetent. I can't even run a typewriter accurately. But I thought a good deal about you and am glad that you are completely *au courant* with your own times. Look after your health, and there is no limit to your usefulness in the future.

Health is considered very important in these factories. The girls work too long in some cases and too hard. The Ministry of Labour considers forty-eight hours the optimum work week for women. But in a war it doesn't always come out as neatly as that when things are made not for sale but for necessity and self-preservation.

I must add that the canteen in this particular factory was better than Grade A. The food was plentiful and good and cheap.

I tasted one pudding made out of a flour flavored with banana and, much as I dislike all English puddings, even I had to admit that it was good.

These canteens help a lot to keep up efficiency, for everybody is well fed all the time, and the girls look it. They may be grimy or dark under the eyes, but the contours of their faces are good—none of the emaciation you used to show in the laboratory, may I add in passing.

The owners of this factory are brothers—one an engineer and the other Mr. Eric Coleton, the person who in peacetime would have handled promotions and sales. He has invented the slogan IT ALL DEPENDS ON ME, and to a great extent the phrase has been picked up in other factories, editorially and so forth. It has been abbreviated to IADOM, and he feels that if the philosophy, as well as the words, sinks in, the war effort could be increased. It's a good slogan. I shall take it home and see what I can do with it.

About half-past five I came back to the hotel and found my host for the night waiting for me, so without taking off the hat I'd worn all day I went down to Kent for the night, and, Lord, it was good to get to the country for a few hours, to hear silence.

Constance Spry is a career woman who's made a great success. She is a marvelous cook, a thoughtful human being—and in addition to all that she is a

warm, hospitable person who likes to have you come to her house. I have often walked by her florist's shop on Park Avenue, with its novel and lovely windows, and never went by without a look to see if I'd missed anything new in decoration. It was her shop that invented the idea of sending a sick friend in the hospital, as she was convalescing, a little fresh bouquet to wear every day on the night-dress or bedjacket, instead of a mess of roses for the nurses to worry about. Her shop first sponsored those white wax cyclamens which are the only artificial flowers I ever really liked. And if I had any mental picture of her at all, it was of a lady of Dresden china appearance, rather old and very stylish.

Constance Spry isn't old. She's simple and efficient and pretty. I had lunched with her and her husband, but seeing her in her own house was entirely different. And I was especially interested, for I wanted to see what country life in England was like in those houses where there used to be half a dozen servants at least.

There aren't any servants in this particular house now, though Mrs. Spry manages to get a little day help. It's quite a large small estate, with a couple of enchanting old oast houses, and the main house is

brick and aged—the sort of house that sets the key-note for the English countryside. It was full of old furniture, much of it French, and the drawing room had great white chairs and a fireplace big enough literally to roast an ox, with great logs piled beside it and huge cushions to sit on. There were marble figures from Italy in the embrasures on either side.

But it was the dining room, and dinner itself, that most fascinated me, because they reflected the war and the changes it makes. The table, set for dinner, was beautiful. There were four cornucopia vases used as decoration on the most delicate of full-size white organdy tablecloths. I am not forgetting that I came to England to observe the war effort, as I write this. I am remembering it. This too was war effort. For the vases were full of exquisite bouquets of garden flowers—passion flowers and roses—grown and picked by the hostess. The dinner, such as I shall certainly not taste again in England, was cooked and served entirely by the hostess and nearly everything on the table came out of her garden, except the chicken, which came out of the hen house.

Mrs. Spry still runs her London florist's shop,

the shop which supplies flowers to royalty (she herself went to France at the request of the Duke of Windsor to do the decorations for his wedding). She may do the decorations for a party at which Mrs. Tree is entertaining important diplomats, and next week end she will do—for nothing—the decorations for the wedding of a country girl who lives nearby. She keeps her London shop going so far with flowers grown in the country and largely gardened by herself. It is probably due to close before long. And she cooks her meals for her husband and herself and two women who live with her, all without forgetting how lovely it is to see a beautifully laid table and how delicious food can be.

We had soup, vichysoisse, which you remember is potatoes and leeks at base, and then cold chicken, many fresh vegetables, an asparagus salad with a synthetic dressing which took no oil, and then a cake made with chestnuts. I have never had a better meal in all my life. There was a bottle of wine if you liked, but what we really drank from choice was a mint drink which Mrs. Spry made from her own mint.

Of course, cooking won't win the war. But such skill will solve a lot of the hard living that is going

on now, which we are all sure to have to go through after the war, and which, wars or not, most of us endure at times in our lives. I had a feeling that in an open field, with a few vegetables to be gathered, and a kettle and an open fire, Constance Spry could concoct a meal for a whole lot of hungry people. There should be so many more women like her.

She was hesitant to take me through the gardens. I think that it must hurt to show untended borders. And she greatly wants me to come back in ten days when the roses will be at their best, and I shall if possible. Many of her roses, the ones she likes best, are the really old ones, the ones forgotten by most florists, "period roses" truly, and she has an enormous variety. They seem to have more fragrance than the roses we buy in florists', or perhaps it's a more mingled fragrance. They are spicy and their colors pastel and their shapes less formal than the tight buds or blowsy blossoms we usually buy.

And over the rose garden hummed planes, which is why the borders go unweeded and the lawn goes uncut. Men have gone to war and can't work in gardens. Her greenhouses are full of tomatoes, not orchids.

She explained how different it looked when life

was normal. She said, "There's no chance to keep it trimmed and to take care of the flowers properly." And then she turned to me and added, "And I can't think of anything that matters less!"

That's the sort of statement that makes you realize that there are many people who not only see it through over here but also are thinking it through.

I have mentioned, I think, that it is against the law for a British person to write to the United States and ask for anything. Carol told me to keep my ears open for suggestions for things we might send with no request. Constance Spry happened to mention that there were certain vegetable seeds that are unobtainable over here, and I can't imagine a better way of helping the war effort than to get a few packets to her.

We got to talking about education later in the evening, and what a good thing it would be if there had been far more of it made available before the war started, so that everyone would know more of the causes of what is happening now.

And so, as I began to tell you in this long letter, I slept before a fire, my first bedroom fire in England. I was going to draw back my curtains after the lights were out, and then I heard the bombers

go over and was afraid that the little yellow-red flames in the fire might show. So I left the curtains closed and fell asleep wondering why some places were hit and not others, but not worrying in the least about a bomb falling on my bed. It's nice to know that one can adjust.

Love,

Mother.

June 17

Dear Mary,

I think that while some facts are fresh in my mind I shall write you something about the present outlook on education over here. It's partly for the record that I want to keep for myself of the present British mood, and if it comes to hand on a day when you are too busy to notice it, just put it under your blotter until you feel like giving it a reading. You will be interested in part of it I'm sure, because some changes they are asking for here have been incorporated in our educational system for a long while, and in other respects they are crying out for the same changes we want too.

Of course, the shake-up and awareness of educational problems in Britain just now were brought on to a large degree by the fact that bombs fell on England and Scotland. The evacuations meant that attendance at school wasn't orderly or even continuous. There are many people who feel that the next generation can never catch up on the education that has been interrupted or missed altogether during these years.

Some children, who went into good and thoughtful homes or else into the new camp schools, have had training which was far better than would have come their way normally. Many children who went into the country have gained a lot from contact with country life. But the picture has been spotty, to say the least.

During the first few months of the war, education didn't seem important enough to bother about in comparison with other problems; and then for a while there was a voluntary system of attendance. Some children went to school. Others didn't, and nobody was in a position to do much checking up, because of evacuations and because safety was more important than anything else. Fears must have run high too and sleep been uncertain. For many months

there were children in London who didn't go to school at all. Delinquency jumped up sharply. Then the shortage of teachers began to appear—for which we had better look out in the United States! A system of double sessions was established, with each group of children going to school for half a day and teachers doing the best they could to handle one group in the morning and another group in the afternoon, often in blitzed areas where the schools had been hit and while they were listening for sirens subconsciously no doubt all day long.

Someone said yesterday in Parliament that at one school which he had visited he found boys of thirteen, quite normal children, who could not read. They have been in and out of school and evacuated five, six, or perhaps even ten times.

There seems to have been a good deal of free play about the whole thing for a while, and some children even went to the country and back for the change in weather, which has its comical aspect. But now, with the public mind turning more and more to the problems of orderly reconstruction, there is a fear that these children may grow up to constitute a national problem of ignorance and lack of discipline.

They wrangled a good deal about this in Parliament yesterday, but as far as I can make out there has been a credit side to education in wartime. Of course, the President of the Board of Education made a good case for what had been accomplished. He said that the children who received no instruction were only 0.22 per cent of 4,750,000, which would mean about 10,000 children, if my arithmetic is correct. That looks worse in children than in percentages. But he did admit that attendance was not satisfactory, for, out of 100 children on the registers, only 84 were actually in regular attendance.

The physical care of the children in school is certainly far better than it ever has been. Over three million are now getting milk in school, and about seven hundred thousand get a midday meal in school. The claim is also made by the Board of Education that, in spite of a shortage of doctors and dentists, the medical and dental service given to children has doubled in the last year.

And here's a story. The school children seem to have been marvelous under fire. One report from a bombed city showed that the attendance on the morning after the raid was only 3 per cent below

normal. Four school girls under fifteen took over the running of a rest center for four days, washing clothes, cooking, cheering up homeless men and women. British heroines come young.

There also has been work done in various directions to make the children conscious of the war effort and contributors to it. They've been taught to save and salvage. In small sums of money alone they saved 23,500,000 pounds from the onset of the war up to last March.

The school authorities admit the seriousness of the child migrations, but they seem to feel that the lag in education can be made up without much trouble, given enough money and equipment to work with. To some extent the omission of formal education is compensated for by what the children learn outside of the curriculum, the knowledge which filters into the city child's mind about the country, for instance. They say there aren't many children who still think windmills are for the purpose of keeping cows cool.

But the people in charge of the schools do seem concerned—and certainly most other people do—about the fact that the great mass of children end their education at the age of fourteen. And it cer-

tainly stands to reason that if they have been handed about and evacuated during the last few years and then stop school at fourteen, their stock of learning must be very small.

The big problem educationally seems to be, if you sift the personal bitternesses and lack of faith in special administrators out of the argument, what is to be done with the children who are of high school age.

There is what they call a Youth Service over here, which works with the educational authorities. I was interested because its temper and its auspices are so utterly different from what we associate mentally with youth movements in the United States. The sponsoring committee here is made up of men and women associated with Boy Scouts, boys' clubs, the churches, the armed services, the juvenile courts, and "persons connected with the employment of young people." This Youth Service is run for young people, not by them, and its object seems to be to organize educational training for boys and girls during the formative years after fourteen.

Now the educational argument arises over the direction of this training. There seems to be general agreement that they need more good modern Senior

Schools, the equivalent of our high schools, with plenty of gymnasium space and with good manual training and domestic science rooms. But the discussion goes much farther. Is this the time and the chance to set up the whole educational system on a more democratic basis, to establish vocational schools with a national coverage, to unify the whole system of education?

It is really a tangle, a sort of central structure with outbuildings and lean-tos. The Ministry of Agriculture has charge of all technical agricultural education. The Board of Education has nothing to say about that, nor any opportunity to relate purely agricultural education to a more general learning. The Ministry of Health is responsible for a number of boarding schools, under the Poor Law. The Navy, Army, and Air forces have their own training schools. The Home Office has schools under its control. There are more than ten thousand church schools. There are the "public schools," like Eton and Westminster. The educational system obviously does lack unity.

When the discussion of all this broke loose in Parliament yesterday, in the first debate on education in two years, a good many people had a heyday.

There was an opportunity to discuss the matter of the public schools and therewith of course defend or crack down the whole English social system.

One Member, Mr. Richards, of Wrexham, said that "It has been said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. I do not know whether we ought to say that the battle of Singapore was lost on the playing-fields of Harrow." He said further (and this made me think back to some of Mr. Laski's comments on civil service) that "What Arnold did at Rugby and what Jowett did at Balliol was to train people for the administration of the Services, particularly abroad. For that kind of work,"—please read this, because it is well said—"emphasis was laid not particularly on intellectual qualities but upon other social qualities." He went on to say, "I think too much stress has been placed upon good form, upon certain qualities which we value very much, but which ought now to be combined with definitely intellectual training. Although our dependencies and our Colonies owe a great deal to this type of administrator, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need another type of administrator today. We shall want the scientifically-trained mind if we are to get the best from *whatever depend-*

encies remain to us at the end of the war." (Italics are mine.)

Now this was said temperately, and the Member from Wrexham made a point of declaring several times that he did not wish to decry the services rendered the country by the public schools. His own solution was vague, a suggestion of "multilateral schools," with a hint of the Hutchins method of allowing talent to find its own field and level, and he added a postscript which praised the Workers' Educational Association, without defining its work.

There was some natural further complimenting of the performance and delivery of the public schools in the past, and a clarifying statement that they affect only 70,000 boys and number only 160 schools altogether. The public schools were criticized by another Member, from Northampton, as having two main defects. One was that in them too great insistence was placed upon athletic prowess, and that they teach too great a desire for uniformity. It is exactly what is often said about our more exclusive and expensive boys' schools in the U.S.A. Athletics came in for a number of other criticisms, and a great many educational hobbies and grudges were happily aired.

It was very interesting to see that nobody thought or was allowed to get away with the suggestion that a number of popular scholarships to the public schools would solve this situation. Often in the United States we think that a scholarship percentage solves a problem of exclusiveness, in schools and also in colleges. Mr. Ammon, from Camberwell, North, said that instituting a plan of scholarship for the best boys from the secondary schools would have some very evil effects. "It will result," he said, "in our best boys being 'creamed' from our State schools; they will be lured by the bribe of pleasant surroundings and by whatever remains of the prestige of our public schools. We shall still have two different kinds of education in the State."

He went on to state that if local wealthy people sent their children to the same schools as the local poorer people, it would have better results, and deplored the false sense of values that made a boy who went to a secondary school on a scholarship feel superior to a boy on a trade scholarship.

I have said that from a good many platforms myself, and so have many other Americans. The problems which are cropping up here are partly national and partly international. These British

people are aware, as we are, that as it becomes less possible to finance private schools and colleges, and as education must depend on public subsidy, a great deal of reshaping is in order.

The discussion yesterday was the first in Parliament for two years which had really spread the subject of education for debate. But there is much private discussion all the time, and much criticism of old-fashioned education coming from young men and women as well as politicians and statesmen all over England. The matter of religious education was introduced into the debate at intervals. Nobody was willing to say that a spiritual and moral foundation for education was not an excellent thing. But one Member said that he wanted to utter a warning that "no assent will be given to anything which will lead to denominational and sectarian strife and to making the children's bodies and souls the instruments over which wrangling may take place."

Another said that arrangements should be made to teach teachers to teach religion—that it was ludicrous to allow teachers who do not believe in Christianity to have the duty of teaching the Christian religion to children in their charge—that it was the "profound belief" of the teacher that counted.

I have heard the same statements made again and again about the Vassar faculty by various alumnae who feared the loss of a spiritual atmosphere among the students. And here, as at home, the question immediately arose as to what was the central Christian doctrine.

They didn't settle that in Parliament. Each Member took his previous convictions home with him, as we do after such an argument. But the net of the debate remains: that proper education is vital to postwar progress, and methods must be worked out without delay for giving young people a useful training. This must no longer be dependent on privilege of birth or possession of money. The pressure of poverty must not be put on education.

More than one Member said that the interest in education is stronger in Great Britain today than it has been at any other time in the country's history. There were loyal statements from the Conservative side of the House about the "democratic atmosphere" of public schools because the sons of belted earls fagged for the sons of country curates; but on the whole the discussion was far more profound than such foolish nostalgia might indicate. Someone spoke of the system of saluting the flag in American

schools as being very important. A few people quoted poetry, and some quoted Scripture. One man defended the phrase and fact of "the old school tie." And the briefest statement came from a Member who suggested converting three hundred aerodromes into good public schools and vocational centers, which would give a great number of boys the same privilege of public schools as wealthy families had enjoyed in the past. He said that—after the war of course—the aerodromes would make good residential boarding schools.

What it boils down to is that there is an almost certainly irresistible movement in Great Britain which desires and intends to extend the period of general education past the fourteenth year, and also to democratize the whole system of education. When this kind of thing gets started, the mutterings of reactionaries never have much effect on it, no matter what happens to old and loved quadrangles.

It is important for us to watch what they do here. My opinion of Great Britain is that it seems to move very fast today. I have felt in the last week or two that the war has not so much changed the state of mind over here in regard to democratic processes as it has stripped off coverings which concealed

democratic moods and intentions and plans which were almost ready for action anyway, war or no war.

Sometime, when I get home, you'll have a chance to tell me what you think. It's only fair.

Love,

Mother.

P.S. There was a most annoying lack of mention of educating girls in all this talk. Every now and then someone said "and girls," but for the most part they plain forgot that women too can study. They'll learn that in time for the next debate, if they wait another two years.

June 19

Dear Mary,

Tomorrow I go down to Sussex to stay for a day and a half with Louise Farnam Wilson, and since she lives in a Defense Area, I had to get police permission to go there and must report to the police when I arrive in X——. But tonight I want to catch up on people and events, or I'll never tell you about them, and some of the cream may be spilled. Since I wrote you last, I've met the re-

spective leaders of the WAAF, the WRNS, and the ATS, and I have also seen the Land Army at work in another Defense Area. Plenty of other things have happened, but I'd better tell you about these Auxiliary Forces and the women who lead them, first of all.

Even when I investigated the English women's services last year for my book on defense, I did not realize from the printed material I worked with how very seriously the women's armies are taken over here, nor how necessary they are. The organization of each is a unit in itself, and completely under Governmental control. To be the head of one of the units is a job which carries with it tremendous prestige.

The appointments were all made more for me by the Ministry of Information, and at half-past ten on Thursday, with not much to do but strict observance of all the red tape of getting in and out of AdAstral House, I had a talk with Miss Trefusis-Forbes, who is the Director of the WAAFS. The Queen holds the title of Commandant in Chief, and H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester was gazetted as Air Commandant in March, 1940. But Miss Trefusis-Forbes runs the show.

She is one of the firmest young women I have ever laid eyes on, but she is not in the least hard or brittle. Everything around her clicks, but she sits and talks it over in a perfectly human way. She told me that the WAAFS between them have a mastery of fifty-eight different trades, which range from instrument repairing to meteorology to cooking for airplane crews who come back from raids and to working on barrage balloons. There has been some gossip in the papers here to the effect that women could not handle the balloon work. She says it is a complete untruth and that the WAAFS are doing very well in that particular branch of service.

There have been some casualties in her ranks. She didn't say how many. But she did say that the WAAFS definitely helped to hold London in the Battle of Britain and showed me with some pride a letter from the highest military authorities which praised the conduct of the girls "under considerable distraction." Those last three words mean blitz and hellfire, delivering gasoline under fire, calling in planes after raids, feeding fliers with bombs bursting all around, and many such other "distractions." It somehow seems an understatement!

The girls have an official eight-hour day, but they usually work much longer. Their leave is 12 hours a week, plus 24 hours a month, plus one week every three months. But all this leave is "at the convenience of the Ministry," and if things look dangerous or threatening, the girls may not get the leave. Some 7 per cent of the WAAFS are married, she told me. Marriage is not forbidden, but it isn't encouraged. They seem to feel that a female in aviation is, like a male, a more able animal when unmated. Or perhaps just more fearless. In many respects they copy the R.A.F., even to the training period, which is a similar one.

The WAAFS do not fly, but they do practically everything else that has to do with a plane. They come from all groups. I was glad to hear that, because I had heard that it was a service which was not open to everyone. There are no requirements for a college education or even a high school one, and what a girl's father did is utterly unimportant in signing up a WAAF. She can't be dumb—that is, not too dumb—but she needn't be a Phi Beta Kappa, if she has two useful hands and feet and a mind that works with them. They take chorus girls, typists, daughters of earls, and housemaids.

Sometimes in the last few days, in talking to the women who run these Services, I've been caught up short with the idea that this is the first time that democracy has really been so widely tried, among women, in the English-speaking countries at least. Men have always had more cracks at democratic practice than women have had in England and America. The army, the bar room, the very ease with which men can travel and talk, have made them able to meet many different kinds of people.

But girls haven't had the same chance. They've been class-ridden and set-ridden. Their fathers and their mothers have hollowed out the grooves in which they run, partly by income, partly by habits. If they marry, their husbands' occupations usually condition their lives. A few girls always have managed to go about freely and so have a few women, though it took either money, talent, or temperament to do that without getting into trouble. But in this war they're shaken loose from the family habits, and they meet—intimately—girls whom they wouldn't normally know. It must be inestimably good for them, and the net result in making women less narrow in social point of view is almost certain, don't you think so? You needn't cable the

answer. Just bear it in mind till I get home. When. If.

I could go on about the WAAFS, but there are just a couple of things that I'll sign them off with. One is that they need pullover sweaters—more than they have—and haven't a lot of girls in colleges at home more sweaters than they need? And second, the best praises of these girls come not from their fancy little booklets but from the fact that the members of the R.A.F. like and respect them. They don't regard them as "ladies' auxiliaries," with separate and feminine functions, but as useful helpers who know the mechanism of flying and the emergencies of wartime.

Miss Trefusis-Forbes, of the WAAFS, is slim and military, with an extra grave look in her eyes that slant just a little in a way that makes her whole face interesting. Mrs. Jean Knox, head of the ATS, is both naturally and deliberately attractive, very careful of her make-up, with long mascaraed eyelashes—unless by some chance they are miracles of nature. She had a more feminine office than the others, with roses on her desk. But she is a cool young woman who understands her world, and there is no frippery about her whatsoever.

It's confusing at the start to make your way among all these women's organizations which have to do with war, and so I did some simplifying and sorting out. Here it is. Pin it on your wall. There are the nurses, grouped in a number of organizations. There is the WVS, which would correspond to our Civilian Defense organization if it had continued to be headed by Mrs. Roosevelt (without Mr. La Guardia). This takes care of all those women who have learned to do good civic work in their communities and continue to do it during the war, as well as those who are learning how to help their neighborhood. Lady Reading is in charge of this. I'll probably see her later. I hope to.

Aside from the WVS and all the nursing units, which include all kinds, from professional Red Cross nurses to the girls who help in nurseries and are at the very beginning of their training, there are the three big military units, one attached to the Navy, one to the Army, one to the Air Force. With the Land Army and the girls in industry of all sorts, this completes the fanlike spread of what women and girls are doing in England during the war. It's fairly important to get straight, because

a great many things in postwar development will stem from the various occupations of women and also from their disciplines. As far as I can see it's the complete and final breakup of a whole lot of theories which existed even that short time ago when you were in boarding school. At that time various people suggested to me that it was a pity to send a girl to college, because men didn't like a girl who "knew too much." All that has changed in a few years. Also, the old-fashioned chaperonage which was already losing its grip when you grew up has relaxed almost all grasp now.

These girls are, many of them, under twenty, but great numbers must live away from home, in billets or in barracks. They are uniformed, disciplined, and must fully understand without any coquetry what the facts of life are and also what the possibilities of human endeavor and endurance are. There are 150,000 members of the ATS alone in khaki. The numbers of WAAFS and WRNS are not officially revealed. I've had several figures given to me. The WRNS are approaching 20,000 and the WAAFS have perhaps as many.

All these disciplined girls, who have learned to do without reliance on a man's arm, even in time

of crisis, are so far from the Victorian girl or from the girl about whom Virginia Woolf wrote that "she could only be a schoolteacher," that they will quite naturally carry the temper of the country along with them. They will marry and have children, but they will probably not entirely forget that they were spark plug testers, wireless operators, radio operators, and had any one of hundreds of other trades at their commands. Their young sons will no longer have to turn only to their fathers when anything mechanical is mentioned. The women will be able to fix their own iceboxes, repair their own electric plugs.

The leaders of the forces, without any obvious motherliness, are well aware of this. Mrs. Knox, the head of the ATS, said to me: "When the war is over, if each of the ATS has a little money saved and one or two trades in which she is proficient, she doesn't have to worry." That's what is being driven into my consciousness every time I turn around over here. There is so much trade and scientific learning going on during this war. Maybe because so many machines are involved. But it's not just machines. The nurses are learning, and the farm girls are learning too.

Trefusis-Forbes and Jean Knox, without looking like each other, are the same type of person in a way. They are thin and young without being over-girlish. They have a certain look that comes from taking excellent physical care of yourself, being entirely realistic about life and people, and handling a big job.

It keeps a woman thin and doesn't make her a hag.

Mrs. Laughton-Matthews, who heads up the WRNS, is somewhat older, and she hasn't that hard, firm, modern look. She has certainly equal poise and wisdom, perhaps more, for the WRNS is the one Service where there are always more volunteers than it is possible to supply the demand for. I have seen a great many women in my day, and I know that I have never talked to a stronger, wiser woman than Mrs. Laughton-Matthews.

I was interested to find out why the WRNS is so popular a Service, but Mrs. Matthews would not enlighten me at the risk of running down any other service. She told me a little of its history. It was organized during the last war, in 1917, and then the WRNS did clerical and domestic work, as now, but they also mended mine nets and did

other jobs, like filling torpedoes. When the armistice came, the 7,000 WRNS were demobilized and started building nests, I suppose. In 1939 the Admiralty reconstituted the service. So it has a tradition, and it is well established. Many girls whose families have Navy men in them choose the WRNS as a Service for that reason.

Their duties have expanded tremendously since the last war. They help route merchant ships, work out target ranges, and do such things that vitally affect lives and battles.

And then there is Mrs. Laughton-Matthews herself, so competent, so easy, so thorough. She'd be bound to have a good organization.

All the leaders completely lack fussiness or obvious vanity in their own achievements. Or if they have it, it doesn't show. They are not in the least like many efficient men who want to tell you how "I" did this. None of them made the progress of the service which was being discussed a personal matter. But each was proud of her service to the point of considering it the best of all the services.

I asked them each a few questions on which I wanted a composite judgment. One was whether they had trouble with the girls on account of

menstrual periods, whether it interfered with the day-after-day performance of the work. Each said that it didn't. Each said the girls gained weight for the most part, except for the ones who came in with a lot of loose fat, and they, happily, got rid of that. They were healthier and better regularized after a few months in service, and while there were always a few cases when menstruation knocked a girl out for a day or so, the number of such cases were so few as to be negligible.

This may be hard to take for those young women who like to be invalided for one week a month or whose mothers think that they should be. But the plain fact is that it doesn't seem to be necessary.

I asked about problems of discipline, meaning of course affairs with men. The officers were unanimous on this point too. Each said that it had to be realized that girls were human beings and that there was always a certain amount of emotional trouble. But as Mrs. Knox said: "The work usually makes them too tired to go in for that sort of thing." She said, "I know how it is myself. I am too busy to go off for a week with my husband."

More than half the girls in the ATS are married. They get their time off when their husbands

do, if the husbands are in the forces. It's a strange life, if you look back a few years, and yet how many inhibitions and starved ambitions of girls and women must be being released, and what a lot of good it must be doing in actually developing women instead of our merely talking about it.

Another thing I wanted to find out about was how the leaders felt about having their forces engage in combat service. Each one of the commanders, in different phrasing, so that it was obviously not an answer out of the book, explained that she thought women did not belong in combat service, because if women were mothers and creating human life and caring for it, they shouldn't be asked to destroy it. One went so far as to say that it would scar the girls' natures if they actually had to kill, except in self-defense.

But they can not shield the girls from danger, nor do they promise anything of that sort. In the ATS, girls have been killed by direct hits under conditions when it was impossible for the girls working side by side to stop long enough to move the bodies. And Mrs. Laughton-Matthews told me, with grief in her face, of girls lost on a ship in the Medi-

terranean, who were on the way out to duty in the Middle East.

The WRNS go everywhere the Navy goes, as the need arises. And the ATS chiefs aim at replacing nearly every man in the AA batteries by women. The girls will live in mixed camps and wear battle dress. These front line jobs are very popular too. The officers of the ATS cannot compel any girl to do front line duty, but great numbers of them ask for it.

I could go on and on about these three Services. They are constantly in my mind here because they are constantly in my sight. You see them coming into the hotel, on the street, out at the balloon barrage sites, hurrying toward their headquarters, marching in the parades. A few are with men. Most of them are seen with other members of the same service. But you know one thing. They aren't sitting at home and wringing their hands and "wishing they could do something."

If your own work weren't important and something for which you were especially trained, you could do far worse than go into one of these Auxiliary Services in our country, and become a WAAC or a

WAVE, or a ferry pilot. And then there will also be a Land Army in every warring country.

Taking a fresh breath, I realize that since I wrote you last I also have seen the Land Army in action. For that I went down into one of the southern counties, and because it was by appointment the inspection tour was all set up. I was taken in charge by a gentleman called Mr. Burdett-Coutts, who looked as if he had stepped out of the pages of an English rural novel, and Lady de la Warr, who is a simple woman who doesn't bother with a hat. She has some 1,500 girls under her charge who didn't know wheat from rye or cows from pigs probably when they started and who had to replace, nonetheless, the men on the farms.

The information I got about the Land Army was less in discussion form than it had been with the other Services and far more pictorial. I first saw a training center, which is an agricultural school of the sort we have at universities and had been turned over to the girls, and we then saw action. I might say that seven thousand men like Mr. Burdett-Coutts are giving time without compensation to increasing the arable land. In the one county where I was visiting there are now 250,000 arable acres

where there were only 55,000 before. What they've done is to reclaim those gorse fields through which we used to walk, and now they are being used to raise many things, but notably sugar beet. Not a bad idea?

If all the 36,000 girls in the Land Army are like the samples I saw, I don't think they are to be pitied. We went to a farmer's barn, where two girls were doing milking. There was one called Joan, who looked like a nice brown berry, with that shape and coloring, and a girl called Phyllis, who was curiously Burne-Jones and looked delicate without being frail.

I had been told that the Land Army girls were the Cinderella group of the War Services. It is true that their pay is lower. They don't get proportionately what the girls in the other Services get. The farmers probably just can't pay it. But they get a break in environment.

At first their backs ache unbearably. They come out of kitchens or dining rooms where they have been working, or away from the typewriters and beauty parlors, and you know what a first day's exercise is like at Brule when you get to laboring with a sickle on the long grass yourself. But after

a little the aches go out of them and they are healthy. Most of them look handsome, whether they are or not, simply because of the poster effect of a girl in a green jersey and corduroy breeches against a field of grain.

I'd heard too that their uniforms were overbulky and ugly. But they looked all right to me. And like all the girls in the other services, the Land Army keeps its lipsticks handy.

Mr. Burdett-Coutts (yes, you have to use the whole name all the time like that, or it would be as if someone called me Mrs. Ning) asked me if I wanted to walk across a plowed field to talk to a couple of girls, and I said yes. I thought I had better have a close-up and see how fagged they look. I was the one who took it least well. I was hot and blowsy when I reached the girls across those lumpy acres, but they had on the smoothest lipstick I ever saw and didn't look even sweaty. I suppose they were. It was just my inferiority complex.

Well, I saw a lot of Maud Mullers, and the prettiest one of them was on a tractor. I asked her how she liked it, for she was driving it for the first time, and she said, "I don't care if the war lasts forever

if I can go on doing this!" She was riding high, and not only on the tractor.

A few do run away, I understand, because they hate the country. But as one cross-eyed farmer said to me, speaking of a runaway, "If I'd had her a little longer I could have persuaded her."

It does not have a moral sound, that sentence, but it was said and meant in the most moral of ways.

The high point of that afternoon should have been seeing those swell girls in the barn, but there was more to come that was even finer. For as we drove along a narrow road where we would never have been allowed to go except for the absolutely important presence of Mr. Burdett-Coutts, we saw the Channel, and coming up the Channel was the prettiest thing I ever hope to see—a convoy.

It looked serene and dignified. We all thought of the dangers it had been through, and that it had survived many risks, and I was about as proud as if I'd brought it over singlehanded, though I wasn't doing anything but counting ships. I wish I could send that scene home to you—the green Downs, the girls working in reclaimed fields, the airplanes overhead, the sight of certain fortifications,

the convoy. There was war and peace! Peace not being ruined by war. The convoy getting through, the girls farming while the men protected the coast. People can do so much when they must.

These have not been all my occupations during the past few days. I have met a good many people who aren't identified with the Women's Forces. And I've been trying to get a slant on the food situation.

One morning I spent at the Ministry of Food, asking more questions about the rationing system and how it works out. It began on January 1, 1940, and now the basic foods, except bread, are all rationed. They tell me that it is possible to get a good meal without a ration book, for you can have bread, a meat pie (bought in a shop), and green vegetables for these are not rationed. Milk, eggs, butter, cheese, and such staples are, as is fresh meat and bacon. What they call American bacon, which is not bacon but fat salt pork, is still unrationed.

The little children win on the entire rationing system. They get all the fresh fruit, a certain allowance of orange juice, and a generous allowance of fresh milk. This, by the way, is possible because we are shipping dried milk and condensed milk

in such quantities under Lend-Lease that they can keep their fresh milk for the children.

It isn't quite so easy to feed an older or adolescent child. In most schools the children get a milk allowance which supplements what they would get at home, but they are short on sweets, and children in the adolescent period do need sweets. And perhaps more meat than they are getting. Still it's by no means a deficient diet in most ways.

The people who have the biggest rationing problems are women who have no children and have to feed men who aren't in the Services. The meat ration doesn't go very far. It's only a pound with bone a week per person. Again, there is the shortage of sweets for puddings, and of fats. The Food Ministry says this itself, and women whom I have met unanimously bear out the fact, that it's the couples of two who have the hardest time making rations meet, as you might say. But it is making women better cooks, and, as far as I can see, the necessary diet for England is pretty much like the ones often advertised in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* as shortcuts to beauty.

One way to supplement the shortness of rations is to "eat out," because you don't have to use your

ration card if you are eating in a restaurant, though in a hospital or hotel or boardinghouse you would have to bring it with you. But if you go to Lyons for tea, or to Claridge's for lunch, you can get a good meal if you can pay for it. Since a lot of people couldn't pay much, the Government has done a very wise thing in fostering what they call the British Restaurants. Some people call them communal restaurants.

Whatever you may call them, they are really extraordinary developments in a country which has always been pretty hidebound in its ways of eating, and never a great place for cafeterias. I went to a British Restaurant the other day with a party of women who wanted to see what they were like. Mrs. Biddle was along, and so were Lady Cripps and Caroline Haslett and Ellen Wilkinson, the M. P., and Craig McGeachy of the Embassy. There was a long queue waiting in front of the building. Inside we took our places in the cafeteria line and saw what the food was like by the excellent experimental method of helping ourselves and eating it.

We had meat, plenty of vegetables, bread, butter, and a pudding. To be sure, it was the kind of pudding which you regarded with horror when

we were in England—the bready, tough sort, over which you douse warm glue that is sweetish and supposed to be sauce. But pudding it is, and the English wouldn't keep on having it, or vegetable marrow either, if they didn't like the stuff. All of this is yours for a shilling, and if you can do without the pudding, or definitely can't bear it, you get it for ninepence.

It isn't very tasty food, but it is good food. If you were really hungry you would be exceedingly grateful for it and satisfied. It is hot, and the meat is sweet and the vegetables are fresh. Altogether, these communal restaurants are great institutions, and when you hear that ninety-three million meals are served in England every week in the British Restaurants, you get an idea of the scale on which this is done.

The restaurants are new developments. First they took care of the people who were bombed out. Then the thing went further. Men whose wives are working came to them for one meal a day—then people who happen to live in the neighborhood, and so on.

The rationing system looked like Greek to me only two weeks ago. Now I understand the methods and the problems quite well, and it's quite simple.

Basic and necessary foods of which there is a limited supply are rationed, so much to each person. Foods which can be grown, like vegetables, and also bread, for which the wheat can be grown, are not rationed, and if you can find vegetables in the market you can eat all you like.

In addition, there are limited supplies of foods, canned and fresh, which are not essential, and each person can play around to his taste, with a certain number of points a week, buying these foods. Each tin or article is labeled as worth so many points, so when you've exhausted your points you can't have any more, no matter how much money you have.

Exceptions are made. Certain groups of the population, such as small children, pregnant women, and sick people, can have priorities on such things as milk, eggs, and oranges.

It's all very human in concept and fair in outline. It doesn't seem to break down at any point, though there are weak spots and discontents. There is a lot of talk about Black Markets and about more supplies finding their way to the big hotels than seems to be right. But on the whole the distribution is fair.

I would not write that with so much assurance

if nearly every person I meet did not tell me that it is true. Though Black Markets do exist, beyond a doubt, there is nothing like the kind of bootlegging that went on in the United States during prohibition. There is no defiant, open refusal to obey the law, nor any feeling that it is clever to get more than your share of anything. I could not exaggerate the soundness of morale on this point.

I had a ration book which I turned in at this hotel. It was then possible for me to have a small jar of marmalade, which eked out the tiny pat of butter that went with my breakfast toast. The jar of marmalade is obviously my ration of sweets for as long as I shall be here.

When I go down to dinner I may be lucky and get a chop once in a while. More likely not. I get soup, and plenty of bread, plenty of vegetables, fish or indeterminate meat, veal or beef, once in a while a smallish piece of chicken, all the lettuce I want (no olive oil of course) and stewed fruit (prunes and plums usually), and sometimes a very small watery ice or piece of ice cream instead.

It's a good meal, well flavored and well served, and it's as good food as anyone can get in London today. Travelers who stay in good hotels usually

do get the best there is. But I know there is plenty of food also in the poorer districts of the city.

I didn't take anyone's word for this but went on a shopping tour of certain districts. I took a few hours to go down back of Waterloo Station to the district which is called the "Cut," where shopping is done by people in very low income brackets. There was food in all the little shops, and it looked just about as good as what I had seen in the other markets. There wasn't the variety of canned goods that is still found at Fortnum and Mason's, or at Selfridge's. But I saw a good many cans of baked beans and soups with the familiar trademarks that we see in the pantry at home. In the small teashops there were both buns and cakes as well as pastries, and, as they tell me, these are all sold out every day at tea time. The cakes were fresher than those we used to be served for tea in Rye. Do you remember how firmly the grim Mrs. Eldridge used to produce any cake you and Tan scorned, the next day after the scorning?

I also explored bookstalls in this district, which were cheek by jowl along the street with open meat stalls. Some of the meat was obviously not fresh, and I asked about that, and the vendor told me that

"It warsn't for 'umans," so I gathered that it was cats and dogs that were being supplied with meat. Not bad, in wartime. In some countries dogs are being eaten instead of being fed!

Everyone was friendly. When I felt that maybe I looked too nosey, I explained that I was from the United States and that we all wanted to see how they were managing, before we came up against the ax. And the people to whom I talked seemed to think that was a good idea. A good many of them looked tired and very shabby or bedraggled. There was the smell of slums and the look of slums. But they were not starving and they had spirit and a great interest in the U.S.A.

I found some articles in a corner store which I had been told were impossible to find in London, a jar of unrationed hand cream which I picked up for Storm Jameson, who said it was very hard to find any grease for her hands in the winter. I was making friends and could have prowled around there for hours and maybe picked up an invitation to tea, but I had a luncheon engagement with Storm Jameson and her husband and a few others, so I went back to find them at the restaurant where we were

to meet. Wishing, as I went, for time and for more time, because everything is so interesting.

At this particular luncheon I was to have the luck to meet a Major in the Army who is a psychiatrist and whose work has much to do with the morale of the Forces. I have heard a great deal about civilian morale to date, but this was the first time I had a chance to discuss Army morale with anyone who knew all about what was going on. Major Wilson does, and everything he told me went to prove that no one with good sense here believes in a robot army. Rather, the conception is of an intelligent body of fighting men, each of whom knows what he is fighting for and, in so far as possible, understands the causes of the war and its ramifications in his own country and other countries as well.

That's a large order, but they actually try to do it. I've since been sent by Colonel Chapman a number of small, very readable pamphlets which are issued in alternative weeks to every officer in the Army, for the purpose of providing him with matter from which he can run discussions with his men. And it is good, clear information on war subjects. For example, there is one on India, and there are

several on United States' production, dealing with both methods and achievements. There is also one on what women are doing, and that fascinated me, because I never thought that men in the Army would be told about women in industry. But there it is—and offered as a morale builder as well as part of army education. There was another on Russia, and so on.

What I liked best about these pamphlets was the clarity with which their uses were explained, so that a quite simple-minded fellow who was an officer would know how to go ahead and transmit the information to his men. It suggested questions and points of discussion with the men, so that the information would really be put across.

To go back to Major Wilson, he says that the emphasis in this war in his psychiatry division is on preventing shell shock before it happens. He says that if a soldier is a very sensitive type of person, it defeats all war and human purposes to put him in such a position or on such a post that his nerves will be shattered. That is the substance of what he said on that point and not exact quotation. In other words, he thinks that prevention is the modern way of treating the shocks of modern war-

fare. It's a very large order, but even to have that in mind is something. Even at home I bite my nails every time I hear that cliché about a fellow who's gone to war. "It will be the best thing in the world for him." Maybe so and maybe not.

One bad consequence of the last war was that the men who hated it most wrote about it most fluently. The ones who were thick-skinned, or had luck, or rather liked to be in the Army were inarticulate except at American Legion conventions. And so our war pictures were penned or painted only by the highly sensitive and by those who were unhappiest in uniforms. In one way it's a good thing that it should be so, I suppose, because it washed out any old fantasies of glory. But on the other hand there has been no good popular picture, at least in fiction form, of the sort of life that still keeps men with some sense wanting to go to West Point and Annapolis, mount guns, or live on battleships, and who think that life in the Army or Navy or Marines is the life for them.

I personally know three men who have never been happy since they got out of the Army in 1919. They are all back in it now, even at their age. And their story has never been written. It would be a

dullish story. They aren't the brightest men in the world. But they are good men and they are competent.

Though I am always with strangers here in London, contacts are not difficult for the obvious reason that instead of jabbering away at small talk in order to find who knows whom and whether your acquaintanceships have touched through years and across oceans, you begin to talk about the one thing that is important to the world. You may be talking psychiatry or the nutritive value of national flour, or looking at a machine, or asking what position a woman holds in an Army Auxiliary, but it's all basically discussion of war.

We are all in the same jam and we know it, and nothing is permanent and nothing safe until we have beaten our enemies. I was figuring out the other morning what there was in the newspapers that wasn't related to war. Except for one or two obscurities in the "agony column," I could find nothing that in one way or another didn't touch on war conditions.

I went to dinner at the Ritz with the Anthony Drexel Biddles the other night and wore a long dress for the first time since I left Tryon. It felt

good to vary the blouse and skirt, though the dress had stretched on a hanger until it gave me the effect of trailing ghostly black stuff over my wrists and in front of my feet. There are compensations for not having more than one evening dress with you, because you always know which one to put on, no matter how it has stretched or how it looks. Do you remember the time you were going to be all fancy in Buenos Aires in your best pale green jersey and found that they had shrunk it in the cleaning until it was practically a doll dress? Wasn't that a night—and in all that heat how hard it was to get it on and off!

Well, back to the Biddle dinner. What shall I tell you about them to hold your interest and complete my memoirs? I did tell you in another letter about lunching with Margaret Biddle, I think, and I've seen her since and heard about her often. She has made a good and useful thing out of her life over here. It can't be a very private life, but the Biddles are the sort of people who would always have been very busy with social life if the gilding hadn't cracked on this century. They would have had to find ways to spend a lot of money and, in

addition to money, each of them has a great deal of energy and brains to spend.

Where they are truly smart is that they will never be caught like a lot of other people who were also Palm Beachers in their day. The others will be as out-of-style as very décolleté evening dresses, before so very long. But the Biddles knew that the world was changing, just as clearly as the people who were thundering that from soapboxes or talking it in classrooms or writing economic treatises about it. They went right along with the world and changed too.

Mr. Biddle, whom the world calls Tony but I do not, can and does say goodnight to you so you feel that you have made his evening a success. My own reaction to that cordiality is not important, but the quality of being able to transfer cordiality is very valuable in a man who is Ambassador to all the unhappy Governments in Exile, and if he can make them feel welcome and cheered and important at the world's party, he is really doing something.

Someday I would like to analyze the quality of both these people, because it interests me so much. We have had a Puritan tradition in the U.S.A. which always held that thinking on serious sub-

jects was completely incompatible with sophisticated life. That if you were grave you had to be solemn, that lipstick was out of place on thoughtful or academic people, and that Ground Gripper shoes promoted thought. All myths.

What I like about the Biddles is that they are geared to all these serious situations without being heavy or even profound. They don't give the impression, by word or statement, that suddenly they woke up and found that the world was different from what they had thought it was, and repented because they'd always been blind and wrong before. Not at all. This is to them the same world which they have always liked and enjoyed, though it is in desperate straits and maybe going bankrupt. They are—each of them—using money, energy, and talent to alleviate the situation. They are meeting a great many new people, and because they have a taste for people they like what they do and get more expert daily.

But, cleverly or unconsciously, they know that part of their individual value to the world is the possession of a certain amount of glamour, the glamour that goes with the sight if not the taste of the

silver spoon. And they have not changed their type so as to eliminate the glamour.

Perhaps the thing I am getting at is simply that they are fashionable people who are quick to recognize when a thing is old-fashioned and to go on to the new mode, social, political or economic. They are unusual, because most of the people so bred and habituated are completely incapable of doing anything of the sort. What makes you admire as well as like them is that both Margaret and Anthony Biddle have a definite usefulness here in wartime London, surrounded by grave and serious conditions and people.

They have escaped being trivial, and it would have been so easy for them to be that way.

I met the Minister of Agriculture and his wife at dinner, among other people. Mr. Hudson's tremendous job is to increase production of food, and he doesn't seem to think of much else, though he likes a joke, as I discovered before long. He is greatly interested in the breeding of cows so that milk production will be evened all through the year, and you can see that would naturally lead not only to more milk but to a good many jokes. The trouble with me is that I never can remember them unless I actu-

ally learn them by rote, and then I am apt to recite them at the wrong time.

Funny though—there we sat at the Ritz with a lot of shapely glasses in front of us and good food in the French manner, for the Ritz cuisine is still French, and we discussed cows and milk in the most fascinated manner, and the thing that mattered was the milk, and not the champagne, to every single soul at that dinner.

We also talked about division of authority. A live animal is under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture. A dead animal passes into the control of the Ministry of Food. A growing vegetable is something that the Ministry of Agriculture looks after, but a picked vegetable is under the dominion of the Ministry of Food.

To accomplish increased production there has to be a lot of regimentation, of course. In England as well as with us. Mr. Hudson doesn't seem to mind that idea, though he is a Conservative politically. He believes that we should stay regimented for a good long period after the cessation of hostilities.

It's a sentiment I come across in many quarters. The feeling that the Versailles Treaty was unsuccessful has made a lot of people treaty-shy. They

think that it would be far wiser to have a long truce after this war, during which period of years economic adjustments could be made, and also economic and trade experiments would be at work. As I get this idea or hope or intention, nations would not be fully committed even to the peace schemes until these had been proven to be useful and practicable. What some people call a police force and others refer to as a large standing army (both meaning the very same thing), would be maintained during the period of trial and very probable error.

It sounds as good a plan to me as any proposition. If you take a quick look at history, it's obvious that many world troubles—perhaps even the majority of them—have come from trying to make people adjust to treaties instead of making the conditions of peace adjust to living peoples who are in a state of economic change. But there is nothing milk-and-water about this idea over here, and it is not in the least spiced with any appeasement intentions. Nobody wants to consider anything of the sort until Germany and Japan are beaten and the theory of conquest has been smashed to bits.

Well, this brings me pretty well up to date, both in social life and brain picking. The two go along

together at the moment. I had one especially good evening with Noel Streatfeild, who came to dinner with me, and then we talked for a long while about the blitz and she told me stories of what it was like to live with it, night after night and day after day. There is a tensity about her calmness and a sadness in her serenity which set her apart from most people I have ever known. She doesn't know what she is like at all. She tells you about herself, but she's only guessing.

What I see when I look at her is a woman who has been through too many scenes of death, too much flashing horror, to ever quite erase them from her sight. In the deepest peace of another country she would feel that these things were going on somewhere and enjoy no contentment. She does the immediate thing, looks lovely, wears a rather neat and casual gallantry which rules out personal complaint or sentimental comment. She pretends that a new lipstick, a pair of stockings, mean a lot to her. So she says. So she may even think. But they don't.

The thing that is on her mind is that the war is not over, that it is not finished, that death and blitz and attack are not at an end. Somewhere a little way back in time, and a long way in memory, is her

youth—and what a beauty she must have been, tall, pale as thin cream, with sweet brown hair.

She is a writer, did I tell you that? I almost forgot because I think of her as driving a canteen through the blitzed streets, wearing a WVS uniform. But she writes children's stories, of all unlikely things! They are very good, so people tell me. I read her book *I Ordered a Table for Six* the other night. It is written in quick tempo, playing up narrative style, and someone told me it was "light." What must have been meant by that comment is that it was neither another *War and Peace* nor nonfiction, but it is most certainly not light in mood! It's a wretchedly unhappy book about people she saw too clearly, told with some pity but without forgiveness.

It is rather odd. I would like to tell you what she told me of her experiences in the bombing raids, but they are hard to pass on to you. These are such intensely personal experiences that without the teller they lose vividness. What I mean is that it is what happened to this person and to that person, and you need what we call in the trade "reader identification" if the shock and drama are to be preserved for the reader or hearer.

I am going on a bit because it is interesting to

think of this and may explain why so many soldiers were unable to tell of their war experiences when they came back home. Each time the thing is told it must be told not only truthfully as to fact, but with revival of shock and horror and immediate sight. To do this means that either the speaker or the narrator always has to preserve the first person. It can't get down to hearsay—that's what I mean.

So to tell you what Storm Jameson has gone through, what Noel Streatfeild has gone through, what Audrey Heath has gone through, or what Louise Farnam has seen, I must tell through their personalities, somehow eliminating myself as a previous listener. And I can't do that. I don't know whether this interests you at all, but it does me as a writer. I know that it will be far easier to tell you about Louise Farnam because you know her and she is not just a first name and a last name, with my scant description to mold names into an actual person.

Good night. I'm still glad you aren't here. I'm glad that you've skipped this in your life, and I hope that you'll continue to skip it. Tomorrow I go down to Louise's house, and I'll bring you back the news of what the country is like in wartime down in the southeast. If I use names of places this won't get

by the censor, but I might say cryptically that I shall take the same train which I would take when we went down to Rye—if we had taken a train instead of driving in the hired car that was so pompous that it almost got stuck in the narrow cobbled streets of Rye, if you remember.

So in a way it's our old stamping ground. But I suppose it will be quite different from what it was in 1929, when you were very young and even I was younger and there was constant national discussion of war debts.

Love,

Mother.

June 20

Dear Mary,

This isn't a letter, but I'm so afraid I'll forget to tell you what the journeys are like in England that I am writing as I jounce along in a third class carriage. I have a bunch of little notebooks that go easily inside that monstrously large traveling purse I carry. They were innocent enough when I got them, but for some reason they have begun to smell strongly

of disinfectant. I am puzzled, and since I have spent a lot of money giving my children scientific educations, I should be able to find out from you why a small canvas-covered notebook can suddenly smell like an entire hospital room. Figure it out for me, will you?

However, it makes me feel very safe from casual germs.

I have always been loyal to my own country in most ways and preferences, but I have a sneaking love for English trains. It is one of my few deeply romantic feelings and probably traces back to a lot of silly English novels, or maybe to the first time I got on one and thought that at last I was "traveling in Europe." Nothing—not the Twentieth Century nor any of the lounge cars on the crack Southern trains—gives me half the fun I get out of riding on one of these jerking, swaying, dirty, ill-equipped coaches, with baggage in the racks over your head likely to fall and knock out your teeth at any moment, with windows that are pulled down by a strap as they used to be on Hunter's Park street cars when I was a child, with dirty tasseled doilies on the backs of seats patterned in dingy green plush at any time, but in wartime far more sooty and unbrushed. I

know about the condition of the lavatory down the corridor, and that this coach always feels as if it were attached to the next one by a hairpin. But just the same I love them!

Once in a train like this I saw an English lady with a tea basket—that was in a first class coach—and some day when the war is over and I am down to one black bombazine dress with a high neck, I am going to invest in a tea basket and go for a trip and make tea on the train. From the way this sounds, I am a little too much in my dotage even now to last long enough for the trip.

About travel, this note was to be. Well, a traveler gets precious little attention these days. There's always a long queue in front of the booking office, and you stand in line and finally get your ticket slapped down in front of you, and you grab up your bag (there are no redcaps, though a few porters meet the trains which serve the long journeys, when people will have a lot of luggage) and off you hustle, hoping against doubt that you may get on the right train. It's a gamble, because there usually are no guards around to tell you which train goes where, and if you are told it is on the third platform that is sometimes

hard to figure—what they mean by "third" and where they begin to count.

Nearly all trains are crowded, as if they had taken off all trains except in those special hours when they knew that there would be a crowd. The signs on the walls all ask you, IS YOUR JOURNEY REALLY IMPORTANT? until, though you may have started out believing that it was, you begin to feel a little guilty and wonder whether you should be going or not.

Another sign says, IF YOU ARE TAKING A LONG JOURNEY BRING FOOD WITH YOU.

But the sign that you most want to see, the sign of the station where you must change trains, isn't visible, because station signs, except those well within the station itself, aren't there any more. Also, all those signs which identify a town or city before you pull into it are gone, the ones that advertise the local fireproof hotels and the best local products. You don't know how much you can miss these signs until you have nothing to go by. And of course the train usually has no guard, as they call the conductor, and, though you hope it has an engineer, you begin to doubt it as you joggle along. If there is an engineer he certainly has the palsy.

The trains are announced, but the accent is violently English and swift, and the stations often are named in amazing pronunciations, which are quite unlike the way you thought the word was pronounced. Altogether, if you change trains, as I did, there's bound to be a lot of guesswork. But here I am, really sure now that I am going to get to H—— before too long and happy as can be looking out at one of the prettiest countrysides in the world.

We have run through the London suburbs, which also deserve superlatives as being the ugliest suburbs in the world. Ours may be ugly, but they aren't so terribly monotonous.

It's always a pleasure to go southward in England. The journey is so increasingly rural. The little green fields are all different shades and neatly hedged in. There is enough brick in the landscape to give it a substantial look, enough thatch to keep it primitive. What I like most about it this morning is that it looks unscathed. I know better of course. There are patches in many roofs that are certainly the results of bombings. There can be no single home in which life has not been torn apart by this war. But the countryside looks more as it used to than does London.

And in a minute I'll have to get my dressing case

down. I am going by time, not signs. If I don't get off at the right station, I'll go on with this. Here's hoping I don't write any more today.

Love,

Mother.

June 21

Dear Mary,

I came back from the country a few hours ago to find a letter from the Ministry waiting for me with a very explicit set of directions and introductions for a three-day factory inspection trip to the Midlands, which begins tomorrow morning, so I've had a busy evening writing notes and canceling other plans I had made. I somehow didn't realize that trip was scheduled for tomorrow. And before I go, I must tell you about my visit to Sussex, for I have had two of the most fascinating days I've had on the whole trip.

Louise Farnam was always LF to me since our days on the Vassar magazine. She was always interesting. She was once said to have the most brilliant mind that ever was graduated from Vassar, and when

I was in college with her it was always shining out all over the place. First quality intellect probably describes her basic mental material. Also, she had both a better education and a better intellectual background than most of the people I've known. Her father was a professor of economics at Yale, but he was far more than that to the university. He was closely affiliated with its organization and management, and both he and his wife were extremely hospitable, entertaining students and great educators and ambassadors who came their way, with equal courtesy.

Louise said once that their money was a Civil War fortune—I forget how it was made, but there was a lot of it. She and her sister were educated by governesses at home and then went to Switzerland to school. Later she came to Vassar. She knew foreign languages, German and French, better than almost all the people in her class, and also, because hers really was a very distinguished family, she was habituated to a thinking life. It was, I believe, as good a family as the United States could produce. It was rich but not plush. The Farnams were thoughtful and students, but not recluses. Social but not silly. The members of the family were deeply fond of one

another, and most of them had a great sense of public responsibility.

When I was the greenest little gawk from Vassar and the Middle West, I visited them a few times, and theirs seemed a very fine house. It was given, at Dr. Farnam's death, to be a house for the president of Yale. There was a great deal of handsome old furniture, and a good deal of manner to living, but everyone put me at ease. I remember that Mrs. Farnam once told me, later, how often she took more than she wanted to eat at dinner because if she stopped eating the young students would too.

Then we all graduated, and I went to Chicago to study civics and philanthropy, and Louise took a Ph.D. at Yale and then decided that she would like to take an M.D. and become a medical missionary to China. Her wishes usually became horses, and she rode them. That was exactly what she did in this case, and she was the first woman who got a medical degree at Yale.

She went to China and worked at the Yale-Hunan Hospital in Changsha. She did a whole lot of other things, including the building and endowing of hospital units in China. All of them, she told me yesterday, have been bombed to pieces. She took several

Chinese children to live with her. Then she got caught in a couple of revolutions, I think, and finally she went to Shanghai.

Once in every two years she came back to the United States, and she came to see us once or twice when you were quite small. I remember that once she was traveling back to China with a great box of hats, and that surprised me, for Louise had never gone in for fashion at all and she didn't dress herself up. She was wearing, five years later, the same blue cashmere kimono that she had worn at college. It was still good, she said. And the explanation of the hat orgy was that she was taking them back to China to members of the colony out there. The colony fascinated her. She occasionally wrote me letters describing the members of it and the kind of people they were. She described them thoroughly, in the Somerset Maugham fashion, as to income, habits (with the gloves off, too), and physical, psychological, and emotional states of mind.

I've kept all those letters. Maybe some day she will do something with them, because, while I may never have told you this about her, she can write. Her construction of narrative is weak, but her observation and accuracy and penetration are amazing.

Then, to everyone's surprise, because I think most of us believed that an intellectual woman who wore thickish glasses and the same kimono for five years wouldn't ever marry, she chose a husband. You're up to date now because you have met Hugh on their last trip, and you and he talked science. If you remember, he is very intelligent, with a great deal of quiet charm. And they went back to England to live.

It was on that last trip, when they stopped briefly with us, that I was somewhat distressed about Louise. She had never looked robust, but she had become so thin and frail that I was worried about her. She had adcpted two children, not Chinese but English, and she and Hugh were living in London. But what bothered me more than her thinness was a touch of despair in her talk about civilization. She adored Hugh and the children, but personal happiness would never complete Louise's life as long as she saw decadence or worse in the world. That was in 1938, I think, and we all talked of an imminent and unavoidable war, but were still wondering if we would positively have to get into it.

In 1939 I had bad luck in London. I couldn't find her address. Your aunt and I were there briefly, and

I didn't seem able to hunt Louise down. Notes of invitation she sent to me reached me only after I got back home to America, so this time I was determined there would be no such mess. I called up her sister before I left New York, got her latest address, and wrote her a note the minute I got over here.

I honestly didn't know quite what to expect. She had been low-spirited about the war before it began, and this was postblitz and she was living in a Defense Area. So I got off the train, wondering how she would be changed and how much would be left of her. There she was, coming along. She always looks faintly distracted, yet as if she knew exactly what she was going to do next, which is a combination no other person of my acquaintance has ever achieved. She didn't look changed at all. She looked better than when I'd last seen her, much as she looked in college.

Hugh was there too, and we were all glad to see each other, and then Louise said, "How is your health, Maggie? Because if you don't have to rest, we won't go back to the house, as I have a great many calls to make, and you can come right along

with me if you like." Of course I liked, so we got in her car, and off we went to visit the sick.

You and Louise have the same slovenly method of taking care of the insides of your cars, only she is worse than you. The front seat was fairly clean, except for a stethoscope, several medicine bottles, a coat, and a package or two. But the tonneau looked like a storage room which had been struck by lightning. There were dozens of bottles of medicine, and there were lumpy things which I never did identify because they were so covered by other things. It was very reminiscent of your car when you read the newspapers and toss them over your shoulder on forgotten packages or wrappings, and the pile of rubbish grows. I don't know why I go into that except that it was a wonderful mess, and even Louise said she thought that some day soon she "must really give it a clean-up."

Perhaps I mention that confusion because it was the only thing of the kind that I saw, the *only* mental or physical confusion in Louise's life or house. We had a chance to talk between calls. She is acting as assistant or coadjutor or something to a couple of local doctors, one of whom is old and one of whom is not well. Doctors are, of course, scarce, and LF

ries a heavy load of general practice, including
nel practice, which is the care of those who have
alth insurance.

Night and day she is on call. She visits the old and
: young, brings babies into the world, vaccinates
ildren, diagnoses common and strange illnesses
ie was worried about an unusual case, which might
sleeping sickness, she feared), treats alcoholics.
ıce the days when I used to make calls with Uncle
:, I never saw such a dragnet of cases.

Hugh is on a job I can't write about, and he gets
me week ends. It's a scientific war job. The two
ildren are beautifully cared for, though Louise has
nurse now. How she does it I don't know. She
s a housemaid and an elderly cook, but the house-
ıid wants to go into the Land Army. Louise says
ıt the ravens will have to take care of them if the
.id goes. But she will not try to argue Ivy out of
ng, though Ivy is thirty-nine and has been twice
a sanitarium. Louise says, "Ivy must have her
ance at war work if she wishes to do it."

The cook, Mrs. Evans, is sixty-five, and also rest-
s for direct war work!

By the way, do you know why cooks are called
Irs." in England, even if they are not? Hugh told

me this. Mrs. Evans has never been married. But to call her by her first name would be infra dig for a cook, and you don't call servants by the title of "Miss" because neither would that be suitable. So "Mrs. Evans" is automatic. Isn't that wonderful?

That's the quick picture of the family, and I could go on indefinitely about them and probably will when I see you, but you might like to hear of what the country is like in wartime. We were at that point close to the coast, and of course I had to report to the police on arrival, because no casual travelers are allowed in those areas. A sign on the post office outer wall stated that NO PERSON MAY ENTER RESTRICTED AREAS FOR HOLIDAYS, RECREATION, PLEASURE OR AS A CASUAL WAYFARER. (How many happy rides we had in 1929 as casual wayfarers on these roads!)

You can enter now for business or employment, to visit parents, children, wives, or husbands, for the wedding or funeral of relatives (wedding is a nice touch, isn't it?). But if you came there after November 14, 1941, you are now requested to leave.

I was allowed to come to visit, both because of word from the Ministry of Information and because LF is so highly regarded. You can see that it was

an extraordinary opportunity, which came my way simply by great good luck, to see what life was like in a Defense Area which has lived under the shadow of airplanes constantly, and where the guns often have been audible, for two years now. Nothing could be better luck than to see it by going around with a doctor and actually getting into the houses of these people.

The thing which impressed me most, I think, was that in spite of constant danger, in spite of the fact that the people have seen dreadful sights, such as planes coming down in flames now and then, regard for human life has not lessened. One thing I shall never forget was visiting a home for the aged that morning. All the inmates were very old. The ones of eighty were young fry, and one old woman will be a hundred next October, on which occasion she will receive a letter of congratulation from the King, no less! I hope she makes it. She was a bright old girl, difficult they tell me, and she was looking for something in an ancient trunk in her little cubicle of a room. LF told her that I was an American. She looked at me out of her withered old face and said I didn't talk like an American.

"I think perhaps," she said, "you talk like the first

ones who went over there, when they still talked English."

There's a tartar compliment.

We stopped at a dispensary, and Louise mixed up a few potions for her patients. In addition to everything else, instead of writing hieroglyphics on a prescription pad and letting the druggist do the rest, she compounds her own medicines. There was nobody to help her weigh or measure. She stood like a beneficent necromancer in the middle of the shelves of bottles and vials, pouring and mixing, and said that it was impossible to make medicines taste good at present because all the tasty little sweet component syrups and "grand tasting drugs" which used to make them palatable were no longer available. They have essential drugs, but people who take them have to hold their noses and swallow bravely.

I would hate to have a bomb strike that invaluable little room, which had in it so much that is curing and restorative.

We added another parcel to the car's medley by acquiring a teacake at the bakery, and then we went back home to lunch with her two engaging children and Hugh.

Louise's house is large and suburban-looking, and

the ground floor is set so high that the basement rooms have more light than is usual, but it gives the house a look of a beanstalk, done in stucco. She and Hugh bought it when Hitler invaded Austria, and that is quite an interesting bit of hindsight now. The invasion appalled Louise. She had two houses in London (and still has), one of which she liked, though the other one didn't please her so much. But with that Austrian invasion, Louise and Hugh both believed that war was inevitable. They figured on a different sort of war, and somehow didn't think the particular coast line on which they live would be as menaced as it is. France, of course, was with Great Britain then, or would be, and I suppose they, like everyone else who was conditioned by the last war, figured that France, Belgium, and Holland would be the major battlefields.

So the Wilsons bought this house and moved the family down there, furnishing the house not by moving their London furniture but by going to auction sales and buying what was essential, spending as little as possible. One of the London houses is full of refugees. It would be, if owned by Louise at this juncture of history.

Having moved their family to the country for

safety, they are now, after nearly three years of war, in a key Defense Area after all. Louise plans to send the children away to another, safer, district this summer. She herself won't go. She couldn't possibly leave her patients. In the meantime there is no slightest sense of apprehension in her house, nor in any other house I visited. There is an air raid shelter in the garden, a rather pretty grassed-over mound, and I went to see what it was like inside, for they said it was "rather better than typical." Inside was a bench on which they could sit, and some shelves where there were blankets and a minimum of necessary supplies, lights and so forth. The place was just about high enough to stand up in, and there were some problems of flooding in the heavy rain. Still, it was a shelter, and it had that one essential of chance of safety, a spade standing against the wall opposite the little entrance. This is there so that in case of a direct hit which blocked one entrance, the occupants, if still alive, could dig out at the other. The ground had been thinned at the second end to make digging out feasible.

One of the things I wanted to observe closely was the food which Louise served and to see how she managed on rations. For lunch we had a small joint

of beef (a week's ration), Yorkshire pudding, potatoes, cabbage, followed by rice pudding and prunes. Looking back, you will remember this menu as a typical noonday lunch served in an English household where there are children and servants. Mrs. Eldrige always used to send up such lunches to you and Tanner when she cooked for us in Rye. They are standard. The difference now is in the size of the joints of meat and the length of time it is supposed to last, in the small bits of butter, in the fact that each person has his sugar ration on the table. The children had their sugar, Hugh his. Louise, I expect, gave hers to the children, and I don't need sugar.

I thought of the way Mrs. Eldridge used to run through a big joint every day of the week and have chickens or ducks or hazel hens every night as well. I thought of it as I watched Hugh slicing the meat with conscientious thinness, asking Louise if she thought that was enough for Rosemary or Christopher, and Louise's scientific decisions. They gave me far more meat than I should have had, but we all cleaned our plates. One detail before I forget it, exemplifying this matter of waste. We had coffee, and mine was served with milk in it. I didn't drink it, because I take coffee black. I just let it stand there

without any mention. But the coffee was not thrown out but put away in the larder, and Louise drank it that night before she went to bed. She also never throws away a cigarette which has been two-thirds smoked—her own, I mean. She puts the stubs down and goes back to relight and to finish them later.

For an hour or so I rested, and unpacked my little all. Louise did not rest. She made more calls and then came back to take me to go on others with her. We drove to the Downs, and saw the herds and the classic old brick houses and the little new stucco ones, and here and there she stopped in her errands of healing. Many of the women in this district have husbands who are prisoners of war in Germany, and many have boys who are in foreign countries. In one little close-aired cottage a charwoman who lived there showed me her son's picture in uniform. He was smiling cheerfully. "He's in Libya," she said. "The news from there is bad, isn't it?" God knows it is! And she has rheumatism, but she is going back to work on Tuesday and is not making any fuss.

We visited one brick tenement house, owned by the Crown, if the symbol over the door means what it says. No doubt it is not the fault of the Crown that it was one of the worst slums in which I have

ever set foot, but there is fault somewhere, when roses twine over the fences in front of a place and in one back room there are six human beings, one of whom is an emaciated baby, another a child with sore eyes, and another a dull-faced mother who, in spite of the filth, was still pretty enough to attract a man. Louise brought the last baby into the world, and they all idolize the doctor. She does what she can to keep them healthy, but I can't help feeling that the priceless new generation of English should be getting a better start than are these children. At that, they do have a milk allowance and they aren't starving.

The extraordinary feature of the afternoon was that, after some hours of visiting the sick, Louise said we were going to an art exhibit and a tea! I gulped but agreed, and we picked up Hugh and drove to the corner of an estate where there was a place which had been made into a studio. Here, unbelievable as it is, the walls were hung with pictures recently painted, which were being inspected by such connoisseurs of art as were left in the county. Mrs. Miniver's flower show was along the same lines, but pictures are still more incredible at a time like this. You must realize, to get the full scene, that

every now and then a great whir came overhead, and planes in formation were passing over, all on war errands. The pictures on view were not scenes of blood and battle. There were a good many still-life ones, "Zinnias," "Jug and Bottle," many rural scenes such as "Bury Church." A few were violently and argumentatively modern, and there were also some religious subjects. And everyone chatted and drank tea.

Louise's children had gone out to tea with some small friends. The only wartime note was that they took their milk with them, and Rosemary, recounting it ecstatically later in the nursery, said, "I had two cakes, and Christopher, I think, had three." They were having their supper at the time, and the milk was not quite sweet. Louise has no ice, but relies on the coolness of a dark buttery. She said that they had better drink it anyway, that it was no less good for them even if slightly turned, so they made faces and drank it. It is such a fine family, with perfect discipline.

I heard Christopher saying to Rosemary, in his perfect English, "Do you think we shall be allowed to have a piece of the chocolate Mrs. Banning brought with our supper?" And Rosemary's sweet, high, un-

complaining guess, "No, I do not think we shall be permitted to have any tonight."

The world may be in confusion, but the Wilson family is not.

I'll never get through with this. I am just beginning.

For supper we had soup, a piece of fish, and a salad. There was no sweet, but we had apple juice and could have had beer. Louise has a sweet just once a day; and on the next day, Sunday, there was gooseberry pie with custard. The lyric notes in the children's voices as they heard there was gooseberry pie was something to remember. It really made eating a delight. Louise's father-in-law came for Sunday lunch. Coming from a distance, he brought sandwiches for himself so as not to invade the family rations.

That is how it is. Food is precious, valued, measured, enjoyed. Louise and her family fare much better than the average, she says, because her patients give her things now and then—a few eggs if they keep a hen, for example. But no egg is wasted. If she has an extra one, it is put away in glass against the time when eggs will be scarcer than they are at the moment.

She buys no clothes for herself. She said she was all dressed up for me when she met me in her best suit. It was only four years old. And on Sunday morning she wore her "apple dress," because her children think it is the most beautiful dress in the world. It is a very inexpensive and far from new printed cotton dress, with apples in the pattern. She told me she bought it "off a rack in 1938." With her extraordinary flair for living she makes the wearing of it a delightful Sunday morning event. Her sixty coupons for clothes must do her for forty months, and the children will get most of her coupons for their use. They were enchantingly dressed, war or no war, but they are both so well formed and beautiful of expression and so healthy that they'd be something to stare at no matter what they wore.

We talked late that night when Louise finally was through with her calls. It was a "quiet evening," though every now and then she went to the telephone to answer some worried patient's questions. But by luck she wasn't called out. That is rare. Just to give you some idea of what kind of endurance she has, I must tell you what she thinks is difficult. Not making calls all day and mixing medicines and going out to deliver a baby after four hours' sleep! That is

routine, to which is added the expert supervision of every phase of her children's living, from baths to thoughts, and the personal overlooking of her larder and her marketing (in wartime and on rations). What she finds difficult—once in a while—is driving along narrow and black country roads at night with no headlights except tiny crossed slits which indicate she is there to a car coming toward her but do not help her vision. The driving is not the problem, but she sometimes meets tanks out on manoeuvers. Without blaming the tank, she explains that tanks are not easy to handle on these roads, which are practically lanes of course, and that they wobble a good bit and might wobble her car into smashed tin and herself into eternity it she weren't lucky. That, however, will not keep her from going to see a sick patient.

She had rather a bad time last year too when she took in four other children who belonged to friends of hers and all six got whooping cough and naturally were sick every night. She was very short of sleep during that period. Hugh only got home week ends and couldn't help much.

But we didn't dwell on those problems. We talked of war, and how mad and selfish the world had been

to let Hitler get his running start, and of what would probably happen before the score is settled, and what it meant to all of us. The extraordinary thing is that Louise is not as despairing as she was before the war broke out. The fatalistic irony which made her write on a Christmas card sent to me in 1938, "And when do you expect the end of our civilization?" does not seem to be part of her present outlook. Of course, her enormous usefulness is bound to give her the lift that personal action usually can give. But I think it is more than that. My guess is that the performance of human beings in England in this war has made Louise, along with Harold Laski, more sure that there is a quality in this people which transcends despair of civilization.

She is exceptional and extraordinary. But the quality she shows is in other people too down here. On Sunday morning we were making more calls, and we went to one large, modern house, which she said I might like to see, especially the kitchen. It was a charming house, built and furnished by people who had both taste and money. The kitchen was enormous and immaculate, and the big coke-burning stove never went out, but burned only five tons of coke a year. There was a big first-floor nursery look-

ing out over a long green lawn and onto an orchard where later there will be plums, pears, and apples, a priceless crop in wartime. There were big, clean drawing rooms, and the point is that the mistress of the house had to take care of it all herself, with the help of one girl to do some of the kitchen work. There were several children, and ordinarily, I suppose, the house would have kept four or five servants industrious.

The woman who owned the house was as serene and pretty as if she had nothing to do. I said to her, looking out at the children through the nursery door, "It doesn't seem like war."

"No," she answered, "it never has seemed like war. The worst thing has been to hear the planes going over to London and to think of what they were getting there."

Later in the morning, while Louise was making some country calls, I left the car and headed for a church across some fields. It was one of those old gray stone ones that are everywhere in England, the kind that we used to visit, with an ancient graveyard outside and the effigies of a couple of minor nobility lying on stone coffins along the side aisles. This church, I found from the inscription on the wall, had

been built by one who was "unsparing in charity," which is a fine phrase. The church had survived a good many wars. On its door now is a poster on which was painted the swastika and over that the words I BELIEVE so as to obliterate it as far as possible. There was no service in progress, so I managed to have a short one all by myself and then joined Louise and drove back toward home through the village, which was very agreeable that Sunday morning, with men and women dressed up for the day in the same clothes they had been dressing up in for many years of Sundays. There were millions of roses in bloom, everywhere.

Louise tells me that people are moving to the country, that when they have a little income or a chance of livelihood they are leaving the great centers. There will be new suburban areas quickly developed after the war, and of course everyone is greatly concerned lest these become cheap and jerry-built.

My final glimpse from my bedroom window was of Hugh's father half asleep in a deck chair in the garden. There was the air raid shelter on the other side. Ready.

I came back on an afternoon train because I had an appointment here with a man who has an inter-

national project and wanted to talk it over. Of course, I was haunted by all the things we hadn't had time to talk about, but none of us had any more time to spare. Hugh was going back to his job in a few hours, and Louise's work goes on without any pause. It was very ennobling to visit her for even that long. Her endurance, her clarity, set very high standards, and the fact that she can attain them gives me new ideas for what little I should be able to do.

And it was not just seeing Louise but seeing that part of the country which encourages me. It somehow proved a certain indestructibility in England. The people there know it is a somber hour, and that lives are being spent freely. But their respect for life, as instanced in Louise's close attention to the case of a deaf-and-dumb fellow who has asthma, shows that human life is still held high. Hitler and his gang would recommend a "mercy death" for that patient, I am sure. Louise is trying to figure out if his asthma is due to certain botanical allergies. She hopes not, because he can be trained to do some research work in botany and has a love for flowers.

Close to destruction as the people in this district are—and they never know what will happen next—and though they live in the closest frugality, they re-

fuse to give up the attitudes of normal living, even when much of the equipment is gone. The children are not living in suspense or terror. The adults think more profoundly, expect less of life personally, and remember back and look forward to the best they can.

I couldn't wish a better friend for you than Louise Wilson.

Love,

Mother.

Somewhere in the Midlands, June 22

Dearest Mary,

The hotel in which I am laying me down to sleep before long seems to me to offer an extraordinary good gamble that the Lord may be taking my soul or rejecting it possibly before morning. It is an astonishing place, built, I think, for Treasure Hunts, and I am the Grand Prize, for it would be so hard to find me. To get at me just now—if you won't give the secret away—you go up one flight of stairs, turn to the left—or was it the right?—proceed down a corridor, schottische to the left again and up three more steps, find the stairway in the center of the

next hall, and then unwind until you come to my door, next to the outer wall which leads out on a roof cluttered with old, no-thoroughfare fire escapes. The hotel that we stayed at in Quito and thought was so bewildering at the time was a bungalow compared to this.

And in Quito they didn't have blackouts and nightly expectations of bombings. I read in the papers this morning that they bombed Louise's section of England last night, a few hours after I went back to London. The damage is reported as "slight." But I suppose if they bashed in her dispensary or her house, it would be "slight." As war news goes.

It's rather fun in a way to shift my environment from my plush London hotel. Here there is a small wardrobe to hide ghosts and cockroaches in. No clothes hangers. There is a rush-seated chair, a wash-stand, a towel, a bolster, and a dubious down pouffe, and I am on the whole very comfortable, except that it is hot and we have to blackout, so I don't get any air even over the roofs.

Dinner here was a surprise and a problem. I came down rather late and was too tired to have an appetite and almost too late to get in the dining room. But a motherly old waitress took me in charge and said

she could get me "the chicken." And she did. She got me a great piled plate of chicken and potatoes covered with gravy and I had to eat it. I couldn't waste it.

And there was a really delicious dish of ice cream for dessert, and I could not turn away from that either. This is not a fashionable hotel, just a good country one where commercial travelers stay, so I was interested to find the food so plentiful and good.

I took a little walk around the streets of this city tonight, and though it was early as summer evenings go, there were few people to be seen. Nobody loafs. There was apparently no movie open. It seems very peaceful, but you can't help being conscious that the quiet is the stillness of being on guard. The city has escaped the violent blitzes, but here and there a building is gone and its turn may be coming.

I have had quite a day, and at one point it was nearly too much for me. Someone noticed I was pale green in the face and beaded with sweat and suggested a glass of water just in time. But that was at the very end of two long visits to two factories, and it has been hot. Besides, you must concentrate every minute for fear of missing something that you can't go back to look at later.

There will be no names or numbers mentioned in any of my remarks about factories. Have I told you the restrictions in reporting anything about what I may see? It reads: "Nothing may be said about war factories which is likely to lead to identification of the factory, output figures, names of managements or directors, acreage of factory or number of people employed." So even in my notes I don't identify the place, but just put down Factory I, or Factory II, and use letters of the alphabet for people. But that will not prevent me from carrying in my mind the faces and the temperaments of many of these people whom I have been meeting and talking to.

In the first factory the employment of girls is especially notable because it is one classified as "heavy industry." It's a converted factory, and there are nine thousand parts made in it for three types of vehicles. The men in charge, the owner and his manager, gave me a great deal of time, and answered every question not only with frankness but were interested themselves in discussing the matter of women in industry.

Before I went through the factory, the manager asked me what questions I wanted to ask, and I said that I would like to know what were the chief problems involved in the employment of women. He said

with no hesitation, "I can tell you that. There are two major problems. One is shopping, and the other is nurseries."

I thought at first that he was mentioning the things that a woman interested in welfare would concern herself with. Or kidding me. Not so, but far otherwise. These are acute problems, affecting the labor supply, and have to be solved if the firm is to get woman labor. "Shopping" in this connection doesn't mean dawdling around shops trying to get the most for your money. It is tied up with Government rationing and the points system. If a woman doesn't get to the shops during the right hours and on the right days, she is unable to get her share of fresh vegetables, canned goods, and all the things that vary a diet that is bound to be monotonous at best. She can get just so much fresh meat a week—a pound a person with bone, as I told you before. So she wants to have her package of canned meat in addition, her tin of baked beans, and these she can have according to the way she wants to spend her twenty-four "points" a week which are allowed in addition to her basic ration of basic supplies. Vegetables are not rationed, but the one who shops at the end of a working day will find only the bruised and battered carrots and the small potatoes.

It's incredible, isn't it, that this should be a major problem of great industry? But if women are to work in the shops, and if they aren't to play 'possum and stay away from the job, making some excuse for half days off, the employer must figure out ways to allow them a chance to shop. And how they figure! Mr. A. told me they had tried a number of schemes, such as trying to get the retailer to hold back a certain amount of merchandise for their employees and trying to get the Ministry of Supply to allow them to sell to their own employees. These didn't work out very well. The best arrangement seems to be a ten-hour day, with an hour's break for lunch, except on Mondays and Fridays, when they close four hours earlier "for pictures and for shopping."

As they say "shopping," I think of what shopping means to so many women in the United States, of the way they can choose among so many articles of food, so many articles for household use. I think of the counters in the dime stories, heaped with big doughnuts and chocolate éclairs, and of all the cosmetics available in ten-cent packages, and the hairpins and the electric light bulbs and the candles and the thousand and one gadgets that are available to us today. I remember the stores like Macy's, with racks and racks of cheap, pretty dresses, the quantities

of hats, the blouses, the neckwear. And then I think of this shopping here, which is stripped down to what is needed and nothing more, and wonder how we'll adjust to it when our turn comes for deprivation, though we'll always live in luxury in comparison to women in other countries, no doubt.

It will do us good, I think. It will make us feel more real, sounder.

The other human problem which affects employment is making some sort of provision for the care of children during the working hours of the mothers. You see, they want to employ women who live reasonably close to the factories. They can't take time to put up hostels, so they want to coax out what amounts to a local emergency labor supply, using up the energy available in the locality. Plenty of women will work if they can be sure the children aren't going to be neglected or in danger while they are away. Our laundress at home has exactly the same problem.

The proper answer is well-managed nurseries, but the supply of nurseries lags 'way behind the need and demand for them. There has been talk of establishing nurseries at the factories. But most people do not think this is a good idea, as it increases the

dangers of bombing for the children—factories are what the Germans would like to bomb. Also, the districts are not proper for nurseries; and further, to have their little children so close to them when they work would distract the mothers.

They haven't a solution yet. They do the best they can.

It seemed to me that this was a very imaginative management. They aren't in the least afraid of innovations, and they have a motto, which is: "The War Will Be Won in the Workshops." They seem to be willing to try anything. Of course, they have music for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon, which seemed to me an excellent plan, instead of having it all the time. When it plays for an hour at a time it's a concert, not just sounds you get used to; and here and there, while it was going on, somebody would begin to whistle along with it, and then a lot of workers would take it up.

They encourage savings and feature the amount that the people employed in the factory save, making a big thing of it when the total rolls up. It's a matter of pride to save money in this factory, which is all to the good for the future.

But the thing that this management is chiefly not-

able for is its part-time work innovations. Perhaps after we have been in the war nearly three years, our lawyers and judges will take a half-day at the shipyards and a half-day at their desks. That's what some of the legal profession do here. I had one gentleman rather well on the far side of middle age quietly pointed out to me by the owner, and was told that he was an eminent local jurist. At the moment he was working on a machine like any operator, in the same kind of overalls, and he looked completely absorbed in his work.

They tell a story, too, of how rushed they were during the month of December last year, and how short of labor. So they looked around the district to see where energy was not being used, and realized that a lot of strong boys were home for the Christmas holidays. They got in touch with the men schoolmasters, with the result that both teachers and boys came to work during the holidays and got a great deal of work done.

The foreman in charge of the shop where they had worked said that the boys weren't any too easy to handle. He prefers women part-timers himself. And there were a great many of them in the shops. They were not very skilled workers, but they had

turned from the dishpan and the breadboard to the machine shop, and it was simply amazing to see what they could do. They were gay as larks, too, and rather amusing in their pride in themselves. I talked to them, and they said that they all were married and had homes and could do this too in half a day.

When I think of the waste women I've seen in audiences in the U.S.A.! I began to figure what we could do at home in a pinch—and also how much less dull a good many faces would be. Anyway, without dwelling on it, here is an accomplished fact. With suitable instructors, as many as six shifts a day with a minimum of twelve hours a week per shift can be efficiently arranged. It's the efficiency that counts of course. This is not being tried for the fun of the thing.

Another thing they do is to take around tea in the middle of each shift, on what they call "trolleys," which are trucks on wheels, and that breaks the monotony in the same way the music does. Also, it's stimulating. The work in nearly every case is monotonous, and in most cases hard and bound to create a strain. I have seen thousands of girls and women today in overalls. My respect for us—the sex—seems to be at an all-time high tonight.

Fat and lean, old and young, they are so competent. From the rooms where they sort out the materials to the inspection rooms is a long progress, and in between the vehicles for making war are made. They will go to Libya and to Russia—Heaven knows where. But everyone wishes that there were thousands of them in Libya right now. The news isn't good.

Brake rods, engines, gearboxes, axles—women working on all parts of tanks and trucks, and knowing what they are doing too. Now and then I'd ask a girl what she had done before, and it was always something so remote from her present job and yet so recent a transfer that I spent most of the day in astonishment. Some of them are still awkward. But I saw one young woman mechanic working with the rhythm of a young man. There was nothing nervous about her motions, nothing hurried. There wasn't a waste move.

By the time I got through with that factory I had plenty to think about, but I hurried on to the next one as soon as the tour was complete and the answers to my questions in my notebook. It's always interesting to see how different managers can be. The

top men in the first factory had been serious, concentrated men. The managing head of the second factory was a jolly gentlemen, very Scotch, very welcoming, and proud as Punch of his factory.

It wasn't empty vanity. His plant works for a number of War Ministries—the Army, the Navy, the Air Ministry, and the Ministry of Supply. It makes thirty-four different kinds of gearboxes, the motors for tanks (I had just been seeing the bodies made), speed motors for boats, and radio reception apparatus. From that you can figure out what a great variety of trade knowledge is under that one factory roof. Though it really isn't all under one roof. There are separate buildings, and the place bursts out at the seams with production.

When it is necessary to expand production, the very energetic Mr. H. doesn't wait to get his structures finished. He sets up the machines as soon as there is a floor for them to be attached to, and then production goes ahead while the walls are being built. You see a scaffolding and a canvas wall covering and know the outside walls will be finished some time. But the gearboxes have to be out next month. I was in one big room with porcelain walls which will be a lavatory later. But for the time being they

need it for a physical research laboratory so they get along with the old lavatories.

If it ever gets done, the building will be a model of modern construction. And the canteen is the best I have seen to date. The meals cost one shilling on the average, and the menu at least looked good. They told me too that their fire and air raid protection was excellent, that all the buildings could be emptied—wait till I underline that—*in sixteen seconds!*

All this came out with no undue modesty on the part of the management, but what they really brag about is the training center which the firm itself has established for its women workers. The pride of the owner is just about the same that Dr. MacCracken is apt to show in Vassar. The training is different from that within the industry, which was what the plant I visited this morning offered. In this Factory II, as my notes have it for the censor's sake, the girls who are taken from peacetime jobs are first tested for aptitude. Then, if they are good enough, they go to the management's private training school, which is run just like a college. The girls live there for ten weeks, and all seem to come out looking smart and quite able to work on machines. Maybe they drop the girls who fail into an oubliette. They didn't mention any failures.

Certainly the graduates I saw looked trim and handsome enough to shame me, who was already sagging on my feet. It's an odd experience to go through machine shops and see so many shining permanent waves bent over their jobs. The girls work in all but the heaviest work, though the proportion of women employed is less than that in other plants I have visited. But they are scattered all through the shops. I talked to one girl whose husband is in Malta, and she told me, with pride, that she could now set up her own beautiful machine. That really is something.

There was a pretty twenty-four-year-old supervisor who sort of epitomized the modernity of the place, like a poster. I had to smile once or twice, because they like their girls to be so good-looking and smart. The girls who had been to the training school had it all over the ones who hadn't, even to the class pin gleaming on the uniforms!

The comments of the management were as usual. The female worker has superior patience and deftness. She does some things better than men. Here, as elsewhere, she doesn't get a man's pay (the man being regarded as head of the family, potential or actual), but she gets three-fifths of a man's pay. The average in most places is two-thirds. A "good girl"

id one of the managers, is in a better position
save than a man, especially because of the restric-
ɔns on her buying. I can't get the reasoning.

I talked to dozens of girls. It is sometimes difficult
r me, doing a job like this, because I am not a fac-
ry investigator by training and have to brace myself
ery time I ask personal questions of another human
ing. But there was usefulness and purpose in doing
and everyone was ready to talk. They all agree
at the work has to be done. Most of them enjoy
but no one wants to stay at the machines indef-
itely.

Everyone who wants to smokes. One thing I have
:her liked about the smoking situation over here
that many women who don't work in factories
d aren't in uniforms have given up smoking,
rtly because there was a shortage a while ago and
course partly because it's expensive and one way
cut down on budgets. Cigarettes are generously
't for the people who need them most. I get a good
al of pleasure out of seeing a woman with a ciga-
te working away at her machine with no self-
nsciousness. It was not always so.

Most of the girls seem to be saving money. Em-
ɔyers always get vague when wages are discussed.

But I pressed hard for answers, and the right one seems to be that if trained and competent and deft and patient, a girl or woman in this work earns from four pounds ten to five pounds a week. This is not a lot of money from American standards, but it is good as wages go over here.

I got back to the front office just in time, for I was dizzy. Never have I covered as much ground as I covered today. Then I had a cup of tea, and then I came back to the hotel, and now I am going to sleep and even a bomb couldn't wake me if it blew me to bits.

Love,

Mother.

June 23

Dear Mary,

I shall probably not get far with this tonight, but I must describe my nest for the night because it is so different from my lodging last night. This time I am sleeping in a girls' hostel, which is one of two close to a Royal Ordnance factory somewhere in

England, where I have spent the day seeing how to make shells and who makes them.

The hostel is not within walking distance of the factory, and an hour or so ago I saw the night shift go off to work in buses. For reasons of peace and safety, the hostel is set down in a rural countryside, and the effect is as if some extraordinary educationally-minded aviator had flown over and dropped a campus complete with buildings. The buildings are all new and all one-storied, for there is no wish to attract attention to the fact that they are here. We are well blacked out by this time of course—it being past midnight—and I know just which way to turn down the hall to get to the air raid shelter. My room is a small single one at the end of a corridor with all that a single woman needs—a narrow but comfortable bed, a bureau, a chair, and a wardrobe. The hangers have a crown on them, for this is Crown property. I wish I could take one home for a pet, but honesty restrains me. Also, the size of my dressing case holds me back from thieving.

The bed disappoints me, for I had hoped that I would be given the kind of bed many rooms have in the dormitories here, on which there is no spring. The mattress, which is a fairly thick pad, is laid

on a wooden bed supposed to be built to the curve of the body and very comfortable; and I hoped to try one and see for myself if that was true. But my bed has a spring. The idea of the curved wooden ones is no doubt to conserve metal, but if they are really good I should think that they would be better than a sagging spring; and most springs do sag after a few years of use and have to be slept on anyway.

I have this little room to myself, but in most cases a room of this size is occupied by two girls. Each girl has her own bed and small bureau. There isn't much space, but she has a good clean place to sleep, meals—I'll come to those in a minute—a place to wash and dry her clothes, movies, post office and writing rooms in the main buildings, and parlors where she can have the boy friend, also in the main building. So she isn't confined to her room and probably isn't in it very much.

At present the hostel buildings are not pretty. They are painted in drab colors, again for reasons of protection. I was saying to the woman in charge this afternoon that I can imagine the buildings all painted white some day—they are brick and would look fine with whitewash. And with ivy growing over the

doors and with landscaping, this could be a very fine vacation center for working girls.

I think it is all right to say that this is one of two hostels, both connected with this factory and each housing a thousand workers, who are only a small proportion of those employed at that. It cost a little less than twenty thousand pounds to build, and that means fully equipped. That seems remarkably cheap, for the structure is sound, the plumbing modern and good, there's a hairdressing room with all sorts of driers so you can handle your own hair if you are smart, and there is a laundry where you can wash your own clothes, and each girl who wants one has her own separate little drying rack in the drying room.

Not one handkerchief has been stolen from that drying room, which astonishes Miss Woolton as much as it does me. She says that some of the girls are very poor and that when they came they had nothing except the one or two garments they stood up in. But they have been able to get a few simple clothes as they earned money, and they have learned how to launder them, a thing many of them never knew before.

I have been over most of the hostel buildings

tonight and covered literally miles in the factory blocks today. And I have met four exceptionally interesting people. One is the labor manager of the women, Miss Catnach, one is Miss Joyce Woolton, the head of this hostel, the third is a young, fair-haired Episcopal rector, who acts as chaplain to the girls of that faith here (when he can catch them), and the fourth is a friend of his who happens to be here today and who was chief air raid warden of Liverpool during the blitz. He has the blackest circles under his eyes of any man I have ever seen, and the same marks of fatigue seem to be in his mind. But I had better tell you about the factory before I write about the air raid warden. It's all of a piece, in one way—for the war is the bond and the foundation of all that is going on, and that is what I am here to find out about. But the manifestations of it sometimes have no military look. They may be a leaflet of prayers to be read in air raid shelters, such as the warden gave me tonight—beautiful prayers they are—or they may be hairdressing equipment and laundry tubs for the use of Welsh and Irish girls who come to work in the war factories.

This particular factory is Government owned, and when I was last in England, in August of 1939, it

didn't exist. That autumn there were fields and thickets of small trees in this district, and in the distance were mild hills. When we drove out from the station this morning, it was still so early that there was a fresh look to all the flowering weeds and everything looked the way England ought to look and wants to look—peaceful and fertile and very contented with itself. Then we turned a corner, crossed a bridge, and there were literally acres of new buildings, and everywhere the sight and sound of this strange work.

Getting the factory established was a rather heroic job. They began it when war broke out, and production was under way three months later. The buildings weren't finished, of course. The mud was thick, and it was an English winter. But they were producing munitions in March, 1940, and they have been steadily at it ever since, making them to be lost at Dunkirk, making more to replace the lost supplies, getting them ready to ship all over the world to their own troops, to the Greeks, to the Russians, to any nation which would take a hand in the fight.

Here women are employed by thousands. The majority are drawn from the near-by towns, but many

come from Scotland or Northern Ireland, so this is a place where the mobile labor problems crop up.

In peacetime no women workers were employed in this work, so the whole personnel is doing work that is comparatively new to it, though some have been at it now nearly the full time that the factory has been going. I don't mean that the girls and women didn't work before. Most of them did. There are a few "ladies" who work in the shops and live at the hostel. "The Mayfair group," as the others refer to them. But many of the others have been in silk weaving, in the potteries, making tiles, and they have a family tradition of factory work.

When the shift is over they pour out of the buildings by hundreds. Miss Catnach, who is a woman of imagination, said, "Let's go down by the bridge and you can get the best view." So we stood on the bridge—this, you understand, was at the factory proper and has nothing to do with the hostel—and watched the girls and women and men going down to the place in the valley where they would get buses and trains that would take them to their homes or lodgings. Some were going to rest, some undoubtedly were only transferring from a factory job to one of housework that would be almost as hard.

They seemed to be all ages, from apple-cheeked children of under twenty to gray-haired women who looked grim. The very young ones are volunteers. The ones from twenty to twenty-four are "directed labor," sent to the job by the Government. The older ones, mostly married, come to work for two reasons. For money and out of patriotism.

The word from the top was very definite. I heard Miss Catnach ask the man in the most inner of all the offices, where I was being welcomed, "Is Mrs. Banning to go everywhere, even into the danger buildings?" He said, "She is to see everything that interests her." And I did.

The plant manufactures small arms and munitions, and makes and loads shells. So the jobs and skills involved and needed are very many. The women don't work on every process, but they aren't kept only on assembly lines either. I saw shells made from beginning to end, from the time they were great billets of copper and brass until they were loaded and ready to kill, and there were girls working almost everywhere.

There was a big woman with powerful arms operating a crane, and she looked as if she were part of the machine. There were women working on the

rolling machines which flatten out the great hunks of copper and brass before they are shaped and fitted and stamped and tested and filled. On the floor you see great baskets of shells, half finished, or partly ready, depending on what the process is in that particular room. Of course, the women work on the assembly lines in what is joint piecework, and they aren't apt to look up as you pass because they don't want to lose time. But if Miss Catnach stopped one of them, they were ready enough to talk. The stories of their work, the reasons for working, were the ones with which I've become familiar in these past weeks. The problems of children at home and of shopping were the same that I've told you about before.

Before you go into the danger rooms you put on rubber shoes. This, they say, is for reasons of cleanliness. Also because of decreasing noise and jars or electric contacts. Anyway, you go through a cloakroom and are fitted out with rubber overshoes and then go into the big bright workrooms where intent women are loading the shells with cordite. There seem to have been very few accidents, and every precaution is taken. But the girls in the danger rooms get more money.

There is one serious problem of working conditions

here. I have heard it discussed in other factories too, and there doesn't seem to be much that can be done about it. The factories have to be blacked out at night, of course, for the protection of workers and plant. That means covering the windows, and the lack of fresh air is dreadful, especially on a hot night. You can imagine what it would be like. I suppose that if some future devil looses another war on the world, and has prepared for it, his factories would be all subterranean and air-conditioned, but there is no stopping to air-condition factories now. The equipment isn't available, and the hot, breathless rooms have to be endured with the thought that maybe it's tougher for the men in the armed forces.

You hear singularly little complaint about that or anything else. It's the management who wish they could do something about it. In fact, as you go about in these war factories where the purpose of the job is constantly held before everyone, you can't help wondering what effect this may have on future conditions in industry. The old-fashioned hard boss, the sort of person who was in control in Pittsburgh in the early days, simply doesn't exist. Not in this war work.

Miss Catnach, for example, is here to do a job for

patriotic reasons. She used to have charge of the women in a big candy factory, and then she retired, feeling it was time for her to do so. But the war broke out, the management of this government factory had to have someone to handle this problem of women's employment, and the fact that she was expert in that line made them ask her to take it over. It's a big job. I went with her into the canteen after lunch, when the new girls who were sent by the Government to work here, or the ones who were volunteering, were waiting for interviews. There were about forty at the time. Each of them had to be and would be talked to personally, and Miss Catnach would have a knowledge, not complete but at least indicative, of what each girl was like and what her background was. When we were standing by the bridge watching the shifts change, I noticed one thing which alone settled her ability in my mind. All the women wanted to speak to her. I could tell from their smiles and finally she turned around and looked away from the crowd, saying to me, "Perhaps they feel they must speak to me. I'll look the other way, and they needn't bother."

I have a picture of many of those shops in my mind right now. Of a woman with a cigarette in her mouth

handling a huge machine and smiling as she said she could set it up now. Of tea being served in the danger room. Of the decontamination rooms, where in case of gas attacks the workers would go into the first room and leave their clothes, into the second room and get hot showers, and into the third and be provided with fresh clothing. Not that I can see where there would be enough fresh clothing for all those girls, if the attack were widespread. The piles looked small to me.

My shift lasted somewhat longer than that of most of the others, but finally they brought me over here to the hostel, through another stretch of countryside, and I was offered the thing I wanted most, a bath. My gray suit stands up very well, by the way. The greatest virtue of the material is that you can scrub spots off it with soap and water, and it may be my great skill that leaves no ring, or maybe I just don't see the rings. Anyway, I live pretty much in the gray suit, varying the blouses now and then, and I've gone back to the gray wool turban I bought long since in Greenville, South Carolina, which I nearly put in the Good Will bag a year ago. But it's firm and the right color and hasn't anything dangling from it. I'm no beauty, but at least I'm not an overdressed Amer-

ican. And thank Heaven I brought two pairs of low-heeled shoes for this steady tramping I'm doing.

I wish you could see this hostel. My mental picture was of a big, old-fashioned orphanage crossed with a cheap hotel. But it's not like that. There's been both imagination and realism in the setup. Miss Woolton, fortunately, is not motherly in a professional manner. She doesn't regard it as her job to chaperon the girls, though she does make it her business to see that when the soldiers or the boy friends are around there's no chance in the building for funny business. The men are allowed to stay in one building—she regrets that she has no place where married couples could be together—and in charge of the men's building is a man.

She is free from illusions. She knows that with that many people in a place you can't expect to have one pervasive mood. There are girls from North Ireland who are rough-mannered and noisy, and there are girls who look down on them, and no doubt here are all the usual affections and hates that flourish in any body of women. Miss Woolton does her best to make them comfortable, to give them freedom. But she doesn't tolerate anyone's staying out all night,

and they have to be at meals when it's time for meals—within the half hour.

Which is fair enough, when you realize that the kitchen has to work twenty out of twenty-four hours! That's because it is providing for several shifts, and each shift of girls has to have breakfast, a main meal, and a supplementary one. These meals have to be really substantial, too, because the girls are hearty eaters.

I spent some time in the dining room, in the kitchen, and in the "stores." Beginning with the stores, I thought there was enough food for the winter as I looked around. Great cans of marmalade, big tubs of butter, cheese, a refrigerated room with meat hanging from every hook. The system is that the girls turn over their ration cards to the hostel while they are in residence, and that means that the manager can buy in job lots for the whole crowd. The girls win on this plan, because while a personal ration of butter or meat isn't large, when it is multiplied by hundreds and cleverly cooked or served, there is more to eat than if a person has only his own small share.

Certainly I never saw so much bread and butter. There was one room where an old woman, who

looked like a clean old witch, sat on a stool buttering and buttering slices of bread. They rose around her in stacks on every side, and they had that wonderful smell that fresh bread and butter has. It looked like a supply for a thousand girls, to my amateur eye, but it was just enough for tea for one shift. Later, when I saw the amount that each girl took, I was surprised that there was enough to go around.

The girls all gain weight if they are thin. It would be a good place for you to work for that reason. The very fat ones lose the surplus weight to some extent, but none of them looks gaunt. They have a hard working day, of course, but it has the advantages of having no domestic responsibilities superadded to factory work and of having plenty of food and an adequate place and enough time to sleep. I am sure the girls here have a better break than most factory workers. We went into the infirmary tonight, and there were girls getting rest and attention, just as they would in any well-run college. The infirmary is new, and there were vases of flowers in the room, the sun was coming pleasantly through the windows, the girls who were in bed had other girls coming to see them, and they weren't very sick anyhow.

At the movies there were a good many men. Not

enough to go around but quite a few. Some were visiting their own girls, and some were soldiers from the force which guards plants not so far off from the hostel as to make a call impossible, when off duty. It's a chance for the soldiers to see a movie, and take a girl out for a walk and confidential and emotional alk. Or a little petting. I stayed around the main building, watching the shifts change and seeing what he meals were like. In the meantime I talked to the air raid warden who had been at Liverpool, and he old me what it had been like in that city, which seems to have been pounded more than almost any other. He told me one story of a morning after a bad raid. Everyone was not only tired but still nervous. That was because there were unexploded time bombs around and they knew it. A priest came hurrying out of his house and down toward the roped-off district, and some official said, rather roughly, "You can't go there. We're waiting for a time bomb to explode!" The priest looked at his watch and asked, "When? Won't I have time to say mass?"

So that's the way they were, apparently. They are not merry people, however, even when they augh. I think that merriment has passed out of their capacities forever. They may come through with serenity but not lightheartedness.

The chaplain and air raid warden and I talked about religion, and I asked if there were signs of religious revival or a deepening interest in Great Britain.

"No," said the chaplain, "perhaps people are less interested today."

I don't believe he meant that. At any rate, he had no slightest intention of giving up working to develop greater interest. He was arranging services for the girls at dawn next day because it was the feast of St. John the Baptist.

The air raid warden went out and came back with a couple of pamphlets for me, one a description he had written of air raids in Liverpool, and another a little booklet of hymns that were sung in the shelters during raids.

I do not believe that religion is losing hold. For one thing, there is no despair in Great Britain. There is cynicism to be heard and seen, but even that is mellowed with the spirit of sharing, of getting along with other people, of doing your own part. They are practicing Christianity here, because of the lack of despair, because of their faith in life even when it is hard, because of their love of children, their desire for wisdom, and their mutual sacrifices. In all the churches—and out of the churches too.

The most lighthearted lot tonight were the girls from the North of Ireland, who were eating supper when I stopped to talk to them. They have a reputation for doing quite a bit of arguing if not quarreling among themselves, but they were very agreeable and ready to talk as far as I was concerned. They all are saving money, and when the subject arose each began to tell how much she saved and to go the next one one better. "I sent a pound home," and "I sent my mother thirty shillings!"

Grand girls, rough or not. I wish I had had time to make friends with them, but there was none. There was a lot to see and besides they needed their sleep.

The girls go out looking very neat. They come back less neat but still not too disheveled and not as work-worn and dizzy as I had expected after seeing how long they stood at the machines and how hot some of the workrooms were. I'm pretty dizzy myself at the moment and need sleep, but today has been so exciting that it's going to be hard to compose myself. This whole venture, setting up a great plant for meeting a desperate war emergency and then providing for housing many of the workers in comfort and feeding them well and not forgetting recreation and even small luxuries that keep up morale, has my hat

off in admiration. They've put dietitians and housekeepers back of the production effort, which is something for us to remember when our time comes. There is no reason why young factory workers (and old ones) can't be as well safeguarded as girls who go off to college.

I'm probably making this all a little too rosy. Of course, some of the girls don't like the place. They kick about the food. A few make trouble. But that's true in any institution, whether it's an orphanage, a hospital, or a wealthy men's club. And what stirs me here is that these factory girls aren't being made into drudges. They will be better for having worked and lived like this, unless the place is blown up some night.

Not tonight, I hope.

Love,

Mother.

June, 24

Dear Mary,

What I saw in my last day of factory inspections didn't change many of my deductions as to the

general factory picture. The rest of the plants I inspected were in great centers and were mostly converted in whole or part from peacetime work. Here the problems of care of children while the mothers worked and the "shopping" difficulties cropped up again as admitted managerial worries.

But in these older factories, where women have always been employed, I came up against more fixations in regard to the limitations of women's capacities than I had in the others. One manager said that women are not ambitious and will not willingly "move from their machines." But he, too, liked women workers and said to me that not only did they show no fear during blitzes (of which there were some in this place) but that 93 per cent of them calmly appeared for work the next morning, picking their way through rubble-confused streets.

There is no upper age limit. I saw women as old as sixty-seven working. And they looked pretty spry. In some places they prefer to have a permanent night shift and a permanent day shift because it obviates upheavals in domestic arrangements every time a shift changes, and also there isn't so much gastric trouble when women are on a steady schedule and not turn-

ing day into night for a while and then night into day.

The fair conclusion seems to be that women are, on the whole, patriotically motivated. But this is subject to deviation and to variation, and much depends on the firm and on human relations within it. There are girls who say to you, "Once I was too tired to go to work. But usually I don't miss a second." And others look up from their machines in a kind of daze, not quite seeing that you stand beside them.

I do not know whether they can stand two more years of this fatigue or not. Luckily vacations are recognized as necessary and they are being studied closely with the idea of making them of most advantage to efficiency. Luckily also, younger girls will come into industry to help out. So shall we.

The most frightening thing I hear in industry is that occasional, almost uncomplaining phrase, "I'm tired." But no one has said, "I'm tired out." Or "I'm exhausted." Nor intimated that she can't go on.

Looking over the whole picture as I did on the train coming home to London—funny, how that word "home" slipped out, but that's the way it felt, too—I began to see that the managements are of two types, in the main. There are the ones who have

always employed women and are employing more to increase output without changing their opinion of women's abilities. Then there are the managements which are experimenting in women's labor to some degree, and to them the possibilities are not yet explored. In one place I saw a girl putting the cockpit of an airplane together, and it was a dramatic sight, the shining blond head and the shining metal parts and the shape of the plane half emergent.

I had plenty to think about coming home. The journey had its own points too. I was in a third class carriage, packed in between an elderly woman who looked like a housekeeper, and a small dreary young woman who immediately told me, as a matter of public interest, that she "had just buried her mother." Beyond her was a very fat, hot man and across from him a white-haired Israelite who had obeyed the Government warnings on the posters to "bring food with you." Next to him was the child of the burying woman, a boy of about ten, who was excited to savage appetite by the sight of the old Jew's lunch, and beyond him were two young men, one in uniform and one in mufti, who listened but did not mix with the rest of us.

The fat man and the Jew began to discuss almost

instantly the question of whether there was a God or not, considering the wickedness of war. Disappointingly, they found out that they agreed that there was a God, and neither would be taunted out of his belief in order to give the other a sparring partner. So then the talk fell on the deprivations of war. The Jewish gentleman took out a bottle of milk, which was strangely brown, and we all glued our eyes on it as he drank, and then the woman (the housekeeper one) muttered to me, "There's more in that than milk!" and the other woman said, "It's my boy I worry about, getting him enough to eat." He was worrying too, so she opened a paper bag and took out an enormous sandwich for him and a second one for herself, saying all the time, "I suppose we'll end by starving."

The boy was pleasantly fat, by the way.

The facts of the supernatural being agreed upon and the deprivations of war discussed, as well as possible with such full mouths, the talk turned to America.

"Oh God," said the funeral woman, gesturing with sandwich, "when will the Americans come?"

I thought that was my cue, so I said that I was an American and that we were coming as fast as we

could. And that simple announcement—that I came from the U.S.A.—nearly put the train off the track. They all wanted to ask questions at once, and they couldn't have been friendlier. The Jewish gentleman wanted to know how old I was, and whether I was Dorothy Thompson. The funeral woman wanted to know everything, how much my passage cost, about how plentiful everything was in America, if I hadn't been afraid to come, and when the war was going to be over. The fat man also wanted to know what was going to be the duration, and how many ships we were turning out, and what we were sending to Russia. The boy, between bites, evidently expected me to yell, "Hi, Silver!" and ride away at any minute. The housekeeper looked at me as if I were a combination of butter and eggs. Even the two who didn't mix stared and listened, and I answered all questions fully, with a large proportion of truth too, you had better believe.

It was really wonderful, to see that my just being there, and American, made a day's adventure for every person in the carriage. Something to talk about when they got home, something to quote, personal proof positive that Americans were "coming over" and maybe that we didn't have horns. We all got to

be tremendous friends. The Jew offered me some of his "milk," and I felt almost as exhilarated as if I had taken some before I got off the train with the rest and lost them all forever. I came back to the hotel to find that a pile of mail was waiting and to feel that the porters and the waiters were practically blood-kin because their faces were familiar and I hadn't seen anyone in the last few days whom I had ever seen before. But what days they have been for proving to me how hard England is at work and how many women are standing at their machines this minute refuting Hitler!

That is not melodrama. That is the way they feel about it. The girls I talked to are in for the war's duration and to win the war. And there are posters everywhere in the factories: "What We Make Today Will Be in the Skies Next Week."

God knows I hope so. London is still aghast at the fall of Tobruk. They know what it means, that the war stretches on into a fog of time. As for the reasons, the papers clamor with a freedom of expression that is very reassuring. They don't know whether it was failure in generalship or failure in their own equipment, but they want to find out and they mean to make the Government explore the reasons and give

the answers. We have been in the war three years, say the editorials, and why should our equipment not be adequate? Why can Rommel ask for refrigerated tanks and get them within a year when ours are incompetent for action in the desert? Why are our guns not what they should be?

Just during these last ten days the people here have realized that the war can't possibly end this year. Of course, the leaders knew it all the time, but the small hopes that were arising when I first got here have been pretty thoroughly extinguished. They are pretty grim in mood now.

That's all for tonight.

Love,

Mother.

June 26

Dear Mary,

Tomorrow is a busy day. I am to see Sir Stafford Cripps in the morning at eleven and then go down to Cliveden. There will be plenty to write by the time I get back Sunday night, so I'll catch up on these last two days though it is late.

It's amazing how many different groups of people you can see in two days if you are as detached as I am this month. Each time I go out I seem to knock on the door of a separate world. But all the worlds are at war, that's one sure thing.

You know what happened to me yesterday? I was given an orchid. It was the most amazing thing because I have felt so removed from the days when an occasional orchid arrived all gleaming in cellophane. Caroline Haslett sent me a beautiful bouquet of garden flowers and they have been making me feel good, but the orchid was a great occasion. I was lunching at the house of Mr. Glenn Abbey, who is in the Embassy, and to whom Mrs. Berle had given me a letter, and the lady who presented the orchid was Mrs. Roockhurst-Roberts, whose name sounds like a Pinero play. But she was a frank, amusing lady of character, who knew what she thought about people and life and books and didn't mind saying so. And she thought maybe an orchid would do me good and somehow rest my spirit if not my feet. How right she was!

She also gave me a little advice rather unconsciously. We were talking of various literary journals and of how boring they can get when they deal only

with the acquaintanceships of the author, and of literary or journalistic sets outside of which the reader sits humbly, though urged to peep at the company at $2.50 a look. This was not what Mrs. R.-R. said but what she intimated in her various criticisms, all of which were pretty sound. She doesn't like to waste her time, and if I know anything about women she uses hers to advantage.

The talk was good—partly on labor methods, some on the strategy of economics, with some gossip about the titles and the great, who seemed to be well and personally known to everyone except me. The rest of the company were Sir Louis and Lady Greig, he very uniformed and informed and hurriedly at lunch between engagements, and she a very lovely lady interested deeply and serenely in what I had found out about hostels.

The thing about people of gentle birth in England is that every time you meet them you find out all over again how accurate the novelists are—their own good novelists, I mean.

Lunches with really busy people are always fun because they are not prolonged. I hate to sit around in the afternoon and watch the processes of digestion slowing the mind, but to meet with interest and

energy, eat your lunch, and go on to what comes next in the day's work is always pleasant. We don't have the same sort of lunch in the midwestern United States often, partly because we have separated the sexes for lunch by national habit.

The food was good too.

I reported to the Ministry of Information in the afternoon as to where I had been and what I had done with my time. I inquired and found that my passage home was as undetermined and misty as ever. Then I stopped at the good old American Express office to ask them to establish my credit so that if necessary I could get money at short notice from the U.S.A. The offices are almost empty now. No tourists hanging around for mail—no chance of saying, "Where did you come from?" to someone you didn't know was in England. You know pretty accurately who are over here now from the United States the week after you get here.

Then I came back to my room and worked on the infirm Queen-Anne-period typewriter, trying to assemble some of my factory data. So much material is beginning to pile up, and I don't want to pick and choose the wrong things to take back to the U.S.A. Space is too limited, and the matter of weight

too serious. It's certainly not like flying around South America and paying for excess baggage with a free and extravagant hand. Those golden days of spoiling ourselves are pretty well over—and permanently, I guess. So I spent an interesting afternoon weeding out parliamentary reports and health and food pamphlets and trying to figure out which ones had not been circulated in the United States and which would be most useful. There's a pile on the table now, all ready for the censor.

I was dining with Colonel Guy Chapman and Storm Jameson, who, you remember, is his wife, and they were waiting for me when I got there at 7:30 because it's essential to get to one of the places where there is still good food as early as possible, not only to get a table but also to have a choice of food before it runs out. I have not been in one of the big hotel or restaurant kitchens, but from the way items are crossed from the menus during the course of a meal, I have a vision of absolutely scraped kettles and pans. And often you see a waiter's jaws move after he has picked up something that a customer didn't eat.

The Chapmans are doing too much for me, but I can not seem to stop them. Some day I shall get them in the United States and try to repay the hospitality,

but to offer hospitality out of a peacetime plenty would never make up for what they do for me here. I have met no one whose expression does not take on admiration and affection when Storm Jameson's name is mentioned. She is loved by all kinds of people, and when you think that she has lived in the middle of the competitions and mix-ups of literary, political, and now military sets, you realize what a remarkable achievement it is. She has no apparent egotism, but, in spite of that and her frailty, I have never met a less passive person.

She had asked Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Tom Harrisson for dinner. The spelling of that last name is unlikely but correct. He is the head and moving spirit of Mass Information, an organization here which has its nearest parallel in our Gallup Poll. They undertake inquiries and make reports on the processes of social change and political trends. It is independent, scientific, and fact-finding, according to its own statement, and is concerned only with getting facts, developing and improving methods for ascertaining these facts, and disseminating the results. It doesn't believe that social sciences can operate only at the academic level, and the people it studies are people who can be interested in the results. So much I

gleaned from a study of one of its documents this morning, as well as the fact that it has a team of trained, whole-time investigators and many voluntary collaborators. But when it began work it had no money, and only a handful of people were interested.

Now you would expect Mr. Harrisson to be a meticulous, punctual fellow, after all that. But he was later than I was. We had finished a drink and had ordered dinner when he drifted in, looking tired as only a young man can look, rather blurred with exhaustion and somewhat untidy.

Someone asked what he had been doing, and he said that he had been spending the afternoon reading over all of BBC's war reports for the last few months, because he wanted to see at what point the British public had been given false optimism about the war, especially the battle of Egypt. There is—I don't think I've mentioned this to you—considerable feeling here that the radio, which is, of course, Government controlled, has been unwisely optimistic and hasn't presented the gravity of the situation to the public.

He said that the reports of war news had been accurate, and we talked about how broadcasts could contain the facts and yet give a false impression to the listening public. They can, of course. The way

different items of news are weighted, their position in the text, the over-accent or lack of accent, the blithe optimism or serenity of a voice itself, all can be instrumental in misrepresenting the truth.

Myself, I think that several main things make for better news reporting on the air in the United States than what they get over here. The first is that in Britain the communiques and direct war news are all reported by one or more people who might as well be one person, because the voice training and accent is invariably the same. It's all what we call Oxford, though clear and uncaricatured. But the leaning is away from undue emphasis in statement. That's what they are taught over here—a gentleman keeps cool. And it's a very good idea, except that a cool gentleman isn't a very vivid reporter when all the ends of his sentences twist up at the end in exactly the same twist. And another thing is that at home we get and discount the personalities of commentators, and if we hear two or three, Kaltenborn dramatizing, Davis understating, Thompson exhorting, Swing soothing without consoling, and so on—we have a good idea of how the news has struck a lot of different people, and the sum of it is clear. Finally, the determination not to panic at all costs and never to show how bad a

thing may be so that the enemy may think he has affected morale naturally comes into the radio reporting.

We shall have this problem surely later, of giving our own people the depressing facts that are sure to come, without giving the enemy comfort or aid.

Anyway, we said all this back and forth, and food came and went, and we talked on many subjects. Both Mr. and Mrs. Williams have a tremendous lot to tell anyone now, for he is in charge of the educational work with the British Army and she is in the Ministry of Labour. I was learning so much that I wanted the conversation to go on forever, though once in a while it was so personal I couldn't follow it. They talked about the progress of war through the failure of political policies and individuals. I could follow only part of the way, and once I cut in to say what I still think is true, viz., that one of the reasons why many people in the United States were reluctant to enter the war was that the political situation in England was so muddled, and lots of Americans saw no reason why young men from Minnesota should try to preserve the British Empire.

They said in no uncertain terms that we needn't fight for that, because they weren't fighting for its

preservation either. One of them said that India had always been a liability to England. And they said with great truth, I am sure, that all wise people in Great Britain want India to have freedom, but that to withdraw from India now would be to grant Japan a military base so important that the war might be lost because of it.

When we talked of the reasons for India's refusal to accept the Cripps proposals, there wasn't a person at the table who didn't admit that mistakes had been made in the administration of India in the past. But then someone said a little ironically to me, "You haven't done so well with your own Negro problem, have you? With so much more opportunity."

There's no answer to that but proper humility.

Tom Harrisson promised to send me a copy of *Change*, his publication, which is devoted to a very intensive and extensive inquiry into British War Production. He thinks very highly of what the women are doing in production, rather more skeptically of their satisfaction in doing it, in all cases. But he gave them great credit for patriotism.

We left the restaurant because it was late, though we weren't through talking, and walked to our various lodgings. At eleven it wasn't quite dark yet,

but it darkened as we walked up Regent Street and the broken buildings were like great cripples along the sidewalks, begging silently for peace. I shan't see Tom Harrisson again and I am sorry. But he is being inducted into the Army next week.

I hope he won't be killed. England can't spare young men like that if she's to have a sound reconstruction period. And I don't believe that there are many like him.

Today I did meet another man with BBC who impressed me in the same way, as deeply thoughtful, without one gram of post and completely stripped of sentimentality. His name is Titchener, and I don't know what his mother called him but he is coming to the United States so maybe I'll see him again and find out. We talked about a trans-Atlantic broadcast which I shall do on July 6—if I'm still here because of not getting my hoped-for passage on July 2. The time is growing close, and nobody seems very encouraging. Forty priorities for one seat on a Clipper the other day, somebody told me. But one thing is sure. I might take a boat back, but I will not fly to Lisbon, for I couldn't bear to be stuck there for the duration, with nothing to do. If I had to stay,

I could at least be somewhat useful in England, at odd jobs.

I'm going to do some English broadcasts too. They must be interested in what we are doing at home, and I'll talk about our start at war organization—see if I can be the success I was on the train the other day, which I doubt!

There was a luncheon for me at the Forum Club today with some women journalists. I liked them all, though they didn't seem to be very actively engaged in writing—more like the Penwomen in the States, who take it easy too, as far as literary production goes. But they all knew their war. One woman described the London Fire as seen from London Bridge, which must have been a marvelous point of outlook. She said she and a policeman stood together commenting and exchanging exclamations of wonder, and suddenly he said, "Here, you shouldn't be here. You get off and lie down!"

People treat me much too well. They send such beautifully worded notes of invitation, such as Mrs. Roscoe, the President of this Woman Journalists Club, sent. Of course, it's not myself they welcome but the United States. There is a very definite appreciation that a journey here now is not for

pleasure, and involves discomfort and risk, and their manner always acknowledges that, even when once in a while someone thinks you really ought to be home where you belong.

So it was the Forum Club this noon, which is a woman's club. But tonight it was the Cavalry Club, which is a man's club par excellence, a great big club, vaguely reminiscent of one of the Jockey Clubs in South America, full of very plush furniture, now a little shabby, with men in uniform or older ones who might have been in uniform once but are now in dark clothes and wear walrus mustaches that look stained with wine.

I was dining with Major Cuthbert and his wife. He is the brother of Margaret Cuthbert, of NBC, a military man and an epicure too. His wife is the most fashionable Englishwoman I have seen—pretty clothes that were exactly right for dining at a club, not too dressy but gay and doing the officers credit. I wasn't so successful, though I took the orchid out of the goblet where it has been living and wore it on "my other dress."

This was another side of wartime, the first time I had come into close contact with people who fight and have a good time too. I've seen them around of

course at Claridge's and the Ritz for lunch, men in uniform with pretty girls and young women. There was just a touch tonight of the mood of the other war. When we were here in 1914 and I was very young, we used to have supper at the Piccadilly, or the Savoy, after the theater, and it was more like this tonight, with emphasis on giving the soldiers at home on leave a good time, a gay time.

The present war is not only different because there is so much wreckage everywhere and civilians have been hit so hard, but also because it is overcast with thought. There can never have been such a thoughtful war in the entire history of civilization. No one on our side dreams of ending it in glory. The victory we must have sobers us with the responsibility it carries with it. All the speeches by little men, in clubs and at noonday luncheons, the talks by priests and preachers, fumble along the same channels. We've accepted war as inevitable, and a great many people think it's going to be salutary for the nation. And a great many others think the boys look fine in uniform and "carry themselves better." But nobody on our side likes it.

Even tonight, though we talked for the most part of people whom we knew and of the military progress

of the war, there was a time upstairs in the dressing room when we didn't admire ourselves in the big mirrors but were only conscious that we were like ghosts of good times that must have gone on here. The place was made for something different from war and from postwar.

"How can a club like this be kept up?" I asked. There was obviously a great shortage of servants, for a few old waiters were doing everything. Of course, even here meals are so simplified that there's not a lot to serve, and nobody ever complains of being kept waiting.

They said a little drearily that it couldn't.

Afterwards we were going to the newsreel, but it was closed, so we prowled through the darkness to another club and finally back to Claridge's for a nightcap. I felt really very gay. But it wouldn't have been much of an evening a few years ago.

So now I shall sleep hard until morning and be fine and fresh to interview Sir Stafford Cripps.

Love,

Mother.

Cliveden, June 27

Dear Mary,

I have been quick, so there is a very little time before dinner, and I'll give you the setting and continue this when I can. My windows look down on an immense expanse of lawn, enclosed by a stone balustrade which is fronted by benches set into the stone. There are a great number of them, and they all were brought from Italy to be set about this lawn, from which the long Cliveden terrace at the back of the huge house rises. It's empty now. The people in the house are all dressing for dinner. But at its best you know that it was a place where the great of the world went down to sit on an Italian bench and look at the moon rising from the Thames, or perhaps to get out of earshot (which isn't hard here, Heaven knows) in order to pursue an important diplomatic or romantic conversation.

The house itself reminds me of Schoenbrunn Palace, and I don't quite know why. It's far larger than I thought. The great avenue which approaches the house, not with curves but with an almost arrogant directness, is one of the widest in England.

All this I'll come to later or tell you about when I get home, if you're interested. But the really impor-

tant thing that happened today was that talk with Cripps, and I must tell you about it.

I felt rather nervy when I started out from the hotel. I couldn't quite be sure that I had any right to take a half hour of his time and be confident of making it useful. But anyway, Mr. Gordon had given me an introduction—I had mailed it, and been called and given an appointment with no demur—and the taxi was on its way, so I had no intention of not going. Anyway, I have become more and more convinced, as I have read the papers and heard the comments of various people, that Sir Stafford Cripps is one of the great figures in England. And if so, the ordinary people in the United States should know about him, for any luck or success we may have in establishing comfort and decency in the world when the shooting is over depends on whether the democratic countries will play together. That, in turn, I suppose, depends on understanding the leadership in the different nations.

In the United States we have a popular picture of Churchill which, from what I see and hear over here, isn't so far off the track. It's somewhat of a chromo, overcolored and unflawed, but most Americans think of him as an honest, bulldog patriot, who

has been wise enough to see the German menace for years when other people were blind, who kept the heart in his people when they were threatened with annihilation, and who is pretty much of a realist. That's the way he is seen over here too, but with more affection, of course, as well as with more irritation at his stubbornness. For he has a bulldog hold on his own War Job, and many people feel that there should be additional controls or shared authority in conducting the war.

And everybody knows, I think, that Churchill will not be the man to conduct the affairs of the country after the war, for he is neither of the age nor the temper to put into effect the great social changes which will be inevitable. That brings me to Cripps, for he is an important figure on the reconstruction horizon.

I have read a good many articles about him and seen numberless pictures at the time when he went on his mission to India. So his appearance had no surprise, and he is just the way he is in the movies. He looks scholarly in the Wilson manner, especially side view. His eyes are somewhat enlarged by his glasses, and it gives him an effect of staring a little—at you or at the subject of his discussion more likely.

He couldn't have been more simple, more cordial, nor have come more quickly to the point of my call. He came to meet me, as I went into his big, quietish office, which had an effect of blue, coming from upholstered lounge chairs and touched off to perfection by a pot of blue Canterbury bells on a side table, where it wouldn't interfere with business or look too precious.

I shan't tell you the questions I asked him point by point, because I'll probably write the interview up separately. As a matter of fact, what he said was less important than certain repetitions that kept cropping up in his talk. For example, we spoke of women, and he mentioned the fact that in Russia women did all kinds of work, even working on the railroads. We spoke of food preservation, and he said that the United States was more advanced than Great Britain in refrigeration and that Britain had the faults of an old civilization, adding that Russia too had modern refrigeration in spite of the fact that its climate made refrigeration unnecessary for a good part of the year. (I nearly told him we have it in Duluth too, even with a long, long winter.)

The way the conversation swung around to Russia was very interesting. Of course, all England is Russia-

conscious now, grateful to her very bones for the fight Russia has put up and conscious that the fight probably made the difference between life and death for England. But there is more than gratitude to a battling ally in Cripps' point of view toward Russia. He admires Russia for what she has already achieved in her internal economy. He admires her setup for employment, and considers her a modern country in outlook, one of the new civilizations which he admires.

You can't talk to him for five minutes without seeing that he not only believes in change but expects it. Nearly everyone else does too who has the use of reason, but the point about Cripps is that he is looking forward to the social postwar changes. He believes that full employment for men and women (note the women) is possible. He thinks that it will be necessary to have governmental control over industry in order to effect this. He said specifically that it could not be managed by any setup of public works alone. But, on the contrary, if the government found it necessary to take over private industry in order to get full employment, that was the thing to do. If they had to take over the boot and shoe industry in order to see that people had shoes, they should do it.

You can imagine how a statement like that would make many people we know shiver in the very boots that Cripps might have made by the government.

He gave me the impression of believing that a world he liked and had faith in would—or could—emerge at the war's end. A hopeful, working world. There is no doubt that it would not be a society in which individualism would fight violently for profits. It will be a managed world, an austere world, a healthy world, if Cripps has his way about it. Everyone will work who is able—men of course, and women too. He believes in part-time work development, saying that many women are bored at home and would like jobs. He won't be one to clap them back into their electrified and refrigerated homes, I can tell you, when the war is over.

There is more than a touch of the schoolmaster about him. All the way down here I kept trying to put a mental finger on not what he has but what he lacks. He has brains to burn. He has a modern, clearly formulated philosophy, and a sociological concept which goes right along with it to a developed highly socialized state. He is personally unpretentious—doesn't use "I" very often. He thinks past bureaucracy to people—mentioned people as if he really

saw them—the bored women, the Russian girls working on the railroads, the farmers who sell to the canteen market. I believe definitely that Sir Stafford Cripps is a man who is in touch with the future, and who will have to be called upon after the war, no matter what his political fortunes may be between now and then.

He is the least tired person I have met in Great Britain among those actively connected with the war effort. Yet he must work like a slave. Sessions of Parliament, tremendous public meetings, private and lengthy conferences, important and crucial decisions follow each other with hardly any space in between the events in his orderly life. But he's not worn out. There's no sense of fatigue in his bearing, nor of boredom. He's balanced and adjusted, and he looks forward to the future. He likes the future. Socialism and change seem proper developments to him.

And he does not see the world as Great Britain's oyster. He thinks in terms of co-operation between peoples—peoples rather than governments, I think. He spoke of the Chinese and the Russian peoples with admiration, as if he could see actual persons or crowds of people.

The last question I asked Cripps was the one on

which I most wanted his answer. It was whether, in his opinion, there was anything inconsistent in getting on with the war as fast as possible and at the same time discussing war aims and considering post-war plans. He said with emphasis that there was not. The argument on that point, he said, was always traceable to political temperament. The conservative who wished no change in the world, who was afraid to face what change might mean to himself or to his position, did not want to discuss what might come after the war and so took the position that such talk slowed down the war effort. But those of a liberal political outlook felt quite different, and believed that such plans and discussion gave the labors of war a necessary impetus and motive.

Certainly no one is more committed to getting on with the war than the Leader of the House of Commons. Cripps is not only in the War Cabinet but speaks for the Government in matters of policy. And if the present Government does not pursue the war rapidly and successfully enough to satisfy the British people, the Government will fall. Sooner or later—perhaps sooner. The average Britisher is reading the war news today with a desire to be fair, but with a determination not to be fooled. He will never forget

that Churchill won the Battle of Britain, nor cease to be grateful for that leadership. But the war must be won and the peace successful.

The fall of the Government would not mean the ruin of Stafford Cripps politically. It is entirely possible, and widely held as probable, that it might mean his rise to greater power, either immediately or in due time. But Cripps is working with Churchill, and no one doubts his sincerity. No one ever seems to doubt the sincerity of Stafford Cripps, and you know why after you have talked to him.

Then why don't I feel warmer about him and the future? Right now I'd support him, work for him, praise him, believe what he says. I just wish he could make the future seem more fun, put a swing in moving toward it, put an irresistible lure in it.

Probably it's asking too much of any one man. To be a charmer you have to heighten your own effects, and he doesn't do that. It's his accuracy which is his strength, but it's never a winning quality. What I did like about him so much was that he does not share that annoying habit which has made English men and women unpopular all over the world, of thinking that because a habit or a practice or an article is English it is necessarily a good habit or a good thing.

He has a lot of friends. Harold Laski speaks well of him, Jennie Lee thinks he is a coming man (she's a close friend of his), Tom Harrisson thinks Cripps is important, so does Mr. Williams. And so does the public, which turns out in greater numbers to hear Cripps than for any other speaker. If it's announced that he's on the program, the crowd is always an overflow—and not only of the intellectuals or of the great but of the men and women who work and live as well as they can.

Lord Astor thinks well of Cripps too, and that makes a complete roundup, from Jennie Lee to Lord Astor, especially as Cripps has been pretty acid to Lady Astor in the House of Commons on more than one occasion. But even she doesn't say anything against him.

This brings me neatly to the Astors. But I'll postpone comment on them for a bit because I hear a bell and had better go down and meet the rest of the house party under the Gobelin tapestries. I am wearing a long dress for the second time in a month and have a frog in my throat. Isn't it just like me to be getting a cold?

Love,

Mother.

London, June 28

Dear Mary,

The cold arrived all right. I came back to London tonight with no voice left at all, in part because of infection of the larynx and in part, maybe, from answering the questions of the company at Cliveden. I still sound like an old crow, but I shan't hamper my own war effort by being ill.

Because of the cold I can't go out for dinner, and because I can't go out for dinner I shall be able to write a couple of broadcast scripts and a letter to you tonight. And maybe get over the stile, like the old woman. They are very tender of me here at Claridge's, evidently not wanting me to die on their hands, and the room waiter tipped me off as to the very best thing to eat in the kitchen, which was a tiny omelet.

The typewriter at least isn't more hoarse than usual, and I shall go on where I left off and tell you more of Cliveden and its permanent and temporary inhabitants. It is the largest private house I've ever stayed in, though no guest bedroom I've ever occupied yet compares with the one at the George Horace Lorimers', with the twenty-four chairs and three sofas. But I'll never forget how tiny my dressing case

looked in the huge entrance hall at Cliveden. It was all I'd brought with me, and both the chauffeur and butler seemed to feel that even in wartime I could have done better than that. But I've found out that when you carry your own luggage, a dressing case is the best idea, and I fooled the help by having three dresses inside it and a nightgown and an extra pair of shoes they didn't know about.

Anyway, a housemaid probably took a magnifying glass, found my luggage, and disappeared with it. I went into a Room to wait until someone turned up, because Lady Astor and most of the guests had gone to visit the Canadian Hospital, which is on the estate. Lord Astor came in after a few minutes and quickly made me feel at home. He's had long practice in doing that, with all the strange guests that turn up here. And he proved the servant shortage again, for the butler had disappeared—perhaps to mow the grass or peel the potatoes—so Lord Astor himself found the list of guests and where each was to sleep, pinned up in the Hall Closet—or should I say the Butler's Room?—and then took me to my room.

I took off my hat and went for a walk with him, which seemed to be routine. I kept thinking of how many times he must have made the rounds of his own

premises with guests in just this kindly way, and how many great people had stood beside him and admired the view of the Thames from his favorite standpoint. I remembered Nora's stories too, of taking Bernard Shaw around the gardens when she lived here at Cliveden as she did for so long.

It's a very noble property. Later in the afternoon I did some more walking around it with Nancy Astor, and again the next morning we went through the gardens, so I have several lovely mental pictures of the estate. Of course it's old. The Astors acquired it fairly recently as English holdings go, though all their children have been brought up here—and in their other houses in London and in Plymouth. And it has the air of English greatness. There are magnificent tapestries in the entrance hall, and suits of armor, and a great staircase rises at one end with bare and polished treads against which your heels sound noisy and trivial. The long dining room is at one end of the house, opening on the same splendid terrace which runs along the drawing rooms. Lady Astor and I went down a back staircase once into a more simplified part of the house, but I was lost and wished later that I had been the kind of woman

who can enter a house once and describe it perfectly afterwards. I can't.

It is the sort of country house setting that went over so big in *The White Cliffs* a few years ago. I suppose that either before or after the regime there were the tall footmen on the stairs. But in the first twenty minutes I was in the house, I knew all that was nonexistent here now, that such lavishness as remained was the shell of a lavish living that had passed into history when the war broke out.

Cliveden is a museum piece. Its former kind of living has no place in society of the present or the future. It interests you because you say, "Oh, this is the way it was."

Not that there isn't plenty of luxury left. But it is left over, as are the beautiful fittings of Lady Astor's dressing room, with its lovely fleecy robe laid out on the chair for her to slip into after her bath. A beautiful Virginian girl, a great hostess, an ambitious woman, a devoted mother, a politician under attack—she has been all these characters in that same dressing room. And now she is a woman in her early sixties, with a small, erect, elastic figure, a face that is both eager and arrogant, and a lady with a hard row to hoe, in spite of the luxury that is still around her.

I had decided not to bother Lady Astor, though Nora had urged me to let her know that I was in England, but in wartime those things seem especially intrusive, so I had made up my mind to let it ride. Then Caroline Haslett was going down for the week end, and so were some other women, and she suggested that I might add a few licks to the conversation, and Lady Astor said she would like me to come, so I went. The others went down on Friday—it's only twenty-five minutes out of London, on the Thames—but I was busy and couldn't make it until Saturday afternoon, and the house party was going full tilt by then.

The first time I saw Nancy Astor was at tea, which was served in a big pavilion below the terrace, the only outdoor pavilion I ever saw that had a beautiful Oriental rug covering its entire floor. The place would have seated forty people, and I suppose it is very handy for receiving guests at garden parties. Or was. There was a big circular table and a lot of delicious-looking food. Dark honey—the first I'd seen—and toast and scones and strawberry shortcakes and cakes and tea and lemonade. It looked like an awful lot of food for wartime, but as I gave it a closer inspection it was clear that most of it was unrationed food.

Bread of different sorts, strawberries—a tremendous treat for all of us, but they probably have everbearing ones—honey (maybe, like Arthur, they keep a bee), and the cakes were plain.

Caroline Haslett appeared, looking beautifully healthy and rested, and with that warmth of welcome which is especially her gift. She touches the personal note with strength, makes you essential and important to whatever company is present—and without flattery. If Sir Stafford Cripps, by the way, had that same talent, he would be perfected. But anyway Miss Haslett has it, and before she's through that will make a difference to the international relations of women.

Dame Edith Lyttelton, Oliver Lyttelton's mother, was there too, and Phyllis Bentley and Mavis Tate, the M.P. It was, you see, a rather special gathering of women in a kind of conference. Lady Limerick and Lady Allen of Hurtwood had been there but had gone back to London before I could arrive. I've not met Lady Allen, which is just as well because I don't agree with her point of view on nurseries, but I won't go into that now. Lady Limerick I have met and shall meet again next week. She's head of the Red

Cross over here, and conceals her efficiency under the quietest of demeanors.

We were serving ourselves when Lady Astor came in, swinging her little graceful body along efficiently, dressed for the country, with a hat that shaded herself, and with an old-fashioned chiffon scarf around her neck. She has the same drama that her sister Nora has in entering a place. She's there, and it makes a difference. And she knows it.

You could not watch Nancy Astor for ten minutes anywhere, I believe, without understanding her career. Her immense energy demands constant functioning, and sometimes it functions to advantage and sometimes it functions wrong and sometimes it just splashes around. I told her last night what was true, that as far as I knew, she had held public office longer continuously than any other woman. It seemed to surprise her, but I think it's true.

She is quite fearless and would be so, I think, even without all her protections of family, place, and money. And she gets bored with insipidity in conversation. She's witty and wisecracking and can stay quiet just so long and no longer. Her principles amount to prejudices sometimes, like the ones she has about liquor and smoking. She's been spoiled

to a fare-you-well from certain angles, and from others she has had a constant beating.

She could have kept out of the public eye and developed into the grand lady of Cliveden and Plymouth. But the thing that I like about her basically is that she really has a social conscience. She felt instinctively that wasn't enough to do with her life. So she struck out into politics and has had a wonderful and exciting time, which can't be prolonged indefinitely now, for the world needs more disciplined women.

She has broken a lot of ground for women, and I don't think she's had the credit she should have had for it. Partly because she didn't need it. Partly because she is always putting her foot into it and making enemies. She has plenty of those, as well as plenty of friends. The impatiences against her in and out of Parliament are legion, but her friends, like Mrs. Tate and Dame Edith, say that they love her and they mean it. She's tremendously generous and has been wonderful to Plymouth and its people since the blitz. She is wonderful with the Canadians. You can feel how much she likes to give, how it increases her own warmth and happiness. I like her enormously, but that doesn't make me blind to the

fact that a college education and a training in fact-finding would have made her the woman she would like to be and would probably have given her a place in the Government. But no one can waste much sympathy on a woman who has glamour at sixty.

We went for a walk by ourselves before dinner. Up to then she hadn't realized that I was a friend of Nora's. Then we talked about Nora and the United States, and Lady Astor became a woman with family ties and deep, almost painful, affections.

All her sons are at war. She said to one of them, "How is Michael?" who is another son. The answer was, "Mother, you mustn't ask." She said, "But is he in England?" He said, "You mustn't ask." She said, "You can at least tell me whether he's alive or dead?" And he said, "You mustn't ask!"

Her life takes a lot of nerve. She came to my room this morning, and we talked some more for a little while. She wanted me to take something home from Cliveden, a piece of china or something, but of course I wouldn't. It's impossible to carry what I have now, and I'm not here for presents. It was an odd thing to see the mistress of that great establishment and all those wonderful possessions actually admiring my odds and ends of clothes, a gabardine coat I had and

a print dress. But it's so long since even the very rich have had new clothes! I must send her a few zippers when I get back to the U.S.A. She said she needed them.

All the meals were fun. They wanted me to stay in bed because I was so hoarse, but I preferred to go down to breakfast and serve myself out of the great silver chafing dishes on the sideboard. And there was more honey. At dinner I sat by Lord Astor, and we talked mostly about war adjustments. He's making plenty. He spoke of the possible nationalization of land in London areas without a shudder. Cliveden is going to the National Trust, and he and his "neighbor" across the river have jointly given enough land to the Trust so the place will not be spoiled by jerry-building creeping up on it. The days of private life in it are drawing to a close, and nobody seems to care much. Certainly not the Astor heirs, if the boy I sat by at lunch is a sample of the rest of the family.

He was home on leave, temporarily out of uniform. But not relaxing much. The war problems possessed him. He wished that something could be done so that the American soldier wouldn't spend his money buying up supplies in the small villages. He was disturbed about the reactionaries who are already

lying in wait for the peace terms. You would both have liked that boy and have agreed with almost everything he said. There was a man on my other side at lunch who was just back from Russia, but I never did get a chance to talk about that with him and was sorry. You can't do everything, even by overworking your tongue and your ears.

In spite of all the silver dishes at breakfast and the FRESH FRUIT for lunch, which was the first fresh fruit, except for the strawberries, which I had eaten in England, and the first that most of the rest of the guests had had for a year or more, there are plenty of signs of retrenchment and austere living about Cliveden. It is very understaffed. I suppose in the gilded days here there must have been butlers and footmen and maids at every elbow. Nothing of the sort now. We were quite a company for dinner and lunch and had no more service—in fact not as much—than I'd have had at home for the same number of people in normal times—in Duluth, in my small house.

The fruit came from the greenhouses, where tomatoes grow mostly, according to Government edict; but some peach trees are there too, under glass or growing against the wall outdoors, and there isn't

anything to stop them from bearing. Most of the peaches, by the way, go to the Canadian Hospital on the place, and what a break that is for the soldiers! Lady Astor does a good deal of weeding and pruning as she walks around the gardens with you. They are in magnificent bloom but sort of tangled in places, and there are weeds and uncut grass that no one has time to attend to. And the lady of the manor is also prone to get up from the table occasionally and go to the doors which open on the terrace and tear down a few overgrown vines between courses. There were just as many courses as the law allowed, nothing more—a soup, a simple meat or fish course, and a pudding or fruit.

Once or twice, looking down that long table, I summed up the company and thought that this was a funny kind of Cliveden set. For the most part, the guests were women, a natural enough thing in wartime in England. But they were mostly women who had jobs or careers, and they'd come here not to be social or for any cachet the place might have, but rather for serious conference. And the Cliveden set myth that we've come to believe in in America, as a byword that even Mr. Roosevelt tosses to his press

conference, was certainly different from this company.

The set is probably just a myth. As far as I can find out from inquiry and looking over the guest book, the Astors have not only always entertained tremendously, but all was fish that came to their net. Dame Edith told me, and she should know, that long before other people in England would tolerate labor leaders at social week ends, they were asked to Cliveden. Lady Astor has always taken a kind of amused pride, it seems, in mixing up strange companies, in having "originals," many of whom were famous, of course, to stay at Cliveden.

She told me as the memory came to her—we were talking about Roosevelt and the war—of how the President had stayed at Cliveden long ago, and how he looked and what he said. Thousands of people have stayed here. It's not a tremendous social distinction to be in the guest book but it does link you to the stream of people who are active in the world.

Nevertheless, it appears that this much foundation does exist for the gibe of "Cliveden set." There was a big week-end party there during the negotiations with Hitler, and when the matter of appeasement

came up in Parliament the next week, practically everyone who had been at Cliveden was for holding off war. So the phrase was hurled at the lot of them and it stuck like tar.

It's true, too, that the Astors have had many German friends, that they did entertain von Ribbentrop, that Lady Astor didn't like Russia much when she was there. Nor Communists at all. It's true that they have—or had—enormous fortunes to protect from wars. So if the cap doesn't fit the Astors or Cliveden, it is easy enough to see why it was designed for that group in England who were too long unwilling to stand up to war.

Of course, all the time there were talks going on among the women there which amounted to conference sessions. Phyllis Bentley, who has a very orderly mind, took charge of the talk in the evening and kept it from straying all over the globe. Global conversations are worse than global wars. Every now and then Caroline Haslett would sum up opinions and bring the less talkative guests into the conversation. What we were after was an exchange of opinion, and then a summing up of it, on the tasks of women in the war and their position when it was over. Many of us were troubled by the things which had shown

up in my own factory inspections, the lack of equal pay for men and women on the same job, the proper way to conserve and develop the skills and talents which war work was bringing out in women, and the future dovetailing of homes and jobs. Family allowances came in for their share of discussion.

There are very few women on the postwar planning boards over here, the important boards I mean. It is pretty much as it is in the United States. Within their own organizations, women have set up a great many exploratory and advisory committees, but they aren't on the boards which the government sets up which have power. They don't make policies nor greatly influence the conduct of the war. Caroline Haslett has been appointed advisor to the Ministry of Labour and has a group working with her which is consulted to some extent; but, except for that, there don't seem to be women in high places, and I should say that even Miss Haslett, admired and respected as she is, is a little scant in authority. She can throw so much weight of influence that her opinion can't be disregarded, but it still isn't like straight executive authority vested in a woman. Maybe she'd disagree. I didn't ask her.

Just as you have come to see for yourself, after get-

ting into professional work, women are only equal with men theoretically. And what we need is no more theory of equality, but more practice, with less talk.

There are women in Parliament, of course. The ordinary frank judgment on them is that their influence doesn't amount to much. But on the other hand Tom Harrisson said that he preferred to talk to the women in Parliament than to many groups of men Members, that he got more out of it. Stella Wilkinson has an important post as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs and Home Security; and Florence Horsbrugh has a big job as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health. Those two are the only women in the Government.

It is no secret that Mr. Churchill is profoundly uninterested in promoting the careers of women. Not so much disaffected as disbelieving. That, I suppose, is part and parcel of his love for a stalwart, old-fashioned England, in which the women were treated well and talked politics at dinner parties and helped their husbands get into Parliament, but otherwise didn't interfere. In speaking of methods by which women might be included in the postwar planning boards, there was great dubiousness about presenting the matter to Mr. Churchill just now. If he said no,

the jig was up. Temporarily at least. So the answer seemed to be to present the matter to Sir Stafford Cripps and to see how he reacted.

One other thing came out of this talk that was important to me. It is the feeling of the English women that many of our problems are in duplicate, on both sides of the Atlantic, and that we should remain in contact, improve communication between the women of both nations and of other nations, and see how far we all want the same things. This, thank God, is with no intention of forming Women's Blocs, either national or international. There wasn't a woman present who didn't think that the best work would be done by men and women working together.

Beautiful nurses came over in the afternoon from the hospital to see Miss Goodall, the Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, who was in our party. As was Madame Blume-Gregoire, who used to be a member of the Belgian Parliament. She was a pessimistic soul. At the end of the war she expects to see all the little nations striving for their own re-establishment. She doesn't believe in international generosities. And as for herself—she will go out for Belgium.

She was a refugee, but she was the only one who

had a limousine or a chauffeur when the party broke up after tea. Lady Astor had decided that I should see the Queen and, with characteristic directness, telephoned over to Windsor Castle about it. She also wants me to go down to Plymouth with her next Thursday, and she will show me the blitzed areas there and also the process of reconstruction. I want to go very much, if it can be managed with what else is on the schedule.

Mrs. Tate drove Miss Haslett and me back to London, and we stopped on the edge of the Astor estate at Joyce Grenfell's house. She was looking as lovely and romantic as her pictures, and I shall have that to tell Nora. There were two thin husbands with intelligent faces there, one for Joyce and one for her cousin Virginia Graham, whose last name and that of her husband is Thessiger, I think.

On the way back we talked politics and about a lecture tour for Lady Astor in the U.S.A.—postwar, of course, not now. It should be managed so that she isn't misquoted all the time and pricked into impulsive statements that would do a lot of harm. She would like to come and would draw enormous audiences of course.

Me and my croup are now going to bed. I sound like a degenerate frog tonight.

Love,

Mother.

June 29

Dear Mary,

This, as Ed Murrow says ever portentously, is London. And what a London it was today! I've been all over the place, it seems to me.

Everything that I've planned for the whole week suddenly became uncertain this afternoon, with a call from the Ministry coming through to the effect that I may be given a place on the plane this coming Thursday after all. I'd given up hope for this week, which was my original request and intention, and was only hoping that they wouldn't cancel my passage for the ninth and keep me here indefinitely. When I imagine what might happen I get the creeps. It would be all right if I were in uniform, a WAAC or a WAVE or a Red Cross Nurse. But for many reasons *I belong* back in the United States as soon as this job is done. I often have a feeling of being

an expatriate, of not really sharing in the trials and risks of the English people and yet not being at the moment identified with what is going on at home.

On the chance of getting off Thursday, I don't dare waste a minute, so I took a pile of material over to the censor's office this morning, where they were very kindly and said they would get it back in a couple of days. I reported to Mr. Jobson, who had made appointments for me with the Ministry of Health for Wednesday and with London and suburban day nurseries for this afternoon. I have studied a great deal of printed material about the care of children in nurseries, for working mothers, and today I saw them in the flesh. A girl with a WVS car drove me around from one nursery to another and was very patient, though she had to do a lot of waiting around in the heat. It was a muggy, exhausting sort of day—not like London weather.

It's rather fortunate that I did this today, because the matter of nurseries was especially in my mind after an argument I heard going on at Cliveden. There is objection raised to having the very little children in these nurseries, the ones under two years old, and a letter from Lady Allen of Hurtwood, in the *Observer* yesterday, said that the expense was

unjustified and also that it had a bad effect on mothers, who should be encouraged to continue caring for their small children. Lady Astor agreed with her, and Mrs. Tate didn't say much about it, but she had given me Lady Allen's letter to read, so I assume she was on that side too. The Ministry of Health believes in these nurseries, and Miss Florence Horsbrugh speaks for them in Parliament, so it is a political matter.

I wasn't going to make up my mind, or at least seal it, until I saw the nurseries. But my judgment in advance was that the matter of expense was trivial and that probably it was good for the children, no matter how young, to have a little scientific care. And finally that if the mothers were needed in factories, the mothers were needed, and it didn't break up families any more than any other war necessity does today.

Tonight I am far more convinced. I wish you could have seen those nurseries. My mind is crowded with the most satisfying pictures of children, and once again I've seen that Great Britain is making social progress in the middle of a war. The real point seems to be that they need many more nurseries than they've got.

Each one that I saw had a long waiting list and was full to capacity. They were of different kinds. Some are in old houses which have been adapted for child care, and these, of course, aren't as good or as satisfactory for their purpose as the new units. To give you some idea of the nursery coverage, the average one takes about fifty children. Four hundred and fifty-three are open, according to a recent report I just was given at the Ministry of Information, 539 are approved and will be open shortly, and 276 are in preparation. That would mean that over sixty thousand children of working mothers will be cared for in these day nurseries. The children are all under five years old.

This doesn't take into account other nurseries, residential and day, which provide care for evacuated children, or temporary care for full orphans. I am really deeply impressed by the thought and care that Great Britain is—at long last—giving to her poor children. She has a good deal to make up for. The pimply boys, the underfed children that used to be seen everywhere in country and cities, are going to disappear gradually under this new regime of child care and feeding, if it is sufficiently extensive and continued long enough.

Nobody said so to me—but the fact that there are nurseries which take small babies must have an effect in stabilizing the birth rate and in lowering the total number of abortions. As for the fear that it takes the responsibility of caring for her child from a mother, it seems to me that is compensated for many times over by the training both child and mother get. The mothers find out what a little baby should eat, how long it should sleep. They never have known. They see the object lesson of the baby getting fat and sturdy. As a matter of fact, what is happening is that all the children of England, and not just the children of the well-to-do, are getting as good care as the famous Nannies gave. And better.

The mothers bring the children in before they go to work and leave them for the day. They can feel safe about them as they never could when they left them with the neighbor's little girl, or the neighbor herself, who might have a tendency to take an extra drink of gin. There are no lamps to be upset, starting fires. A child who is feverish or has a stomach upset isn't neglected all day.

It's always touching to see a lot of little children, some so fat, some so pretty, some few so wise or bewildered by life. Today has been so encouraging.

I saw dozens of them lying in little canvas stretchers, taking their naps just as they should be doing—resting with beautiful thoroughness. I saw flocks of them sitting at small tables with mugs of milk and sandwiches, having tea. They were learning to brush their teeth and going to the toilet at regular times. And those habits will stick.

As for dangerous regimentation and breakup of family life, the thoughts never entered my head. All I could think of was that these babies were at least getting a decent start, which—God forgive our imperfect civilization—most of them would never have had unless there had been a ghastly war.

Well, anyway, it's all to the good. I always get so lyric about the necessity of proper child care because I know how much you and the rest of my children had and how different you might have been without it! You are a careful composite of carrots, cream of wheat, scraped beef, proper habits—and look what good work you are doing today and how promptly Tan slipped into classification 1-A.

When I get back I shall write a piece about this for the magazines, if the editors will take it. Full of facts and figures. But, just informally and off the record, let me tell you that what I saw today

was the most cheerful sight I have seen in all blitzed England—and I do not except the rose gardens of Cliveden.

Tonight I dined with a man who wanted to talk postwar projects. He was not very clear, or maybe it is my sinuses.

Love,

Mother.

June 30

Dear Mary,

I am getting a place on a plane on Thursday, day after tomorrow. Unless the whole picture suddenly changes, and I keep two fingers crossed, even when I'm at the typewriter, I shall leave London tomorrow night. My own surprise at coming out on time like this and actually being given a passage makes me realize how doubtful I was about this return flight. And taking it has been a complicated matter because so many events were scheduled for this week, including an audience with the Queen, a visit to the headquarters of the Canadian Army, a talk with Dorothy Elliott, who is the head of the Woman's Division

of the Workers' Transport Union, the visit to Plymouth with Lady Astor, a night in Surrey with the Cuthberts, and three broadcasts.

Anyway, I got the broadcasts in. I had written them and BBC wanted me to do them by transcription, so I have just done that. I was pretty hoarse but maybe it was just a nice Tallulah Bankhead rendition. At least I did the best I could.

It was interesting over at BBC headquarters tonight. I won't describe them much. You don't put that kind of thing in a letter and expect it to pass a censor, and it shouldn't. But there was a strange and awful (correct usage) modernity about the rooms where one broadcasts safely today, no matter what. There's a solemnity too about what one says when on an errand of this sort. It falls so short of the mark of what should be said to convey the new philosophy of Great Britain at war to our own still skeptical country.

I tried to say it; and then I walked back to the hotel, through a light, sweet rain that didn't bother me at all, and I asked Mr. Titchener not to come with me, for I wanted to have London to myself for a little while on my last night. I had on my white raincoat with its hood, and I felt like a happy ghost

in those unlit streets. It was quite dark. The gateways were dark, the alleys black and Dickensian. The markers leading to the shelters glimmered just a little here and there.

It's an ugly city really, but it has the kind of beauty that long experience brings to most things and people if they can survive suffering and mishaps. I felt like myself today and like myself twenty-seven years ago when I went through these same streets, trying to be sure that I wasn't afraid, wondering then too if I'd ever get back home. I remembered happy times I'd had in London, theaters with Herbert Tree in *David Copperfield* and a stirring performance of *The Dynasts.* I remembered how I felt when I knew you were going to be born, and how I thought that wars would be all over for you. I was fooled all right. But I still think that wars will be over when those children I saw today are grown up. My timing was wrong. But even in the middle of this war, the intention of peace is stronger than it's ever been before in the world, I believe.

So I walked out with London tonight and then came back feeling curiously young. And I must have looked queer because a funny thing happened. I walked by the desk and up the stairway as I've done

for four weeks, when I don't bother with the elevator, and I was halfway up the stairs when the concierge came running after me and said severely, "Pardon me, Miss, but what room are you going to?" I looked around and said, "Why, my own!" and he nearly fell downstairs backwards, for he hadn't recognized me. I must have looked for a moment like my younger self.

It's a good night, and though it's late it is senseless to go to bed. I can sleep when I get home, and so I won't waste time now in such nonsense but will tell you the rest of what happened today.

This morning I went to Parliament. Instead of being in the Visitors' Gallery today, I was in the little Speakers' Gallery, where Mrs. Churchill usually sits. The House of Commons is meeting, as you know, in the House of Lords, because Commons was so badly damaged. I saw it later from a top turret of the other House, where Mr. Beaumont took me, and it was not a pretty sight at all. But, bombing or not, the processes of government go on. And will.

I have been staying away from Parliament because what I would have liked to do is to be there every time the House met, and that was not what I was sent to England for. But I have followed the reports

of what's gone on, both in the *Times* and in Hansard, which is the daily report of Parliamentary debate and action, just like our Congressional Record. To see it today was my treat and reward. I've been in the Houses of Parliament and attended sessions before, but nothing of the sort ever meant as much as it does just now.

I think that in Parliament you see what England is basically, why she is different from other countries, including the United States, which began at least by copying her form of democratic procedure. England has preserved it better than we have. The tradition and procedure of Parliament are ancient to the point of being fancy dress or comic. The wig on the Speaker. The mace lowered from the table when he leaves. The woolsack. The ones who look like beadles that march up to move the mace or accompany a speaker to the table. The dispatch box against which a speaker leans when addressing the House. These maintain rites as strictly as the ancient rites of the Catholic Church are maintained.

We wouldn't dream of having that much mumbo jumbo in Congress. But we haven't stayed as close to democracy as the English have, none the less. There, on a bench, sit the members of the Cabinet, the

people who are directing the Government, for the time being. Behind them sit their ostensible supporters. Across the aisle sit the Opposition, ready to hurl questions at them, to be derisive, to insult if necessary. There's nothing like that in the United States. We don't expose our Cabinet members to anything so severe.

An M. P. told me this morning that he had been twenty years in the House and that when he had to speak he still went into an actual panic. They are rough customers, these M. P.'s. The odd noise they make when they mean to say "Hear! hear!" is no readier on their lips than the boos. And nobody seems too grand or formal to shout or mutter.

In case you don't know it, the way they go about the day's work is to distribute on each "sitting day" a little leaflet which has the questions which are to be asked the Government printed in it. These are grouped as those for "oral answer" and those "not for oral answer." The name of the questioner precedes the question, and each question has a number. As the name of the questioner is announced, each member of Parliament can refer to the leaflet, read the question, and know who has asked it; and the proper Member of the Government rises to reply.

For example, Question Number 6 on this particular morning was an acid one, sponsored by Mrs. Tate, who wished: "To ask the Minister of Fuel and Power whether he is aware that fun fairs are still blazing with light from morning until night, that one shooting gallery in a fun fair in Blackpool the other day had no less than 50 colored lights illuminating it in broad daylight; that a revolving electrical machine three feet in diameter was lighted by 6 100-watt bulbs all day; and whether, in view of the urgent need for fuel economy, he will take steps to regulate these and other unnecessary forms of lighting."

Rising, Major Gwilym Lloyd George assured Mrs. Tate and Parliament that he would. As soon as possible, these things would be done.

There were lots of questions like that, flying at the Minister of Fuel and other Ministers. "To ask how about using motor vehicles to rehearse and produce a propaganda play for the Oxford Group?" "To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware of the widespread ignorance in Great Britain regarding our Chinese allies; and what steps are being taken to rectify this." "To ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that a firm in Old Bond

Street is advertising whiskey for sale at 37*s*.,6*d*., and if he will take and use the powers necessary to control the retail price of whiskey." "To ask the Minister of Agriculture if he is aware of the shortage of threshing sets." "To ask the Secretary of State for War what he is doing to secure dive bombers."

Sir James Grigg, the Secretary of State for War, says then that, while he can reveal no figures, he feels that the number is adequate—or will be. The House begins to growl. Miss Irene Ward, who asked the question, rises and says derisively in effect that he has said that before and that facts disprove it.

There are sixty-five questions for oral answer in all. Many are answered evasively, partially, of course. But the fact that a question has been asked means that the issue has been raised and is a matter which can be put before the public in the papers.

The strange situation now is that Parliament is protected from too much publication of embarrassing questions because the newspapers have become so small in size that they can't print many of the questions. Unless it's a really big issue, a question doesn't get thoroughly publicized today. But I suppose the heads of the Departments of State never can be sure what will be popped next.

Question Number 44 came from Mr. Stokes. It read: "To ask the Prime Minister on what date he expects to make a report to the House as a result of the request he made, on or about the 13th of April, to General Wavell, that he should appoint an officer to collect information regarding the loss of Malaya and Singapore and the conditions precedent thereto."

There were other questions for the Prime Minister to answer, though no one expected him to be present. For the Record. He was just back from America, and he seldom comes to the House except to report the progress of the War. Members of Parliament wanted to know (Question Number 47) whether he would consider increasing the allowances to old age pensioners, the blind, and the disabled. Lieutenant Commander Gurney Braithwaite wanted to ask the Prime Minister (Question Number 11) whether, following the improvement in the remuneration of miners, he will now address himself to raising the basic pay of the rank and file of His Majesty's Forces, with a view to bringing this more in line with industrial wages and the rates prevailing in the fighting services of His Majesty's Dominions and the United States of America."

These were no doubt rhetorical questions, but,

quite unexpectedly to most of those present, the Prime Minister came in. It was his first visit to the House since the Libyan reverses, the first since he had come back from the United States, and, as the word spread that he was there, as people saw him, the House hushed and stared and then applauded. Not very loudly. No riot.

He took his place beside Sir Stafford Cripps, the Leader of the House of Commons. And when the time came, he rose to answer the questions addressed to him, parrying them more or less, but no one was caring about that. What they wanted to know was what he thought about the war situation; what they wanted to see was how he looked, well or ill, confident or discouraged. If they saw what I saw, they saw a man who looked a little pallid and rather overweight, but who was cool and completely in command of himself. His voice gave exactly the same impression. He answered the questions addressed to him as if they were all in the day's work, and as if he had nothing to do except the day's work.

The great leader was back after another dangerous journey across the Atlantic. There was no pose, no swank, no heel-clicking. Maybe at the moment calm was a little overdone, casualness overplayed, but it

was good for the record. And there was a concentration in that chamber that nothing but the issue of war could have achieved. It was everyone's first business, ahead of committee work or personal problems.

Lady Astor had come in a little while before. I had also recognized Miss Wilkinson's curly red head, Mrs. Tate's Grecian profile (she's very handsome), and I knew Megan Lloyd George from her pictures, and Florence Horsbrugh from her important place on the Government bench, and Irene Ward from her questions. Lady Astor had a Panama hat and a blue suit and a white blouse, and she wore them exactly as she would have worn the same costume in Virginia forty years ago when the Langhorne bathtub was full of American Beauty roses sent to her sister Irene, the Gibson Girl. I've seen Nora's pictures of Nancy in the early days, and she looked just the way the pictures did on this very morning, seen from above.

Everyone seemed to be stalling. Then Mr. Churchill stood up and, in answer to some question, said that he had no intention of discussing the situation in Egypt at this time, but he wished to make the announcement that General Auchinleck was replacing General Ritchie. I saw tonight that the news-

papers reported that there was cheering. There was not a sound. The announcement was received in silence, which did not seem to be unfavorable to what the Prime Minister said but only to be measuring the effect of this change and its consequences.

With that Mr. Churchill left the House, and as he left there was applause and some cheering.

The Chamber half cleared almost immediately. The members of the Cabinet trickled out, the Speaker left, and the mace was then taken off the table and put on some rests attached to the table legs. And Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Health, began to make a speech on the condition of health in the United Kingdom, which I stayed to hear, especially since I am seeing him tomorrow.

I stayed, in fact, a little too long, for I was lunching with Mrs. Biddle and some of her friends, and I had intended to go back to the hotel and maybe change into my Best Black. But there was no time for that, so I went along in the black silk suit that is wearing at a few seams. It's still all right—and will be for next summer, if I ever get those seams fixed. And it's perfectly fine when I don't turn my back to anyone so that the yellow blouse shows through.

I hope I kept front-face as much as possible when I was meeting the guests. Not that they'd care if I came with sleeves rolled up and soapsuds on my hands. Lady Limerick was there and Megan Lloyd George and Caroline Haslett and Irene Ward and Clemence Dane; and next to me was someone I had been hoping to meet, Mrs. Miles, whom they all call Blossom, and who is the only woman airplane designer as far as I know. And Helen Kirkpatrick was there, looking the way all Americans should look, very simply but very smartly dressed, in a big bright plain hat that set off her firm, humorous face. Craig McGeachy, of the Embassy, came in for a minute. She had the cousin of my cold, and it was a worse blackguard than mine. She's been in bed. But she's not the type that pays much attention to her ailments and dropped in to say hello, though white as a sheet.

Mrs. Biddle and Miss Haslett had planned the luncheon with some care, so that I might meet as many as possible of the women who are doing things who hadn't crossed my path before now. Miss Wilkinson was expected, but she didn't get there, and I didn't wonder much after seeing how much

was going on in the House of Commons this morning. I've met her before anyway.

Blossom Miles is a woman I would like you to have the chance to meet—a designer and inventor, rather up your street. She and her husband run an airplane factory, and if there were any time at all left I would go to see it, as she has suggested. But of course there isn't. You must have a look next time you get to England.

It was a fine party—not trivial. We all stayed longer than we meant to, I think, discussing everything from problems of fuel to nurseries. Megan Lloyd George knows and says that her brother the Fuel Minister has a tough job. It's easier to make food go around than to make fuel adequate. You can't raise fuel, and there are no recipes for making a scuttle of coal any more effectively warming!

We talked, too, of nurseries, and Blossom Miles said she would put her children in one if there was one, and I said you would too if you had children—I couldn't very well offer to put you and Tan into one.

Then it was three o'clock, and I said goodbye to Mrs. Biddle, wishing I could tell her how much I thanked her without seeming utterly fatuous, and also that I could tell her what a good job I think

she is doing personally. She is thoughtful and not mechanical for a minute in her attention to her guests. She never seems to eat anything, but she provides wonderful food for the company. She doesn't lead the conversation like the head of a committee, but she sees that it's going in the right direction.

I didn't like to see the last of Caroline Haslett, even temporarily. But I'm sure that's not for very long. She is connected with all sorts of things I am interested in, and our paths are pretty likely to cross.

The rest of the afternoon I spent on the trail of my airplane ticket. I had a nice, quiet hour in the office of the American Export Lines, waiting my turn. There was only one ahead of me, but he was not the nervous or hurried type.

As far as I can see the ticket is mine, but I haven't got it in my purse yet. I have to go back tomorrow morning, and I shan't believe I'm really going until the plane lifts off the Atlantic.

Let's see if I can sleep.

Love,

Mother.

July 1

Dear Mary,

This is being written by a rather hot and very tired but serene woman in the train to Bristol. It is a private train, which carries none but the people who are going on the two flights to America scheduled from Ireland tomorrow. With maybe a few men from Scotland Yard along to keep an eye on us.

The window is open, and the cinders are blowing into little drifts all over me, but I have a very fine big yellow plush chair all to myself and had a good dinner of anonymous meat and ice cream in the restaurant carriage.

In the end everything got done. It always does, but there will come a time when I'll find that the charm for fitting things into some Last Day will not work. And this was a particular dandy of a day. There was so much to cancel and apologize for. I had to tell Lady Astor how much I regretted that the Plymouth expedition had to be given up, and I hope she knew that I meant it. Now I'll probably never meet a Queen in her own house but just stand on sidewalks as usual to see one go by.

I did keep all the engagements which were made for me by the Ministry of Information, which was

some satisfaction. This morning I had a short but interesting talk with Mr. Brown at the Ministry of Health, and he confirmed the things I wanted to have confirmed by someone in authority, before I started talking about them at home. Health in Great Britain is not only good but improving. The only weak spot seems to be in tuberculosis, which shows an increase due, no doubt, to the conditions at the time of the blitzes and also to the fact that people neglect to have examinations when they should and to embark on cures as they should. The birth rate is holding pretty firm. There has been no increase in common contagious diseases, such as we all feared there would be and heard talk about on our side of the Atlantic. No typhoid, a drop in diphtheria. I am the living evidence that, as the statistics point out, the Common Cold is not conquered in Great Britain; but I am also evidence that even under conditions of neglect and aggravation, it is rarely fatal.

Mr. Brown is a sturdy man, good, forceful, quite an orator. He is said to have the largest voice in the House of Commons, but he didn't let it out yesterday in the Chamber nor this morning in his private office. I talked also to his secretary, who is going to

send me all documents which I might publicize to advantage over in the United States.

With that appointment concluded and the flow of information channeled for use during the next few years, I went to the Ministry of Information to thank everyone and to say goodbye, showing my identification card for the last time and, as usual, going in the wrong direction as soon as I entered the Main Building. They were all so friendly that I kept wishing that I could do something in return for them, that they would come to the United States and let me introduce them around, and suddenly, in that very warmth of desire to show them how friendly we are in the United States too, I felt the usefulness if not the success of my little mission. As I had felt it yesterday with the women at lunch when we sat over empty coffee cups and talked about joint war problems, and as I felt it in the country and in the factories.

Storm Jameson and her husband came to lunch. They were to have dined with me tonight, with some others, but that had to be canceled, and they came alone this noon instead. If I could lift the privations and the sufferings of wartime from any one woman, I would just at this minute lift them from Storm

Jameson. She spares herself nothing, mind or body. She seems more exposed to the war than any person I have seen. And there isn't one soft spot of sentimentality in her. I shall not remember everything she has said, I suppose, but I doubt if I ever forget her clear, thin face, with its pallor and delicacy, her black wartime hat, with its little veil that is so becoming, and her way of listening to everyone else flounder about and then indicating the path through the argument without any fuss. And I like that shrewd officer who is her husband and believes in education more than wars but is completely realist about necessities of the moment.

Yesterday I had a note from Lady Reading, who is head of the Women's Voluntary Services, asking me to tea with her today. Since I was leaving at seven from the station and had to pack and pay my bill—I got my ticket finally before lunch—and also was expecting Jennie Lee and Noel Streatfeild and Russell Strauss to come in for a last word or two, it seemed impossible. I wanted to meet her very much. I knew much more about the WVS than about any other of the Women's Services, because I had studied its form and achievements last year when I was writing *Women for Defense*. But it seemed a

pity not to talk it over with the women who had raised it from scratch into the largest women's war organization that there is in the world, I think.

So I went, rather in a flurry, but once we got talking I forgot how little time I had. Lady Reading is a large handsome woman, perfect for her job, easy and firm, not so militarized in bearing as Mrs. Knox or Miss Trefusis-Forbes. She seems to understand amateurs, and how she has handled them! She was called upon to furnish workers for all the emergency jobs—running the canteens, maintaining rest centers, taking care of evacuees, providing clothes, filling the gaps between organizations, training housewives how to handle ration cards, and so on and on through a long list of usefulness. You can read about it in my book. But this is what she is like: She stood at the window of her office, looking out for a minute, calm after a hundred blitzes, and telling me about them. She said, "I knew it hit very near, and then I looked out. For a minute I didn't know where I was —all the roofs were waving!"

She told me of the WVS, that the position it has reached since 1938 is a complete revolution and has put the work that can be done by women in a voluntary organization on a different footing than

has ever been contemplated before. The WVS started with no backing and was met by Mayors all over England with suspicion and doubt. Now, she says, the WVS has become a definite branch of the Local Government of Administration.

Contrasted with the ATS, the WAAF, and the WRNS, her job has been to decentralize, even while holding a tremendous body of untrained volunteers together. It was a tremendous task. Its achievements had to build its place, and they did just that. The WVS stands in relation to the Home Office as the women's auxiliary forces do to the Army and Navy and Air Force.

I have a great respect for Lady Reading's work, for it is really on the home front. The Volunteer Car Pool over here is the new baby of the WVS. People register their cars and then are called on to use them in case of need. And need only. There's no pleasure driving allowed now. It's just what we must do in the United States, but here it's being done through a woman's volunteer organization which can be trusted with a job that big. Detailed and complicated returns must be kept, licenses and petrol issued, log books checked. The responsibility of providing cars in answer to calls from Government of-

ficers and others in the categories covered by the scheme rests entirely with the WVS.

Then they provide the staffs for the vast majority of British Restaurants. I hadn't known that. They mend half a million pairs of army socks a week. They do the billeting of war workers. They do the home salvage.

Lady Reading told me that they now work for fifteen Ministries, and all this work is done on a local basis involving no extra expenditure. Wait until I get home and tell that to the Victory Aides in Minnesota. In blitz or air attacks, the members of the WVS answer many calls and are often in great danger, manning canteens, carrying messages in behalf of wardens, providing food, clothing, and transport for victims. And Lady Reading says: "It's been a humbling experience to watch the development and selfless devotion to work combined with the human approach and quick sympathy practised by the women, no matter how exhausted, tired, and anxious they have been feeling themselves."

I am very glad I had this brief talk. It gives me something to take back to women who fear they may not be useful in the war and who want desperately to do something, even if they can't leave their homes.

There's a pattern of effort here with which we can compare our own developing defense work.

Lady Reading thinks the Germans will come back, and that it may be worse. She will be right there to meet them, with a trained organization that gets better all the time. I was thinking of that as I went back to the hotel and put the few things I am bringing home into my single suitcase. I'll have to take the fur wrap because the Atlantic may be cold; but the raincoat and the evening dress and the blouses and nightdresses and cosmetics stay here. I wish I had dozens of dresses to give to people here.

Jennie Lee came in, direct as usual with her message. She said again that I must be sure to make it clear to the American public that all citizens of Great Britain put the winning of the war first, before any other political or economic objective. But that disaffection comes when one group feels that another is not equally devoted to this single object. She was still speaking about the coal miners of course, who, she thinks, would work a lot harder if they were working for Government-owned mines.

Russell Strauss came in, looking tired after a tough day in the House of Commons. The debate over Egypt is going on. I can hardly bear to go away with-

out hearing what happens to the vote of "no confidence" which may be proposed in regard to the Prime Minister. But everyone feels it won't get far. Russell Strauss sent messages to his children over in New York and is very glad that they are getting on. He is lonely for them; misses, he says, seeing this period of their development. They have changed so much, and he hasn't seen the change.

Noel Streatfeild was there for half an hour. She's the one I'd like to smuggle back. She's had enough blitzes, all she should have to stand, but no one looking at her casually would ever guess it. It's the tired unhappiness of her book that made me sure of it. She gave me a present, a thing I shall always prize, a broken air raid warden's pin that had been through ninety-one blitzes.

"For luck on your trip," she said.

And Lady Astor telephoned and said, "Can't I come up and help you pack, at least?"

They all wanted me to go home. They knew my place was back in America, that my little job was nearly done and I could go back now and be more useful at home than over here. Besides, I'd be safer and they think of that—for other people. But they hate to have me go too, because I represent personally

one link with America, and while I am here it is that much more concrete, and when I go it will be just a little bit vaguer. They think longingly of America, where life is not so perilous, not so frugal, not in a state of siege. They know the chances of invasion are not over here, that they may yet have to fight on the beaches and in the streets. They know that they probably will be blitzed again and again, in ugly desperation if nothing else. And yet not one of them would leave the country if he or she could except to help win the war.

It's a lovely evening. If I didn't know this country was at war I wouldn't believe it, looking through the window. The gardens were flowering in the suburbs, and now there are fields and big hardwood trees and an Innes look to the whole landscape. The greens are different on the most distant fields, and here and there the red brick cottages make the countryside look substantial and old and built for keeps. It is, too.

Love,

Mother.

July 2

There must be one more note before I get to Ireland, which will be before long. My guess is that we are heading for the Irish Sea now, but the windows are blacked out. I feel better than I did on this short flight before.

I stopped writing just before we got to Bristol, and we all got off the train, looking one another over to see what we were going to travel with. Then we were herded into a couple of buses and taken to the hotels. Our hotel was in the middle of town, and here we saw blitz again, as bad as I had seen anywhere, for it wasn't cleaned up as well as in London. The buildings had been shaken down into untidy heaps. There was nothing left along some streets. Nothing. Our hotel stood almost accidentally at the end of a blitzed district, and, entering it at the end of a hard day, in the last glimmer of twilight, we felt solemn, especially because we were getting out of England and leaving so much danger behind.

But not without salute. At half-past two a siren howled, and I was wakened by the lady who was sharing a room with me. I might not have heard it except that she called me. We turned on our lights and I got up—not frightened but just plain cross.

It seemed malicious and deliberate. But the siren kept after us, so I put on the shabbying fur cape over my bathrobe and some good stout shoes and went downstairs where people were assembling—not everyone, by any means—in the lobby. We smoked cigarettes, and I talked about Hollywood with a man who seemed to be in the motion picture business—not one of our passengers. I can't remember what his face was like.

Nothing near us was hit. The "all clear" was sounded about two hours later.

Before long we'll be in Ireland, where synthetic peace exists, and we'll have all the eggs we want and plenty of butter on the tables for lunch. There will be no wreckage from blitzes to make me sick at heart. But I don't seem to have any appetite for the eggs and the butter, and I don't think I'm going to be able to enjoy the Irish scenery with its gray ruins of castles and its white plaster cottages and donkey carts, as I did in 1939. I am possessed not by envy of those who live at peace today but by admiration of those who maintain their spirit and their dignity and our mutual democracy in time of war. And I'm coming home to say so.

Love,

Mother.

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