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marked "No Jews Allowed" and at where the Jews ate; Jewish shops also did a thriving business. And if a man, wearing the infamous armband with the Star of David on it, entered a bus or street car, he was instantly offered a seat by general spontaneous agreement as a protest against this Nazi cruelty and to show that men were brothers, no matter what the Nazis thought. And you learn, though you cannot repeat, how the remnants of the Jews who could be saved were aided to escape Holland, or were hidden. The only Nazi penalty for helping Jews is death.

At the club, they will tell you that the best way to escape from Fortress Europe is to think up your own plan and carry it out. None of the routes stay open long and what worked marvellously for a friend may become sure death if you try to repeat it. The Dutch coast is as flat as a tennis court, and there is a forbidden zone five to ten miles deep all along it. No sailing is permitted on canals leading to the sea. The inland route is terribly long but it is a help, they agree, that the Dutch all speak other languages. Sometimes people escape with aid from the underground but most of these young ones get out by themselves. Some had money and some started without a penny. They all knew what they wanted; they wanted to leave Holland so as to fight their way back.

All Dutchmen arriving in England immediately report to their Government and are given war jobs. They have converged on England from the compass points of their exile and here they are assigned posts in the civilian government or military duty.

Those who have not yet been sent to the Dutch Caribbean possessions or to Australia remain and form the nucleus of an armed force. Apart from the self-contained Dutch army, there are Dutch paratroopers and commandos in British Units. In the Dutch Navy there are motor torpedo boat flotillas, minelayers, minesweepers, U-boats, cruisers, destroyers and squadrons in the Fleet Air Arm. In the R.A.F. there are Dutch fighter squadrons and Dutch naval air squadrons operating under British Bomber Command. The Dutch merchant navy functions in the allied pool and the Dutch fishing fleet fishes for England.

In all these services and in all the branches of the Government you will meet members of that wonderful escapees club, Oranjehaven. One member, a tall dark-haired young man who seldom visits London, is the commanding officer of a Dutch Squadron, flying Mitchells, in daylight raids over France, Belgium and sometimes Holland. Last summer he was ferrying a flotilla of motor torpedo boats from Florida to Curacao, where they were needed against the German submarine pack then operating in those waters. Another member, the present commander of an M.T.B. flotilla stationed in England, made five unsuccessful escapes from Nazi prisons, having always refused to sign the German pledge renouncing escape. On the sixth attempt, though by then he was surely the most closely guarded man in the area, he succeeded, and made his way to England. Now he has the practically nightly job of hurtling across the Channel in those flat-keeled, pale-painted, deadly little boats to attack German

shipping along the French coast. A Staff officer who learned to fly Spitfires at the age of 42, made a famous escape that particularly delights the Dutch. He and a friend stole a German plane marked with swastikas and flew it from Holland into a welcome of British anti-aircraft fire, with two definitely unfriendly Spitfires on their tail, crash-landed in an English field and announced that they were Dutch and had come to join up. There are also two club members, now R.A.F. Spitfire pilots, who spent eight long months making frequent round trips between England and Holland on a job which cannot now be described. They got the Dutch V.C. for that, a decoration that takes some getting. They talk of their round-the-world trip, the original voyage from Holland to England, as if it were the jolliest outing imaginable. Japan was killingly funny because of the conversational communal baths, and how drunk they were on vodka on the Trans-Siberian. There are girl club members, now employed in the Dutch government offices, who wear a narrow blue and orange ribbon- the Cross of Merit - sewed to their inexpensive utility dresses. They, too, made that long perilous journey through a Fortress Europe, and presented themselves to their government in London, asking only to work, to help in hurrying the day of liberation.

Wherever you go among the Dutch, whether it is to a bomber station or to an M.T.B. flotilla, a government office, or Oranjestad, you feel a special atmosphere which is hard to describe. The Dutch are serious, tireless and efficient, but the Dutch are gay. The Dutch are constructively critical of

of themselves, and they are critical of what they call "Our hundred years' sleep". But it is as if now they were fiercely and somehow happily alive. Each man knows the value of his work, no man or woman is wasted, and they are solidly together and solidly determined, and they rejoice in every inch gained on the long triumphant road home. They want more than the liberation of Holland and of the Dutch East Indies. They want very much more than victory. They want a fine peace; they intend not to waste this war. They mean to repay all the suffering in and out of Holland with a country which will be as just as they can make it. So you get from the Dutch a vast feeling of hope.

The winning of the war is the great immediate aim for which no sacrifice is too heavy. But there is a wonderful thing, the future, and the Dutch are not afraid of the future. The Dutch are going to try to write history well. You feel that these people have learned through the brutality of war and occupation to respect forever the dignity and the rights of man.

Recently a Dutch broadcaster said: "Queen Wilhelmina has declared that immediately after the freeing of all territories of the kingdom of the Netherlands, a Round Table Conference of all the people and races involved should be called. It would be against the principles of Democracy to make specific arrangements at the moment when the peoples for whom they would be made are still under a foreign yoke. But after the war, the kingdom of the Netherlands would be converted into a Commonwealth,

not a commonwealth of white peoples as has already been known in political history, but a Commonwealth of white, brown and yellow races". The Dutch are going to do their honorable best to make the future fair.

The Dutch outside of Holland will tell you that they get their strength from Holland, from the silenced jailed millions of their own people who will not give up, and whose courage and good sense are constant guides. The Dutch underground press is certainly amazing to read. Four or five national secret papers have a monthly printing of 150,000 copies. Besides these there are scores of local papers, village news-sheets, trade or group or party journals. These newspapers, printed in tiny type on wretched paper, are handed on until they are worn out. School-children, as extra-curricular activity, make carbon copies of whole pages or separate articles from these secret papers and pass them on. The underground press wants no articles from London and receives none; all the writing is done in Holland. From Holland there come requests for documents, for the Beveridge plan, the text of the Moscow agreement, speeches of President Roosevelt in full. The newspapers are earnest, thorough, and quiet in tone. At the risk of penalties ranging from torture and death to deportation for forced labor, these newspapers are written, printed, distributed and read. The titles of leading articles in them are astonishing to us, who read freely what we like and who often read lazily. The Watchword, a national underground paper, carries such articles as: Social Monarchy, The Re-

Education of German Youth, Freedom from Want in Liberated Holland, the Press after the Liberation, Christianity and Humanism. Another large circulation paper called Free Netherland publishes pieces on: Germany after the War, not a German but a European question; Our Democracy after the War, Money in the World of Tomorrow, Democracy in Industry.

Three months after the occupation of Holland, these secret newspapers started to appear and new ones are still being founded. Among the latest of these is the Communist Signal and the Free News Forum. In the beginning the role of the Underground Press was to be a morale builder, to counteract German propaganda and keep the Dutch together and keep them faithful to each other. The Press served as a link between people who could not meet or talk. But the Dutch inside Holland who never doubted the final victory, now take that victory for granted. Their chief present concern is how to win the peace.

It is through this press, and through other means which cannot be described that the Dutch government in England maintains its total contact with occupied Holland. Everything from statistics on disease to the names of the latest executed Hostages is reported here. It is the policy of the Dutch Government to plan for the future, for the return to Holland; and no detail is too small to be overlooked. On the other hand, these are only plans and tentative working cadres; the people of Holland will be sovereign and they will decide whether

any plans are final. However, learning that the tuberculosis death rate has doubled since the German occupation, the Medical section of the Dutch government organizes to cope with this. The Medical section has also studied exactly what caloric content of food to give people so desperately under-nourished through these long years; for, as too much water will kill a man who is dying of thirst, so food for the semi-starved must also be controlled medically. A Social Section plans the return of the Dutch deportees from Germany, arranging for physical examinations before they dare be released into a community which has already endured steady epidemics of infantile paralysis, typhoid, diphtheria, etc. The Social Section also plans for the reintegration of hundreds of thousands of men into a country that will lack everything from shoes to houses. These are limited samples of the care with which the future is foreseen; meantime, inside and outside Holland the Dutch work together for the Liberation.

The great day is called "Hatchet Day". This is the day of uprising when all the Dutch, who have been making their own weapons if they could not save or steal them, intend to purge their country of what they hate even more than the Germans, the Dutch traitors, the Quislings of Holland. There are eight million people in Holland, and the Government calculates that 419,000 men have been deported for forced labor in Germany; 6,500 students were deported, 20,000 officers and non-commissioned officers are in concentration camps, 120,000 Jews have been sent

away to die. They say that not one loyal family in Holland remains intact; from all of them some man has been amputated. Further, the Government estimates that 20,000 people have been executed by the Germans, apart from the wholesale deportation and undoubted massacre of the Jews. These executions are not haphazard. The Germans are systematically destroying the possible leaders of the Dutch people. Hostages are taken before, not after, a crime has been committed against the Germans. There is, in short, a selected pool of hostages, and these are specially able people whose death weakens the national life. It can be seen how the Dutch would hate any of their compatriots who agreed to help in such destruction.

Despite executions, deportation, hunger, disease, and numbing unceasing grind of oppressive regulations, the Dutch in Holland pursue all their underground activity, prepare for their quick essential house-cleaning, and like a lighthouse continue to send out a steady unshaken light of courage. From time to time, in small groups or alone, they still escape from Holland and find their way to the nondescript house facing Hyde Park. For luggage the newcomers bring with them the intensity of their convictions and their great moral health.

The Dutch may have been asleep for a hundred years, as they say so harshly of themselves. But in any case they woke magnificently and they are not going to tire. It is a curious thing to say of a race that is reputedly stolid and thorough

and cautious that they now seem to blaze. It is a find light
and it shines for all.

The ward is a long, wide, cold room with bright green curtains at the windows. There are yellow and mauve potted chrysanthemums on tables down the center of the room, and a black iron coal stove at either end. Wicker chairs and a table covered with magazines stand in front of the far stove and this is where the patients, wearing Royal Air Force uniforms, gather. Five or six men are lying in the white-painted beds. The ward has the casual, cheerful, faintly bored feeling of any place where men are convalescing. But this ward is not like other wards because no one here has a real face and many of them have hands that are not much good either. These men are the air crews who crashed in planes and were thrown or dragged clear of the burning wreckage, but they were not thrown or dragged clear quite soon enough.

The men around the stove interrupted their conversation to talk to one of the patients in bed. The wagon that will carry him to the operation room is drawn up alongside the bed and a nurse is helping him on to it.

"What's it to be today, Bill?"

"Eyebrows."

"Won't he be pretty?"

Then there is a chorus of cheer's, and the operating-room trolley rolls away. There was no special feeling about this because eyebrows aren't bad, the boy had been through so many operations and was so close to having a face again that this little extra pain did not worry him, and besides men have been wheeled in and out of this

ward all day long, and day after day, and each man alone has learned how to wait for and endure these trips.

In a bed farther down another boy is waiting; his turn will come after the eyebrows are made. He is going to get a nose. For weeks he has been growing the skin for this nose, in the form of a narrow sausage-shaped pedicle, attached to the unharmed skin of his shoulder. His face is incredible and one hand is entirely gone. There is no expression in these burned and scarred faces; all the expression is in the eyes and in the voice. You cannot tell age either; fire takes that away too. The boy had light brown tufty hair and good laughing eyes and a good voice, and a face that would soon at least have a nose. He was twenty-one, though you could only know this if you were told, and he had been a chauffeur before the war, driving for the squire of his village. The Welfare Officer had arranged to get him an industrial job, when he would have enough of a face, but he did not want it. He wants to go back, with one hand and that face, and be a chauffeur again in his village. Because the village is home and what he loves, his people are there, the village is a recognizable world. And in fact, they would all like to go back to what was before, before the war and before the flames got them.

Around the stove there are now four boys, gossiping together. One has just come from London and they are asking him about his trip. He is going to be operated on tomorrow and after that he will return to flying and he is very happy. He is an American from Columbus, Ohio and he crashed in a Hurricane and his face, they say, was simply pushed two inches back inside his head. Now his nose is

very flattened and the skin around his eyes is odd, but by contrast to the others, he looks fine. He feels fine too, because what he likes is to fly, and he will be doing that again. The others will not fly. They are talking easily and generously about his squadron and neither you nor they nor anyone looks at the curled claws of hands of the 19 year old Canadian, nor at the melted stump that the 21 year old English boy has, nor at the stiff reddish solidified fingers of a boy who always worked on a farm in Canada, and would like to again, and maybe some day his hands will bend just enough to let him do it.

The 19 year old Canadian, with the claw hands, wants to be a boat builder. He is a darling, with a lively brain and one half of his face is hardened twisted reddish meat and one half is fairly okay, so you can see what a nice-looking kid he was. He thought he'd lost his left eye, after he was pulled out of the wrecked plane, because he couldn't see from that eye. He was a gunner and his pal the navigator pulled him out and he said to his pal, "Where's my eye? I've lost my eye somewhere here." So his pal said, "Well, we'll look for it then." And they crawled around on the grass, dazed and burned, looking for the eye. This story, you may not instantly guess, produces roars of laughter from everyone because it just goes to show how dopey a guy can be.

There is a wonderful man on the staff of this hospital, a former school teacher now a flight sergeant, who lives with these wounded boys and whose job it is to see that they make the hard and lonely adjustment to their disfigurement that they must make, if they are to live. He is their friend and confidant and he knows as

much about them as one man can know about another, and he treats them with a matter-of-factness which is essential and, in the beginning, startling to an outsider.

He said casually, "Pete, show your hand. He's got a real bad hand."

And there was the hand, or rather the non-hand, and there above it was the serious, hesitant face of the 21 year old Englishman, and we looked at his hand as if it belonged to someone else, and we were only interested to see what fire could do to a hand. His face was fairly good, but the sides of his head had been burned flat, and a head is strange without ears. This boy had been a talented pilot. He completed his operational tour, which means thirty separate missions against the enemy, and then as a rest he was sent to be an instructor. This is normal routine. It happened that his student crashed the training plane, when he was flying with him, and the pilot got these burns trying to pull the student out of the wreckage. But this is just bad luck, you see, worse luck perhaps than if you got it returning from Germany in a plane that had to crash land. It's all bad luck and a part of the curious job of war and no one makes anything out of his bad luck. This can happen to anybody, they seem to say, nothing for me to complain about specially.

The saline baths, which are the essential basis of burn treatment, were in rooms alongside the ward. We went in to see the baths and there was a boy, sitting in the deep tub, and the attendants were keeping his face dampened and under the water he was patiently flexing his purplish hands. He was being cheered on by a sergeant who is in charge of the baths, and who loves the baths only less than

he loves the boys he is saving. "Come on," the sergeant said, "You can bend them more than that." Then, not to be too hard on this child, who had been here only three days, he said "You see yourself how good they are. Your face is fine too. We'll have you out of here in no time."

The boy answered but you could not understand what he said; his skin was burned so tight that he could scarcely move his mouth and the words came out in a shy mumble. The face was absolutely expressionless, so set that it looked dead, and yet the shape of it was still intact. Two bright blue eyes stared out of the scarred face, and watched the stiff hands that bent ever so slightly under water. The rest of him was the fragile, tender body of a very young boy, for after all nineteen is a very young boy. "Come on now," the sergeant said, "Come on, bend them." The boy had been opening and shutting his fingers the distance of a quarter of an inch for two hours, and he would go on doing that for more days than one wanted to think about. But in the end he would move his hands and his face would be fixed and then he would fly again.

They were having tea in the reception office. This is a wonderful hospital in which the staff and the patients call each other by first names and nick-names and the patients feel as at home as if they were guests at a summer camp and they have all been together so often or so long that they have permanent jokes, and they have all got such guts that there is no place for pity.

In the office there was a pretty blonde girl in khaki who is a chauffeur now, and drives these boys to the village pub or to a neighboring football field where the hospital team plays an Army

team, or to the train or the movies or wherever they want to go. Another pretty girl who wears a St. John's black uniform is the secretary and there were a few internes getting a quick cup of tea during a lull in the operating room. There was also a very young girl, wearing a blue silk bandana handkerchief over her hair and a polo coat. She was tiny and pink-cheeked and absurdly young looking to be a married woman. But she was married and her husband was sitting beside her and he was very young too, and tall when he stood up and he must have been a handsome boy. He was blind now. Beneath the bandage over his eyes you could see the familiar drawn burned face. The girl had come to this hospital on the first day her husband arrived and she had not left him since then. He was new to being blind and very awkward about it. She managed so that her husband should not feel his awkwardness and though she did not talk, the blind soldier talked happily and easily, with the confidence his wife had given him. He was teasing the girl chauffeur about her football team that she lugged all over the countryside and what sort of football team she was sponsoring anyhow, they'd been beaten everywhere since she started driving them.

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This hospital is one of six Royal Air Force burn centers and it was planned as a wartime hospital. But there will be five to seven years work after the war, without counting the men now prisoners in Germany who will need this sort of care. The average hospitalization is from six to eight weeks; but these bad burn

cases take two years to be repaired, at a minimum. Not only RAF cases are treated here, there are bomb wounds, where the fact has been torn apart, and sailors who have been burned and rescued from the sea, and men of all services who have been terribly damaged in accidents. But the largest group of men here are the boys in Air Force blue and the oldest among them is twenty-nine.

The hospital is a marvel and this is due to a great surgeon, always referred to by his patients as Mac. Their confidence in Mac is boundless; they say that if Mac told a chap he was just going to take off the chap's head and graft it temporarily to the chap's arm, the chap would certainly agree. This confidence is based on observation; they see with their own eyes the slow patient miracles that Mac performs. He works for them tirelessly, operating three or five days a week, sometimes from ten in the morning until ten at night; but he does more than surgery and that is why the hospital is a marvel. You would never see a more delicate and unpretentious job of life-saving than goes on here.

Mac believes that, with sufficient time, he can fix a man's face "so that it will not cause comment." This is what he tells them, promising nothing more and delivering nothing less. When these burned boys arrive, they see others like them and the rubber in the human soul is so resilient that they always see someone who looks worse than they look. Mirrors are handy; the men are not allowed to become afraid of facing their present disfigurement. Since they will be in and out of this hospital regularly for years, they do not wear hospital uniforms. As soon as they can walk, they are given their RAF uniforms and shipped off to the village, to

mingle with people and get used to living in the daily world. The local people are accustomed to them, they are not stared at, and this first adjustment is fairly easy. After this they are encouraged to go to London, mainly to see and be seen. They are apt to go in pairs and keep each other company, but the job of making them accept themselves without self consciousness is so well done that this initial contact with strangers appears to come off successfully every time.

Mac has abandoned the basket weaving school of occupational therapy. He feels it is silly and offensive; these are men vitally concerned in the war effort, and there is an industrial workshop at the hospital which makes small airplane parts. Work is voluntary and they know that they are doing something useful. When Mac is through with a patient for a time, feeling that he has had all the operations he can take, the patient is sent away to work at a job, or if the disability is too serious the patient is sent to a rest home which is also a limited factory and training school. The men are not permitted to become idle, nor to feel that they have lost all chance of fitting into average life, during the long years of treatment. Mac says that of course the worst disability is blindness, but after that comes the loss of hands. Fortunately total loss of both hands is rare and it is amazing what these boys can learn to do, with a hook for a hand, or by using the stumps of fingers.

And when they come back to the hospital, as they must year after year, they know and are fond of the staff, they find old friends in the wards, and due to Mac there is no hospital gloom, none of that

excessive starched hospital discipline, and the men are really very cheerful about their return visits. They have a club called the Guinea Pig Club, which gives a bang-up dinner in the village once a year, and all the old patients come as if they were attending a school reunion. It is a great enough achievement to repair these damaged faces, but to keep the minds behind the faces so sound and so self reliant is a triumph. Mac, and a superb staff he has trained, and the courage of the men, explain that triumph.

There are some things which even Mac cannot handle and they are not talked of especially. There is the heartbreak of parents when they first see their children, come back like this; and there is the tragedy of the wives who cannot take it. One doesn't talk of this, and the losses are cut, and life goes on. There is something else, perhaps worse and deeper, and it is the fear of these very young men that after the war they will never really be able to compete with whole men and that they will not find a job and will not be able to provide properly for themselves or their families. So they make a joke of disaster and form a Beggar's Union.

It is natural that these boys should not be thinking much about the peace, and how to prevent the Germans from ever starting another war. They have done their share; they have paid for the safety of our world. It is obviously up to us, with our real faces and our two hands, to make it a decent lasting world that they paid for in advance.

Martha Gellhorn

SUNDAY IN THE VILLAGE

They came to church wearing their best. The few soldiers looked very well dressed and everyone else looked brushed and scrubbed and shabby. Three ladies were wrapped in aged coats made of unidentifiable fur, which had seen heavy service these last four years. There were two blonde little girls, escorted by their governess, who wore grey tweed coats and grey felt hats and pig-tails. The coats were inches short at the wrists and the hems, because children will grow whether there are clothing coupons or not. There were several old men in dark blue overcoats and polished but cracking shoes. They all kneeled on the threadbare cushions to pray; they stood and sang tunelessly but devotedly from their hymn books. The church was cold and most of the choir stalls were empty as only very young boys and older men remain in this village. Sun came in through the narrow windows and lightened for a moment the beautiful severe stone church. The voices of the little choirboys rose like birds and the organ sounded splendid. Not it was the time for the prayer. Give us peace in our time, O Lord, said the rich chanting voice of the Vicar, but you could scarcely hear for at that moment a squadron of Spitfires roared over the village, flying east.

In the silver morning the Thames moved gently between grass banks and boys raced their bicycles across the curved pink brick bridge. On his tuft of island, the lockkeeper, who always won

prizes for his flowers, would be spading the terraces where his begonias used to grow. Farther up the tow path, two men who were not going to church took up positions in the willows and prepared to fish for pike. The wild ducks, who never move for planes, rose from the water and flew in magnificent formations to quieter stretches of water. Some bulls were ominously playful in the field behind the fishermen. Two little girls emerged from the brown soft-looking woods, carrying evergreen branches. Above the lovely silent village and the gentle river, a huge tan bomber hung in the air. By the river you could hear the organ faintly; but no sound, except that of the passing planes, reached the small, timbered, pale-painted vine-covered cottages in the village lanes. The planes seemed only ornamental and it was hard to believe there was war anywhere.

Now three bombers, as fascinating and small as runaway kites, drove higher and higher into the pale blue basin of the sky, trailing white streamers from their exhausts. The children stopped racing over the curved bridge, to watch with pleasure these smoke patterns in the sky. In peace-time, there would be nothing so interesting to look at on Sunday morning.

"Testing the weather," said one knowledgeable red-cheeked boy of nine.

"Wellingtons," said another.

"Not Wellingtons," said the first.

"What are they then if you know so much?"

"Douglases."

"Ho, ho," sneered the Wellington fancier and they got on their bicycles to go home for Sunday dinner, a meal no intelligent child would be late for, because it was the biggest meal of the week and there would be meat.

Yesterday the butcher's van came through the village, stopping at every house, to dole out the microscopic weekly meat ration. On Saturday the women would be running in to Miss West's grocery store, to see if they couldn't buy a little something extra as a Sunday treat for their families. Mrs. Thomas managed very well, because her husband believed she ate a hot meal every noon while he was at the factory, but actually she ate some bread and tea and perhaps a bit of cheese and that way she could save her rations for the weekend when he would be home. Mrs. Johnson only bought cigarettes and bouillon cubes and a jar of jam, and all the women advised about the jam since it cost coupons. Everyone spoke to Mrs. Johnson's daughter, Betty, who was going to have her fourth birthday next week. Betty said she wanted, for her birthday, "a dolly, a barrer and a book," and lots of little girls for a party. The dolly would be made out of an old stocking, there would be no wheel-barrow, there would be a book, and the Johnsons had been saving their rations to make a cake for the party.

The women would stand in the tiny crowded store and gossip, and Mrs. Markham would enquire after Miss West's hands, which were very purple, with chilblains Miss West thought, but that was because of not getting as much fat as one once had. Still we

can't complain, can we? Miss West said. This is one of the classic phrases of England. All agreed that they had nothing to complain of and were indeed fortunate beyond belief. Because there was the beautiful village which they loved, and it was still standing, and though all the young people were away at the war, only four had been killed.

Before the war, on Sunday afternoons, the young people used to play football or cricket, or walk by the river for courting purposes or exercise, and in summer they went swimming and boating. But of the eight hundred souls who lived here, one hundred and fifty are away in the Forces: the war came like a weird Pied Piper and left the village youthless. So on Sunday afternoons the grown people stay indoors, or perhaps the men go out to dig in the gardens which everyone has, and the women just make sure the chickens are all right.

At four-thirty they will draw the blackout curtains and this tiny dot on the land will become invisible. Then they will have tea, which on Sunday is the evening meal. There will be no guests because of rationing, but each family will sit quietly in its own little doll-house and drink cups and cups of tea and eat bread and butter or bread and margarine, and talk over the small familiar news of the village and their lives. The women talk about food rationing, not that there isn't enough to eat but it fair drives one wild trying to make a change in the meals. They do not speak much of clothes since these are poor people who never went in for fanciness and they are adjusted to being shabby. It

is only that the children wear out or outgrow their things and that makes a trouble. They wish they could paint their houses too, or cover the chairs with new material, or make fresh curtains or repair the fence, the gate, the stove, the roof: but none of that can be done now, as is natural. It is just nice to talk of, saying: after the war is over, I'm going to have new curtains for the downstairs.

They will speak of their friends and acquaintances, saying discreetly how sad it is that young Mrs. Hamilton is getting a divorce, her husband is in the Army, it's so sad for these young people having all that unhappiness, but that's the war, isn't it? And then there's the great grief of the Baileys, who lost their only son. All the village can see and all the village has time to share in this sorrow. Mr. Bailey can't seem to get over it, and Mrs. Bailey has been ill ever since it happened, ever since the plane crashed. Young Tom was a fine tall good boy. His fiancée goes every day to his grave in the churchyard and stays there alone for a long time, and everyone sees her going though none seem to notice, not wishing to intrude on her sorrow. "She says she wants to go with him," one of the women will say: this is not news in the village but it distresses them to think of it. They know each other so well that any loss belongs to them all.

Then they will laugh, as they have been doing for months, at the lockkeeper's story. It seems that two bombs fell on this village; these are referred to as "our bombs". They fell in a field near the lock and killed some cows. This, by universal

agreement, was a sad and shocking sight. "There was the poor animals all shot up and one with its head some place else." The lockkeeper spoke on the radio after this event, and remarked that he and the missus were blown out of bed by the blast. The village shakes with laughter over this, for the lockkeeper is a reserved man and they laugh at his mentioning his domestic arrangements and furthermore they laugh because he could not possibly have been blown out of bed by those bombs.

They will discuss the evacuees from London too; this subject never loses its value. There are few city children still here, but right after the blitz the village was full of them. The children weren't so bad but when their parents came to visit them it was a trial. London people are not like the village people, so lazy and untidy and ignorant, the village thought. Some of the city children were holy horrors too, and some were funny and pathetic. The constable had to caution two little Londoners for stealing all the daffodils from a lady's garden, and they said, "what, we can't pick them weeds from that field?" It just goes to show how a child has no advantages in a city. But most of the children who have stayed are as loved now as if they were the sons or daughters of their guardians, and they go to the village school, an old cold building, where classes are separated by a curtain, and stand and drone out their lessons and play wildly in the cobbled yard at noon, and roam the lanes in the afternoons, and these Londoners are country people now and do not want to go home.

The doctor will probably get talked about too; he has only been here thirty-five years, so he isn't exactly a village man. He is very stern and they pretend to think he needn't be such an old bear. There was Mrs. Pierce's girl, Laura, who was suffering from nerves, she thought, and just didn't feel able to work for a few days. She worked fifty-six hours a week in a war factory and had to get up every morning at five-thirty to catch the bus to the nearest town, and she was worn-out. The doctor said they probably got nerves in the armed Forces too, but they weren't given a rest, and she could forget all that silly talk and go back to her job. The doctor says people grumble about the diet and it is doing them no harm at all; they should be thankful they've anything to eat, look at the poor people in Holland and all those places. And what if men of fifty, gardeners or chauffeurs or farmers, who never worked indoors before, do find the noise and the sameness of factories a strain: the boys in tanks and planes and ships are overworked too. If a village man or woman has to walk ten miles to work each day, they have to walk farther than that in the infantry. The doctor has a son in Italy; he has not seen the boy for some years because he was in Africa before that. The doctor is over sixty and never stops working, and he thinks everyone may as well do the same and get the war won.

The women will talk a little of how expensive everything is, and the men will talk a little of their jobs, and they will ask each other, as they always do, when this wicked war will be over, and then gradually there won't be much left to talk of. Besides,

it will be time to go to evening service in the community hall, which is used now because the church can't be blacked out. Anyhow, the missus will probably go to evening service and the man will go to the Workingman's Club next door.

High cupboards line the walls of the community hall now, and camp beds are stacked on the stage. In the cupboards are "all the lovely clothes they sent us from America," and in other chests there are canned foods. For two and a half years this hall has been used as a refugee center. After the blitz homeless people from the cities were fed and clothed and sheltered here until they could be stowed away in houses in the countryside. But the hall is going to be used again for parties, and tomorrow night there will be the first dance in all this time. "You get out of the habit," Mrs. Peters remarked, "and you don't really feel much like going to parties. But perhaps after the first time it will seem nice again." The camp beds will stay on the stage and the cupboards cut down floor space, but they will make do; and the hall remains in constant readiness to be used again, as a refugee center, should the need arise.

They were so jolly in the Workingman's Club that they could not hear the piano next door, playing the hymns of evening service. There was a darts game going and billiards, and on Sunday the wives can come to the club, and so there was chaffing, punctuated by high female laughter, at the tables around the blazing coal fire. They drank light and dark beer or straight gin, kept their coats on in the hot room, teased each other about

anything, and had a fine time. A boy wearing the uniform of the Airborne troops was playing billiards, resting his cue on a bandaged hand. He had just returned from Italy and he was shy, proud and self-conscious to be back in his village, fresh from the battle. The men over forty had all been in the last war, since once before the Pied Piper had passed through this village and left it youthless. Now, not wanting to question the new soldier directly, the older men spoke of Salonica and France and the Dardanelles and no one listened very closely. They would have liked the boy to talk, but he did not know how to, and in a way they held back from hearing. This war was so vast, so complicated, so terrible, and so remote from their decent harmless lives that it was painful to think of, and perhaps one got on better by not knowing too much. Still, they wanted the soldier to feel how happy they were to have him back and how proud they were of him and all the others like him.

They talked elaborately away and around the war, making jokes, saying the soldier's name often, and with their voices and presence creating a kind of warmth around the boy. He was less shy now and leaning on the billiard table he remarked chattily to a very old woman at a nearby table: "I was fair sozzled last night, wasn't I, Granny? Was you ashamed of me?"

"I'm never ashamed of anything a sojer does," the old woman quavered, lifting her head with pride. "Where would we be without our sojers, I'd like to know."

Two men said: "Hear, hear"; and making a joke of it, but

meaning it with their whole hearts, they said: "Here's to our sojers." The beer glasses and gin glasses were raised and everyone drank, laughing, but very serious anyhow, and the boy in the beret and battle dress looked modestly at the floor and was happy to be with his own people.

At ten-thirty the club would shut, and so would the pubs at the White Hart, the Bull and the French Horn. The people who were still up at this reckless hour would now walk home in the dark, through the narrow stone-walled lanes and through the old graveyard where the stones slant in the earth and are covered with ivy and moss. They would go home to sleep, to be ready for the dark early rising on Monday. On Monday the children would go to school, the men and the younger women would go to the war factories, the mothers would start the week's washing, the old ladies in the Almshouse and the old people who were lucky enough to have families would potter about helping where they could.

After this week would come another and then another month, and the long years of war seemed slowly to be ending. The war must be won; no one really thinks of anything else. The war must be won, and then there would be again the lovely remembered summers with regattas on their river, and sun and picnics, and visitors come from London to admire their flowers and their enchanting cottages and their beautiful church. The war would be won, and then at last the young people would be safe and home again.

They are fifteen and sixteen years old now and they are at home in the war. They never bought food except with ration books nor clothes except with coupons. They grew up to find trenches in the playgrounds, bunks in the subways, queues for everything, and they have never had a date except in the blackout. Almost before they began to notice where they lived, they saw their streets bombed; they take the curious gaps or the gutted houses of the neighbourhood for granted. They are so at home in the war, since it is all they know, that they have to think twice before they can remember what peace was like.

These are the poor kids of London, the Cockneys, speaking a rare and funny language of their own which is sometimes as hard to understand as a foreign tongue. They are short and strong, not beautiful at all, but made of some material that endures. At fourteen they leave school, and at fourteen life descends on them without gentleness. They work 45 to 48 hours a week at least and earn averagely less than \$8.00 for it. Since the men of the family are mostly away at the war, they are vital wage earners, and a boy of sixteen may easily be the head of the house. They work in war industries or they release older people for the Services by carrying on in essential civilian factories or trades. In winter they get up in the dark and return home in the dark and one might imagine they would be tired on Sunday and besides there is no place much to go. The routine of living ought to crush them, you would think; a factory, and a crowded poor home on a

stony street, and the black London night. For fun there are the movies and their own clubs, and that is all. It would seem pretty grim and you would expect to find very sad kids, who had to live like this. They are anything but sad. They are the liveliest toughest brightest people you would ever hope to meet.

My friends belong to a club called the Four Feathers. This, to them, is the Racquet Club, the University Club and the River Club rolled into one. The club is on a short narrow, dirty and treeless street called Mulready Road. In the daytime the street is full of little children, roaring around on hand-made scooters and shouting to each other from the windows and the balconies of the identical two-storey brick buildings that line the street. My friends, of course, are working during the day, making anything from the inter-comm telephones used in bombers, to cosmetics. At night, the neighbourhood is a black wasteland. My friends find their way around this wilderness with perfect ease, mainly without flashlights since flashlights cost too much, break or run out of batteries. At night they seem like jolly young leopards out for a stroll in their home jungle. Three nights a week they go to the neighbourhood movies; they know exactly what every seat costs in every cinema in their district. The other four nights they go to their club.

The club is three bare greyish rooms, two downstairs and one upstairs, which need paint as does everything here, and which succeed in feeling friendly and cosy anyhow. On an average night, boys are playing pingpong in one room, more boys are doing

P. T. (which is physical training) in another room, wearing stocking feet instead of gym shoes and slightly soiled undershirts and their everyday trousers. Upstairs the girls sit around an electric fire and knit, smoke, drink cocoa and eat buns, and gossip with each other and with whatever boys have deigned to join them. They might even do a mild spot of jitterbugging which they have learned to do by watching it done in American movies. They stay until ten-thirty and then prowl forth into the night, back to their homes and sleep and the knowledge that the next day starts at six in the morning.

The girls adore the movies. "Do you know Deanna Durbin?" "Did you ever see Lloyd Nolan?" "Have you met Humphrey Bogart; he's my dream man".... They want to know whether this actress dyes her hair; how much money that actress earns; do all those dresses they wear in the pictures belong to them; are their houses really so big; why do they all get married so often? "Bing Crosby is a good man", one girl said firmly. "He's been married to the same wife for thirteen years." They love the movies, because the movies are pretty and escape, and if by any chance a film star is shown rising at six a.m. to go to work, she is a beautiful girl who will soon marry a magnificent boy and live in a divine bungalow with ruffled curtains and a frigidaire. But these kids do not fool themselves with movie dreams. Someone asked what they would do after the war, and the girls around the fire laughed and one of them said, with such a wise face and such a wise mocking voice, "Go on working. What do you think?"

The boys like to argue and have done a rare amount of thinking for such kids. They were talking about this war and what difference it made in their lives and first they said the war didn't make any difference at all. As Ben, who is sixteen and a plumber, remarked, "If you've got pots and pots of money probably you don't eat so much now, but we're working class people and we never did eat so much as all that and it's about as good now as it ever was." Then John who makes radio parts said he thought they were better off because of the war, because they got ahead quicker and they learned much more. "Like before," he said, "we'd be doing little jobs because of our age but this way we're doing big jobs that'd take two or three years to learn before." But didn't they mind being bombed? And amazingly enough, it became clear that they didn't really remember the blitz. It made you mad, they said reflectively, it made you mad at the time. They said that of course if you had somebody of your family in the war, it made a lot of difference, that is if anything happened to them. But what did they think they were in this war for? Oh that. Well, they were in it because the Germans started it; much as you would be in a tornado if one blow up. "Hey Bill," said John calling over a young sailor who was visiting tonight, "What are you in the war for?" "I'm fighting for the honor of my country," said the sailor without a moments hesitation. They looked at him with pleased and slightly embarrassed wonder. In a way, they'd grown up so entirely in the war that they never questioned it.

They had a lot of ideas about the peace, even if the war remains a state of nature that can scarcely be explained or analysed. "After the war," a blonde slight gentle-faced boy said, "I'd like to get more schooling. At night or maybe some afternoon in the week. And be paid like I was working. Just general schooling," he said shyly, "to learn some more." Another boy spoke of old age pensions and a good house for his family and a free doctor if anyone was took sick. Another said after the war he'd like to see "Happiness for all and social security." A dark boy with tight curling hair and a very worn, almost colorless coat, said he'd like to travel, "just to see if all those other countries was there." One boy said, with bitter and proud obstinacy, "I'm quite content as I am." "He knows he won't get no better," a girl announced. And finally a boy who had been listening to a lot of sober realistic talk about wages and hours and pensions and housing said, like an explosion, "I know what I want. I want a greyhound to race at White City and I want to go to college. Not night school nor nothing like that but a real gent's college." They shouted with laughter, all of them. Here was a true joker, here was a man who didn't care what he wanted: a greyhound and to go to college. He'd be asking for Buckingham Palace next.

They are too young and too modest to consider what the combined working efforts of about two millions of them, kids between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, mean to this country. They do not realize what they add up to, in war industries; they do not

recognize the value of their work in simply keeping things going. They think in child's terms; there is the world which is the neighbourhood, then the street, their club and the center of this world is home. Here they are on sure ground and here they see what their job is. Their job is to earn. The families are large and all must share in keeping the family alive. They have worked since they were fourteen and in one way or another they expect to work until they die. Even when they talk of what they want, they always remind themselves that whatever they want has to adjust to the family needs. "What" would you do about your folks then?" says one fifteen year old to another, and the weight of this responsibility does not break their backs.

They are short and strong, not beautiful at all, but they are certainly made of some material that endures. The war was what they got to grow up in and they take it without complaint. The peace will be a surprising new climate and who knows how they will live in it. Perhaps they will demand that their dreams come true. They may not get a greyhound and a gent's college, but perhaps they will insist on "happiness for all and social security."

But they are curiously wary of dreams, even of the smallest ones. It was closing time at the club and a girl, aged about sixteen with a turned-up nose and long rather straggly dark hair, rose, rubbed her eyes, sighed and remarked that she was going home.

"Got to work tomorrow," she said, and yawned and added,

with real feeling, "I could do with a nice long holiday."

Her pal, a jolly hefty kid of the same age, snorted at this statement. "Oh could you?" she said, "Well, I could do with a nice autographed photo of Clark Gable and I don't expect I'll get that either."

Martha Gellhorn

A LETTER FROM ENGLAND

22 December, 1944..

Dear _____,

In June of 1942, I think it was, Ted assisted me in writing you a letter from Mother Hubbards Cupboard...do you remember it?.. Well! Today He helps me again to write a similar letter at the end of the fifth full year of war, and in the sixth year of its progression...I am not any less a Mother Hubbard some two years and a half afterwards, and I am the more a Polly Flinders, because cinders are precious commodities to us here.

It is no official secret that the weather has been vile these last four months..Rain has been perpetual, and in the Month of November, with but thirty days; we were gifted with twenty eight days of real typically English wet weather...I asked one of your American soldiers, who was at our home on the 9th, December, "What do you think of England?"...to which he replied..."Oh, England is very much like my own Michigan, excepting the weather...The weather is the absolute limit." He, of course, spoke in these terms, with no anxieties of mind, regarding the effects it has upon a home, because...he, as with our own service men, was better clothed than the ordinary civilian, better warmed, and without doubt, (and rightly so) better fed, although he said he had seen two shell eggs in seven months...Yet to a Mother of any family, the weather is in these days an insidious enemy, in that it has to be beaten with all the inferiorities that war brings..One fights it with dull edged tools, like food which fills but does not sustain long enough, clothes which although the best "utility", never knew the quality of even our inferior pre-wartime materials, and last but not the least, with footwear which never was meant to stay damp, and wet, and keep childrens toes free and snug from snow; chills, and frosts..

One lady that I heard of, recently bought a pair of boots... (boots in England, mean HEAVY wearing footwear) for her boy...In 7 days they were done, and the heel completely off one of them. The material of papery quality, was sent to our local newspaper as protest, and mention was made of it, for the benefit of the powers that be. The pathos of the incident doesn't end there...for, one may have the money with which to buy another pair, but NINE coupons for a pair, (out of an allowance of twenty odd, for six months) prohibits a further purchase, and so, as with David today, other ways have to be found. Ted, I say, fortunately...bought a pair of size 9s low shoes in desperation two years ago, and after much trying, couldn't wear them out. A week ago, David HAD to have shoes for school, but, the Autumn purchasing of school clothing for the coming year had taken all the coupons...so, David wears Ted's size 9 shoes, thankfully...You may ask, "Why buy all school clothing at once, and so

denude yourself of clothing coupons?"...The answer is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush", and there may not be another chance of buying for twelve months...

Less than a month ago, no less an authority than Sir Henry Price, the head of a great Clothing undertaking in this country, in his firm's annual report, said, "Whereas during the war years, food and shelter have been very well looked after, and very well publicised, Clothing, of every sort has been very much the Cinderella of the trio. "I have a feeling that very shortly clothing will by sheer pressure of deterioration from everyones personal reserves, assert itself in the public mind to a priority over food." He ended, "Half my suits are no longer wearable, and the remaining three or four are very well worn. I've only been able to get one new suit in the past two years".

It is accepted, that in another four months time we shall have a real and complete shortage, and the main reasons are, first of all the shortage of labour in the clothing manufacture houses, and the employment of those that remain, in the production of clothing for the "demobilisation period". For men and women returning from the services it is recognized that there must be clothing ready, and because of this, stocks must be amassed, and shops denuded still further. Mr. Dalton, our Clothing Minister said three months ago, that he would increase concessions, by liberating material, and asking for more workers, but the effect of this cannot be felt until next summertime...and at the moment there is snow on the ground, and our thermometer stands at twelve above freezing, in the hall. Suits and costumes take three months to make, after you have been measured for them, while ready-mades are almost as defunct as the Dodo. Repressive regulations are such that works may even have to close down, and endanger the position already far from satisfactory...The thing that strikes women the most if and when in town is this...The people who wear new coats, usually wear fur coats...and they are usually tiger...Again, the wearer usually has a forces relative out east, hence the tiger pelt...Renovations on older coats are usually adornments of tiger at the collar or the cuff, the wearer being the lucky possessor of bits from the remains of a new coat made from the gift pelt. Again, in the complete dearth of handbags of leather...(and I read with wonderment in the New Yorker, of British-made handbags from special hide leather...We never see them here.) One see's NEW handbags, of a pale unstained leather, filled with the trademarks of a Cairo market. Practically all new handbags seen in British streets today, are again, gifts from forces members in the near East. I priced a quite ordinary bag over a year ago... It was thirty two dollars, and was worth but five.

So, for bags, one knits them of string, not wool, or makes them from the material of an old felt hat, cut in long narrow strands, which are plaited, and then stitched together in a circular manner...The cheapest type of bag on sale today is of what we term

American cloth...It is a very inferior type of oilcloth, shiny, and usually black...With this bags are made, with a strap to throw over the shoulder...A month's wear cracks the top shiny material, and in two months the top material has largely shelled off, leaving below the foundation of dark muslin-like material.

After five years of war, households also need sweeping replenishments. I should say that all households, rich or poor, are in this state...yet, it is estimated that the present quota for such goods makes it but possible for one household in ten to have a pair of new bedsheets and one household in five a pair of bed blankets, a year...Long ago, we had to split all sheets and blankets down the centre, and join outsides to the middle, so that the unworn parts would be over the bed, and not hanging off them instead...Two years ago, I unpicked the best two pairs of lined curtains I had, making the green lining into covers for our shabby chairs, and putting back the outer material as curtain, minus ling...Two weeks ago, I unpicked three nightdress cases, (you know, the envelope type, with a usually embroidered flap...) I cut a piece of the plain material right off, and hemming it, made a serviette, with that which remained I made into a chairback cover for a bit of new Christmas brightness...A very lovely but too large brocade coat which once belonged to my Mother, I cut up, and have made two cushion cases, also for Christmastide, and so, as with all other British women, I make and mend, ever trying to keep a once bright interior...Towels are couponed so are precious, for one cannot afford clothing coupons for towels...Curtaining of net, and cretonne, too are couponed, as are of course bed sheets...The unworn parts of towels make excellent facecloths for the bathroom, and, in earlier days when I yet was the possessor of spare summer frocks, I found these at a pinch, made quite efficient nighties...Nobody saw me in them anyhow, because we saved light by having no illuminant in bedrooms at all...and, saving light, managed without blackout curtains in bedrooms too...It is amazing how methodical one could get even in the dark, when placing clothing that one took off.

Hardware today, like pans, etc., are difficult...Annually, one person in three can have a new pan or a kettle...one in seven can have one new knife, fork or spoon, whilst one in four can have a new jug, or teapot...

There are still no carpets made, and threadbare second hand ones take prohibitive prices. I wouldn't attempt to buy, in fact I couldn't afford to, for Ted, although a Policeman, does not receive the wages of war workers.

Girls in their teens, very often earn double a man's prewar wage, if they are on war work...I know of some who start working at such work with a six pound a week wage, which is about thirty dollars...Ted's prewar wage was ninety shillings or 22½ dollars, and

this has recently been increased by its last war allowance to 100 shillings, approximating 31 dollars, a week.

This is not a great salary, when I remember a friend who, recently having heard of a sister being bombed out, and who applied to the Government for a docket for new bedsheets, went to the store for one pair, and was asked L6 the pair.

Probably the greatest difficulty today is the coal problem. It is very bad...and it cannot improve. This winter there is a scheme of "priorities", and if you have got through your meagre allowance that the summer allowed you to accumulate, you must go to the Fuel Overseer...Its not a little dismal at the beginning of wintertime. The broad basis of this scheme is that the first who receive attention are those who have not had more than 15 cwts in the LAST SEVEN MONTHS...After these, come persons who have not had more than 25 cwts in the same period, and last, those who have received more than this in the same time. This means that many will not receive coal for the next few weeks UNLESS sickness or complete lack of supplies induces the Fuel Overseer to grant a special permit...The Yule Log this year, comes into its own, if you have any logs.

A fortnight ago, we had no coal at all...We had about a dozen logs specially saved for Christmastide, and about two hundred-weights of coke...Four days we managed without coal, and then we received 2 cwts...Yesterday, we received a further 6 cwts, and this must carry us through till well into January, 1945...So, as I said when I begun...Cinders are precious, and we sit close to the fire at night, and retire early, with hot water bottles for bed usage.

Yet...we look ahead to Christmastide...although adults have not the material interest of pre-war days...although we here in our home are wonderfully provided for again this year, by all whom we know in U.S.A. and, through your gifts, I have not only received Christmas cake, but have also made one, and a pudding too...At least one American Soldier will share your generosity with us, this festival.

Although I do not mention specific gifts by name, I am truly so grateful to you all, be it but for the chance of resurrecting my baking ability in one cake and one pudding, of prewar quality. Please will you all accept this last sentence as a Thank You for grand presentings, on yet one more wartime Christmastide.

We shall have nuts this year. We were to have oranges too, but there will after all, be no fruit at all. Like a friend who recently wrote us from New Jersey; I share her quite proper ire, when she remonstrated to a lady who whilst yet gazing upon at least ten different sorts of fresh fruit, moaned at there not being any bananas. From September until November, there were a few apples

and pears of English growing, and we did see Canadian apples too, but today they are all quite gone. A few oranges that percolated through were for the "under fives children"...Our lads being fourteen, rarely see fruit, and there have not been tinned commodities for literally years...Some few months ago, we had sent from your country, a dried Banana product, and we did save it for Christmas-tide, as we do all special gifts...we have saved right through the year, odds and ends that to us are notable additions...But, with the dried banana, very recently, there came a radio appeal for just that product for a baby suffering from Infant Colitis, and in a hospital but 5 miles away, so, we at once sought it out, and sent it in on the next bus...The Matron was delighted with our hoped-for Christmas Banana drink, and...the baby recovered.

For Christmas week, we have a personal extra allowance of 5d worth of meat, making it in all, 13d worth each...It will most probably be imported pork. We have also each an extra 8 ozs of sugar, and 8 ozs of margarine, just for the one week, but the over seventies will from now on have three, instead of two ozs of tea, weekly. This may not seem much to American minds, but to us it is the beginning of what we pray may be an upward trend.

For five very long years we have been strictly rationed to bare, and plain diet...It still remains bare and plain, but...for one week we have a recourse to more of it, and that is something to remember, when we say to each other, "A Happy Christmastide".

Although we remember that in Britain today there are over 13,000,000 houses, but of them 4,500,000 are damaged by enemy action, we also gratefully remember that Americans are this Christmas, "building up Londontown".

Through the trying and tiring times, whether at war with us or not, we do not forget that you ever helped us nationally...and this home in a more personal if not any the more practical manner. We don't forget it, and we do remember the old lady who said that no stile was too high if you had someone at the rear helping to get you over it.

So...I close, for I'm sure Ted's fingers are tired...Wishing you, and thanking you, all in one breath, everything that is good. Will you take it that I thank you, as do we all, again and again, for this Christmas's good, and for a year of generosity. I cannot say more, if I write individual lines, later on, but for the moment, take this please, as my very loving greeting, and my very sincere thanks too, for that which you have done for us, for so long.

Lovingly, always, from

Martha.